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An Exploration of English as a Medium of Instruction in Nepal

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Abstract:

As in many developing countries, English is increasingly used as the medium of instruction throughout Nepal. Diverse populations, including children of immigrants, study in Kathmandu's public schools. Students are taught in Nepali, and increasingly in English. While parents are largely positive to English-medium classrooms, the effect in children's learning seems to be negative. According to literature, Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education (MT- Based MLE), where two or more languages, including a child's mother tongue, is proven to work well in multi-ethnic societies. Studies show that because of the academic concepts that most languages share, it will not be difficult for the child to learn additional languages when they are taught in their mother tongues. UNESCO's General Conference Resolution 12 supported research findings in saying that multilingual education is the best way for education to address the specific needs of ethnic and cultural minorities. This study examines trends and best practices in terms of what language is used as the medium of instruction in schools in multi-lingual societies. It uses classroom observations, focus-group discussions, as well as a test of English language to evaluate learning when students are taught in their first language, versus when they
are taught in a second or third language. Findings suggest that children who have been educated in both the languages find it easier to study in Nepali medium than to study in the English medium. There is no marked difference between children whose mother tongue is Nepali and those who have other mother tongues, and shows interesting results in terms of the acquisition of additional languages.

**Description**

In her session, Aditi Adhikari will talk about the trend to use English as a medium of instruction in Nepal, and how that affects students' learning.

**Context of the Study**

With increasing national and international mobility, globalization, and multilingual societies, an increasing number of children are now taught in their second languages. Learning to communicate in international languages is economically viable, and in Nepal, there is the belief that a successful education should provide people with access to international markets by teaching them English. Like in many parts of the world, English is increasingly used as the medium of instruction throughout Nepal.

However, many studies show that children learn best when they are taught in a language that they are fluent in (Malone, 2007; UNESCO, 2003). Children who are not taught in their mother-tongues have to learn complex concepts in a language they don't really understand. According to the World Bank's 2005 data, half of all children who are not in school come from areas where the language of instruction is not used at home (Malone, 2007).

According to Skutnabb-Kangas and Tonkamaa (1976), there is a difference between playground language and curricular language. Curricular language requires a higher order of
thinking and takes a longer time to develop. When children have a hard time in school because of language abilities, it is often mistaken for learning ability that is giving the child a hard time.

According to literature, a possible solution to this problem is Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education (MT-Based MLE). This means that two or more languages, including a child's mother tongue, is used in instruction (UNESCO, 2003). MT-Based MLE encourages and helps children to “build a strong educational foundation in the language they know best”, and to then “use both/all their languages a life-long learning” (Malone, 2007). Because of the academic concepts that most languages share, it will not be difficult for the child to learn additional languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). UNESCO's General Conference Resolution 12 supported that multilingual education is the way to go to address the specific needs of ethnic and cultural minorities (UNESCO, 2003).

Education in the mother tongue, however, has its own challenges. It means that educational material must be created in different languages and that teachers should be trained to be able to teach children in different languages. This would be especially challenging in metropolitan cities where children from different linguistic backgrounds study together.

A position paper by UNESCO (2003) proposes that where there are children of more than one linguistic background, “ways and means should be sought ‘to arrange instruction groups by mother tongue.’” This means that it is the job of educators and government bodies to arrange for the mother tongue based education for their citizens.

This issue is most immediate in developing countries because of language diversity; about 70 percent of the languages of the world are found in just 20 countries (UNESCO, 2007). Schools in developing countries have to adjust a more linguistically-diverse student population. The same is increasingly true for urban centers, where diverse populations, often immigrants,
settle. According to UNESCO (2007), there may be 30-40 mother tongues among students in a single school in metropolises.

This causes a two-fold problem. In addition to affecting learning, reluctance to use mother tongues and teach it to children could also cause the extinction of many languages. Almost half of the 6000-7000 languages that currently exist in the world, are in the danger of extinction, according to the “UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger”. The loss of a language means that the culture associated with the language is largely lost, including the oral literacy, knowledge system, value system, cultural music, art, and practices.

Method(s)

The literature review for this study will use India and other multilingual countries to talk explore trends and best practices in terms of what language is used as the medium of instruction.

There will also be observations of classrooms that are being taught in different languages, and focus group discussions with teachers who have taught with Nepali and English as the medium of instruction, as well as students who have experienced both English-medium and Nepali-medium education, and a test of the English language for both groups of students.

Outcomes

This is an ongoing study, and the findings will probably be that children who have been educated in both the languages find it easier to study in Nepali medium than to study in the English medium. This is possibly true, both for children whose mother tongue is Nepali and those who have other mother tongues. The results of the English language test are not known yet.
References


Standardized Testing of the Non-Standardized Arabic-Speaking ELLs: A Misalignment of Perceptions

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Abstract

The rapidly growing population of English Language Learners (ELLs) has brought new challenges to schools throughout the United States. Research has also demonstrated a disparity in achievement between ELLs and the general student population in association with the increasing accountability demands of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). The investigation conducted in a charter school serving students of predominately Arabic descent showed not only a misalignment between students and staff views of testing, it also demonstrated that despite all our best efforts, the school continued to yield to the pressures of standardized assessments. Teachers, administrators and students from a metro area in the Midwest participated via archival data, staff questionnaires and staff and student one-on-one interviews. The purpose of this research was to explore standardized testing practices on ELLs, specifically those of Arabic speaking backgrounds, and to analyze the role standardized tests play on the instructional time needed for Arabic-speaking ELLs to acquire CALP. Non-native English students take time, which can range from five to seven years, to become proficient in the academic language. In the current study it was found that teachers forfeited countless hours of much needed instructional time, in order to accommodate preparing for, and administering of, these assessments. Moreover, while attempts were made to minimize emphasis on testing, the school succumbed to the ongoing demands of external stakeholders. Consequently, Arabic-speaking ELLs were not receiving the instructional time necessary for them to acquire the English language proficiency which was equivalent to that of their English speaking counterparts.

Keywords: case study, English Language Learners (ELLs), standardized assessment, perceptions, instructional time, accountability
Introduction

I have walked in the shoes of an ELL--shoes that grew tighter as I explored a culture that was so vastly different than my own in terms of not only language but also religion, customs and traditions. I tried to make sense of idioms that held no meaning to my foreign ears. I identified with items that did not exist in the culture I had become a part of. I started first grade in Canada at a time when ELLs were few and far between and technology was non-existent to bridge the chasm between the old world I had come from to the new one I was a guest of for a long while. I came to school with no English and was placed in a class where the teacher, through no fault of her own, was inexperienced on to how to help and support my needs as an ELL. As such, I was offered no classroom accommodations. Repeatedly my report cards and notes home emphasized that I was copying from my peers and simply not getting it. Constantly my dad would write back that I was a newcomer to the country and to education. My dad would, over and over again, also stress that I did not have a grasp of the language nor had I been acculturated to school norms having missed out on kindergarten.

Grounded in my own experiences, I have continued to view the world through the eyes of an ELL though I have long ago vested myself of the baggage that is commonly associated with the label. I chose to devote my teaching and administrative career to working with ELLs--to be the voice of those children who have for far too long remained in their silent period. Consequently, when given the opportunity I made it my mission to have my ELLs be heard. The seeds of the research were sowed in my last position as a curriculum/assessment coordinator. It was there I witnessed first-hand the demands placed by standardized tests on the newcomers, the basics and the high intermediates on the state’s language proficiency test.
At my last site, along with the homeroom teacher, I was responsible for proctoring the district tests. Based on my observations I was able to experience the issues and concerns that the Arabic-speaking ELLs faced with respect to testing. I garnered the Arabic-speaking ELLs’ and teachers’ viewpoints. Being right there in the mix provided me with the opportunity to capture a view of reality presented to very few outside of the school environment.

Since the population of the school was composed of predominately Arabic-speaking ELLs there should have been more support for these students. As a school on the whole, allotting fifty percent of the school year to standardized testing robbed ELLs of the time necessary for learning to occur. Seeing as I was the curriculum and assessment coordinator for almost four years at my previous school, it was here the seeds of contention were first planted. I continuously questioned and voiced my concerns of requiring Arabic-speaking ELLs to undergo test after test. I often asked when teaching and learning were going to be given the opportunity to do what they were intended to do. I repeatedly stressed that we were setting our students up for failure and fail they did. Few blamed the language issue, most impugned the staff. The authorizer compared our school to others with little to compare them on except for the fact that we were a school as well. As one year rolled into another more and more demands were being placed on our students. It finally came to a head when we were told by our management company to assess our summer school students on the Performance Series (PS) assessment. I refused and told them that if they wanted to test I was not going to be responsible for it. At the end of that same summer during staff orientation a presenter shared information about how the second grade PS scores was going to be used to predict the success of a student in high school and beyond. If a student did not attain the scores that were based on normative data (of which our Arabic-ELLs were no part of), they would not be on a trajectory to receive at least a twenty-one on the ACT. In those moments
I made a decision. A decision that within the hour, brought forth my resignation. I finally broke free of the shackles that had held me hostage over the years.

**Literature Review**

The philosophy behind the testing was to monitor the growth of our students, especially the ELLs. However, as Abedi (2002) claimed, since “one out of seven children in the U.S. speaks a language other than English at home” (p. 1) and it takes anywhere between five to seven years to attain proficiency in academic achievement (Cummins, 1979; Hakuta, 2001; Lenters, 2005), emphasis should be placed on increased direct instruction and class time. The students are required to master content in English at the same time as attaining a specific level of English proficiency. The ELLs’ population expansion rate is about 170% while the general school population growth rate is slightly above 10% (Francis, 2006). Due to this population explosion more attention is being paid to ELLs. For the most part, the achievement gap is centered on the instruction and assessment of ELLs.

Testimony to Congress has shown that the academic performance levels of ELLs are considerably lower than those of their peers in almost every test of achievement (National Education Association, 2008). A recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (Institute of Education Sciences, 2011), for example, also demonstrated that only thirty percent of ELLs scored at or above the basic level in reading, compared with seventy percent of non-ELLs. NCLB demands that students take and perform well on state tests so that educational equity is achieved and high academic standards are maintained. Standardized testing has been on the rise since the latter part of the 20th century. The stress on assessments has been further heightened in the 21st century as politicians, business leaders and others have promoted the notion that the United States’ economy will continue to weaken unless student achievement and school progress
is monitored through testing (Bonstingl, 2001; Edyburn, 2013). Consequently “responding to the understandable demands for more accountability, almost every school in the land is morphing into a test-taking factory” (Reich, 2000, p. 1) with more frequent and more rigorous testing. As such, I contend that with more time testing and less time learning, ELL students are being short-changed because the tests are depleting valuable instructional time.

By NCLB’s own definition, an ELL’s struggles with the English language “…may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the State’s proficient level of achievement on State assessments” (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2011). NCLB acknowledges exclusions and accommodations, however standard accommodations are neither fully explained nor well-defined (Abedi & Gándara, 2006). The question of how to envision language proficiency and the manner in which it is linked to academic achievement is key to addressing the concerns of language development in ELLs. Cummins (1979) in his seminal piece coined the terms basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to illustrate the two distinct levels of English needed for effective communication in and out of school (Cummins, 1979). By making an underlying distinction between the BICS and CALP he found that it can take anywhere from five to seven years to attain CALP. This fact has continued to be supported by others such as Hakuta (2001) and Lenters (2005). Ortiz-Marrero and Sumaryono (2010) additionally noted that ELLs are required to attain academic language proficiency during their first year in the United States at a rate that reflects the increasing demands of the society they live in (Ortiz-Marrero & Sumaryono, 2010). As such, they concluded that ELLs are at risk in the present climate of accountability and standardized testing due to the needed CALP, which is the type of mastery that standardized tests use along with the academic language necessary to
approach school curricula. Given that ELL students need more time to develop English language academic skills, ELLs should be afforded greater opportunities to practice with the content language and be provided with increased time for focused academic language development to occur, in order to succeed in standardized testing.

**Methods**

The study was conducted at a K-8 charter school in the Midwest where the researcher is also the current principal. The investigation included four teachers, the curriculum coordinator, the assessment coordinator, and six ELL students who were in the high intermediate range based on the state’s language proficiency assessment. The data were comprised of: (a) archival data; (b) interviews and; (c) questionnaire data. The purpose of the exploratory case study was to answer the following research questions: (a) According to staff and student perceptions, what is the impact of standardized testing on Arabic-speaking ELLs? (b) According to staff perceptions, what are the consequences of testing on instructional time?

**Discussion**

The overarching theme that emerged from the data was the misalignment between staff and students views of testing with regard to: (a) kinds of testing; (b) purposes of testing; (c) value placed on testing; and (d) impact of testing. An unexpected finding that surfaced was also the misalignment between my intentions and the school’s capitulation to the cycle of standardized testing. For the most part, a disconnect existed between the two groups of study participants. Aside from both sharing that there was a lot of testing, students perceived assessment in a favorable light unlike staff who had little to say in terms of the positive aspect of testing besides it helping them address areas of weakness for their students. One other theme that surfaced was the misalignment between my intentions and reality I faced at the school. In my position I too have yielded to the authorizer, the state, and the federal government. I am responsible for propagating the culture of testing that had me running from my other site because our very existence as a school hangs on our students’ performance and achievement on standardized assessments.
Standardized tests are not created with ELLs in mind. Though my experiences of being an ELL drove this study, as a public school administrator I too am shackled to these tests, and can only stand by as our students continue to painstakingly take them. While it has become evident within these pages that there exists a misalignment between teachers and students with regards to standardized testing, it goes without saying that students remain unaware of the repercussions attached to schools who fail to make the grade. Much like the challenges I faced when I entered first grade, the students endure theirs with little to no end in sight. Language can bridge the barriers to communication but in order to do so those barriers have to be mitigated via more time to learn the type of language necessary to dismantle those barriers. Limiting access to academic language is in fact limiting the ELLs’ road to success.

**Significance**

Unique to this study were the findings that staff and Arabic-speaking ELLs did not perceive assessments in the same way. While students saw them as a means to help them grow academically, staff stressed their accountability component. Moreover, student perceptions of their parents’ responses to discussions of testing were revealing in that they were able to perceive their families’ reactions. Finally, in spite of my best intentions to advocate for the Arabic-speaking ELLs’ needs to be afforded opportunities to develop CALP, I was embroiled in the process as we shaped and maintained a school culture that effectively mirrored the testing customs and norms I had so purposely bolted from. With the threat of re-authorization hanging over our heads two years in a row, the likelihood of making the necessary changes to support our ELLs was constrained. However, through the case study the story will unfold. Someone will take note to help me initiate a new cycle. A cycle that will assist my Arabic-speaking ELLs as they take back their right to secure the academic language that will propagate this latest cycle.
Recommendations

For learning to occur the process has to be seamless. Most students cannot learn when there are constant interruptions to their schedule. ELLs because they are trying to play catch up with the language, need every moment, dedicated to helping them acquire the CALP that will facilitate their success with the English language. Arabic-speaking ELLs, because of their additional challenges in the areas of language (Palmer et al., 2007), command more instructional time to learn English and the academic skills that accompany it (Collier, 1989; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1979; Mueller, 2001; Smith, 1991). I believe ELLs must be assessed less often so that more academic language learning can occur that will provide them further access to the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1988) they currently hover over.

There is justification to make recommendations for practice (e.g., professional development) or policy. Professional development must place the needs of the Arabic-speaking ELLs at the forefront. The accrediting agency can benefit from receiving training on the unique characteristics of Arabic-speaking ELLs especially the time needed for them to acquire CALP. The authorizer must recognize that ELLs are being deprived of much needed instructional time due to testing preparations and administration. It is important to set high standards for every student and make sure that all learners’ needs are taken into account in educational reform endeavors. However, educators must also strive for a reasonable approach to interpreting and using test data so that well thought-out, educated conclusions are drawn, especially when these judgments carry high-stakes for ELLs and the schools that serve them.

I recommend that our authorizer limit the emphasis they place on district tests. I understand assessments are a monitoring piece necessary for them to hold their schools accountable. Nevertheless, there has to be an understanding of the time it takes Arabic-speaking
ELLs to attain CALP (Collier, 1989; Collier, 1995). Instead of using three plus years as their compliance piece, why not go with what the research says about the acquisition of CALP, and monitor their growth instead of putting benchmarks that have not been normed on the ELL population? The authorizer uses the three plus year timeframe because they expect a student would have improved tremendously having been at the same school for that length of time. Three years would prove how successful the school’s educational program has been. The authorizer claims that since the students have been ours, we cannot argue they came to us below grade level because enough time has been provided to get them to grade level. However, in their group of schools the Arabic-speaking ELLs are not accounted for otherwise the fact that BICS is about the only the language the ELLs have acquired in those three years would be recognized and the fact that they still need almost another five to seven years to reach CALP levels (Cummins, 1979; Collier, 1989; Collier, 1995; Hakuta, 2001) would be contemplated. Without the support of the authorizer, our school cannot move forward. In actual fact, it could cease to exist. Like the cannon ball, as we drag the tests behind us, we are razing a path and in effect leaving our Arabic-speaking ELLs to face the wrecking ball. Seeing as the students do not belong to the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1988) they are in additional need of being supported and championed. The authorizer, because of their connections to the state, has to be the intermediary influence to help advocate for their cause. Through the state university the road can be paved for the Arabic-speaking ELLs so that their route to the acquisition of CALP is made smoother.

Implications

Completely eliminating all testing is both unrealistic and impractical because there is a need for assessment data to inform instruction. Though the current study was based on a single school that demonstrated its time being allocated to test preparations and administrations,
implications should include investigating more extensively the relationship that exists between time spent on testing or its preparation, its resulting deduction from instructional time, and the fact that Arabic-speaking ELLs are being expected to perform like their non-ELL peers with an adequate level of proficiency without meeting their goals of English language proficiency prior to being assessed on standardized tests.

**Conclusion**

The stakeholders are aware of my voice. I simply need them to pay attention to the message I am conveying so that they too can add their voices to create a chorus that will have others listening. Despite the fact that I did not bring with me the intention to cause any ripples, I am now on a mission to create waves of change. My Arabic-speaking ELLs’ must attain mastery of the English language and let it be the beacon of hope to succeed in a world that is slowly closing in on them. The results of this study will be the flames to ignite the path of those who are blinded to the needs to our students.

The students perceived that success on tests was their route to a realization of their goals. What they did not recognize or grasp was they would only get that through the acquisition of the language required and critical for them to be proficient on the assessments, specifically CALP. Looking back, I cannot identify when it was I had crossed the threshold to a world that without access to CALP would have been near to impossible to penetrate. Nevertheless, I breached the glass ceiling and the remaining shards speared the effort to be the ELL who would be heard.
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The Representation of Poverty in Great Depression American Literature:

*The Grapes of Wrath*

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**Description**

This study examines the impact of Marxist theory in American Literature. Using three overarching concepts of this theory: economic power, materialism versus spirituality, and class conflict, the American Literature course content was adapted to incorporate holistic approaches.

**Aim/ Objectives**

This research aims to explore how, if at all, American authors represented poverty during the Depression Era and to determine if Marxist critical literary key tenets are present in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The core research question is “How did American Author, John Steinbeck represent poverty during the Great Depression Era?"

**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research is to explore how American author, John Steinbeck represented poverty during the Depression Era in the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. I have applied a Marxist literary critical analysis to the novel highlighting three overarching concepts of the theory: economic power, materialism versus spirituality, and class conflict. Evolving from these
concepts are issues that create class divisions. In this research, I have also examined ideologies from Marxist theorists including the base and superstructure.

**METHODOLOGY**

The 1930s witnessed a period of starvation and displacement for millions of Americans from every race, gender, and more specifically, the working class. I have chosen to conduct a qualitative research, specifically a literary critical analysis on the sociological and psychological effects of the Depression Era as represented by social reform author, John Steinbeck. This research seeks to identify “How poverty is represented in novels written during the 1930s.”

In order to critically analyze and demonstrate the dynamics of the social world of the Depression Era, inclusive of the mass migrations and in terms of race, gender, and class, I narrowed my selection to American literature landmark novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The central issues of the novel surround the sociological implications of the Depression Era on families. *The Grapes of Wrath* rates among the most successful social reform novels and provides a substantive and authentic depiction of the struggles of poor, Whites. Steinbeck wrote *The Grapes of Wrath* from a firsthand experience, which helped him garner real life situations among the refugees. He met Tom Collins, “the manager of the Weedpatch unit of the Farm Security Administration’s migrants camps in California’s great Central Valley” (Hearle, 2007, p. 400). “Collins gave Steinbeck access to his extensive reports on the migrants and their lives on the road and in the federal camps and introduced [him] to many families” (Hearle, 2007, p. 400). The novel helps to create concrete imagery of the effects of the Depression on the sharecropping population in America.

Using the broad themes of economic power, materialism versus spirituality, and class conflict, I will apply a Marxist approach to conduct a literary criticism of the novel. The
fundamental principles laid by Karl Marx theorize “Marxism declares it offers a comprehensive, positive view of human life and history that demonstrates how humanity can save itself from a meaningless life of alienation and despair” (Bressler, 2011, p. 166). Marx’s core contention lies in the disparity between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, or the ‘haves’ and the ‘haves not.’ He believed that if society can reach equilibrium then a classless society would result in a balance of wealth and equal opportunities.

First, I identified the key tenets of Marxism in the focused novel. I then used specific scenarios from the novel that align with the key tenets. I observed that there is a recurring pattern throughout the novel. This pattern identifies a line of division between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats. Having defined the key tenets, in a close reading I then looked to see how these key tenets come into play with the plot of the novel. In explaining and analyzing the novel, I applied Marxist key tenets to different scenarios in order to evaluate if my research question “How did American author, John Steinbeck represent poverty in Great Depression Era?” could be answered.

Table 1: Process of Analysis.

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**CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

*The Grapes of Wrath* (2002) records the history and lives of dislocated, poor, white, sharecropping farmers from Oklahoma. The story depicts the fictitious Joads family who joined the Westward migration to California in search of the jobs advertised on handbills throughout the
villages in Sallisaw, Oklahoma. During the Great Depression Era, poverty emerged as one of the most prevalent themes in society and literary works. However, poverty was not confined to any given race or region. Instead, it had sprawling effects especially on the lower class or “‘the American Underclass’: those ‘people who [were] seen to be stuck more or less permanently at the bottom’” (Gandal, 1997, p. 3-4).

The Great Depression spanned over a decade from 1929 to 1939 and had rippled effects across nations worldwide. According to Szostak (2003), the Great Depression remains “the longest, deepest, and most pervasive depression in American history” (p. 44). The Depression produced high levels of unemployment and dislocation. “It is widely accepted that the unemployment rate peaked above 25 percent in 1933 and remained above 14 percent into the 1940s” (Szostak, 2003, p. 44). Resulting from the wide scope of unemployment, poverty and hardship reigned among the American populace. Szostak further states, “[y]et these figures may underestimate the true hardship of the times: those who became too discouraged to seek work would not have been counted as unemployed. Likewise, those who moved from the cities to the countryside in order to feed their families would not have been counted” (p. 44).

LITERARY CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Karl Heinrich Marx, a nineteenth century German philosopher and economist, developed the theory Marxism, “as an alternative form of government to capitalism and as an acceptable worldview” (Bressler, 2011, p. 165). In applying a Marxist analysis to this research, I aim to heighten awareness of the ramifications of the Great Depression across the United States, especially on Americans that are on the lower spectrum of society. A Marxist theoretical analysis can be applied to literary works using three broad concepts: economic power, materialism versus spirituality, and class conflict, which I will utilize throughout this critical analysis. I will
apply one of the key tenets of Marxism, the base and superstructure to demonstrate the effects of economic disparity between different classes. Marx refers to a society’s fundamental economic conditions as “material circumstances” (Dobie, 2011, p. 89). In order to accurately explain the protagonists’ and or antagonists’ social, psychological, or economical conditions, a Marxist approach dictates the material and historical context in which they occur must first be examined. According to Dobie (2011), “the moving force behind human history is its economic systems, for people’s lives are determined by their economic circumstances. A society is shaped by its ‘forces of production,’ the methods it uses to produce the material elements of life” (p. 89). A close reading of John Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath* reveals evidences of Marx’s concepts and key tenets.

The owners of the means of production scrambled as a widespread backlash of the Great Depression swept across the nation causing investors to withdraw their investments from the stock market. The rippling effects ultimately settled at the feet of the tenant farmers’ of Oklahoma who fuelled the forces of production in Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Steinbeck presents a disheartening portrayal of the unequal distribution of goods and services that drive the working force of white, tenant farmers in Sallisaw, Oklahoma during the decade long Depression. The fictitious Joads’ family led by young protagonist, Tom Joad, along with hundreds of thousand others’ emerged victims of an economic system that marginalized the lower class of society. Stripped of their means of livelihood, sharecropping, the Joads became powerless surviving on the bare minimum, which inches towards depletion. Nonetheless, the family refused to accept the material circumstances which society had imposed on them. Endeavouring to rise above their circumstances, the Joads joined the westward migration to California.
Poverty may be defined in terms of a one’s inability to adequately satisfy his or her basic needs. Poverty inherently affects mankind’s psychological and sociological well-being. I will use the abovementioned novel to investigate how poverty is represented during the Depression era and its social impacts on families. Throughout the centuries, a direct correlation can be made between economic, literacy, and emotional poverties. This research also seeks to demonstrate the relationship between economic poverty and both literacy and emotional poverty.

**FINDINGS**

**Call for Action**

According to the core principles of Marxism, the findings of this research answer the core question: How did American author, John Steinbeck represent poverty during the Depression Era? The novel presents an accurate representation of both the sociological and psychological states of the American lower class during the Depression Era. The working class became subjects of an impoverished society because they had no control over the means of production, which Marx refers to as the base and superstructure. The social reform author studied in this research, Steinbeck, utilized literature to appeal for changes to the plight of the proletariat. He demonstrates the desperate needs of the working class and their deplorable living conditions. Steinbeck echoes an outcry for actions from the bourgeoisie who controlled the means of production. He reveals the extreme poverty of the American lower class populace and the division between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat during the Depression Era.

**Massive Job Loss**

According to Bressler (2011), “[i]n America, … the capitalists exploit the working classes, determining for them their salaries and their working conditions, among many other
elements of their lives” (p. 176). The preceding Marxist literary critical analysis examined and exposed the failures in the ideologies of the dominant class. Although the Great Depression had plunged the nation and world in a chronic recession, the brunt of the fall spread like wildfire amongst the proletariats who suffered massive job losses, which left the American lower class homeless since their lands were repossessed by the bourgeoisie who owned the base and superstructure. This resulted in considerable migration across states as the poor, white, tenant farmers embarked on a quest to find work. Lawson (2008) states, “[t]he anticipation and fear along the road builds to a climax, and the [Joads] family arrives at California only to find that, rather than the promised land, they have come to a place of despair, hunger, and vanished dreams” (p. 60).

**Dehumanizing Living Conditions**

Steinbeck represented the dehumanizing conditions that the working class lived in. According to Lawson (2008), “Steinbeck’s accurate portrayal of the Okies was disturbing, passionate, and empathetic. It portrayed hunger and despair in a land of plenty” (p. 60). The Joads and the many other sharecropping farmers pitched their tents, most of which were made from cardboards and scraps found in the dumpsters, along the roads as they settled into the dilapidated conditions that became homes for them. The government Hooverville camps were not equipped with the essential amenities, such as a bathroom, found in homes and the families resorted to the river to relieve and satisfy their basic human needs. The dehumanizing conditions that the working class experienced during the Great Depression underscored the poverty that prevailed amongst those that fall on the lower continuum of the economic scale.
Demoralized Patriarchs and Destitute Families

The pursuits of the Joads family proved futile as they became deeper entrenched in the conditions the capitalist economic system had constructed for them according to Marxist theory. The patriarchs stood humiliated because of their inabilities to provide the basic needs of their families. They were stripped of their pride. Resisting their marginalized positions, the Joads sacrificed family members, grandmother and grandfather, to cross over the desert and to get into California in search of jobs. Their socioeconomic position did not allow them to arrange a proper burial for their parents. The family continued to fall apart as the eldest brother, Noah, and son-in-law, Connie conceded to the social construction that the bourgeoisie’ system had designed for them. The women, Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon, suffered psychological traumas as they watched their kinsmen slowly became demoralized and incapacitated under the strains of poverty and the numerous failing attempts to find jobs in order to support their families. “The rich and powerful, however, are actually insecure and scared by the coming of thousands of hungry people who seek the most basic needs of humankind” (Lawson, 2008, p. 60). Echoing the ideas of Karl Marx, “Steinbeck portrayed the owners as selfish bourgeoisie, exploiting the poor for their own gain” (Lawson, 2008, p. 60). The bourgeoisie grew terrified of the influx of desperate families and set up oppressive defensive measures that would protect them from the foreseeable defeat. Hopelessness prevailed throughout the novel, as the proletariats had no recourse to resolve the national crisis. According to Marxism, the powers of the superstructure ensured the families remained poverty stricken by constructing an economic system that presented little or no opportunity for the lower class to elevate themselves.
Extreme Poverty Resulted in Deaths

During the Depression Era, death became a recurring theme amongst families. The Joads sacrificed their parents, simply because they were determined to take the long journey to California to find jobs so they could feed their family. Massive job losses resulted in extreme poverty, which left the working class with little options for an honest means of survival. Their material circumstances according to Marxist theory caused them to become subjects of an impoverished society, which the dominant class had constructed for them. According to Marxism, the bourgeoisie ensured the economic system operated in a manner that kept production going while they remained indifferent to the workers who provided the forces of production. The proletariats’ material circumstances remained intact, just as the bourgeoisie’s society had constructed for them, which resulted in widespread deaths from hunger.

Poverty Led to Acceptance of the Bourgeoisie’s Ideologies

Marxist theorists posit that a capitalist society will gain control over the beliefs of the proletariats by exerting the power they have in the economic base and superstructure. Given that the division of a capitalist society has two basic structures according to Marx, the dominant class, whom he refers to as the bourgeoisie and the owners of the means of production, enjoys power and prestige from the goods and services manufactured by the proletariats, who provide the forces of production but gain little or no benefits from profits generated (Dobie, 2011, p. 89).

Steinbeck illustrates this ideology as he presents the tractor driver who in a desperate need to provide food for his family does away with his beliefs by accepting the reality of his circumstances as defined by the bourgeoisie, which Gramsci coined as hegemony. According to Marxism, those who own the means of production control the economic power base in a capitalist society. Despite their underprivileged circumstances, the lower class got caught in the
entrapments of the bourgeoisie. The worldview of a society according to Marxism can be
determined not by religious or philosophical ideology of the people but by the interdependency
of the socioeconomic classes and a close study of the superstructure. In light of the fact that the
dominant class controls the superstructure and how power is allocated, the worldviews of the
lower class will be false. Marxism suggests that the basis of a society’s worldview is firmly
rooted on the economic base, which therefore shapes their reality.

The studied author revealed that the society reviewed maintained a false worldview
because the economic base undergirds their reality. As a result, the characters suffered
immeasurably and experienced catastrophic downfalls. A Marxist critic would advocate that the
characters’ downfalls resulted not because of their imperfect personalities, religious, or
philosophical beliefs but because of the material world in which they lived. The proletariats
became alienated and felt powerless from the dominant class.

**Poverty Resulted into Class Conflict**

Hunger breeds anger. Class conflict emerged among the working class as they struggled
to finds jobs. The bourgeoisie perpetuated class conflict amongst the working class as the
proletariats bought into the ideologies of the dominant class. According to Marxism, a capitalist
society cannot avoid class conflict because the powerful superstructure and economic base thrive
on the material world constructed and the profits gained from the labor of the working class,
which will inevitably lead to unequal distribution. While the dominant class relishes in the
prestige they gain from the labor force of the working class, the working class agitates about the
little benefits they gain from their labor and become nonconformists. They reject the
bourgeoisie’ natural worldview and call work strikes to implement social reform, which results
in class conflicts. On the other hand, according to Marx, the working class develops a false
consciousness when they conform to the dominant class’s natural worldview. The numerous confrontations between the white, tenant farmers, and the contractors and government officials in *The Grapes of Wrath* shows the class conflict Marx alludes to. While the farmers aim to rebuild their families, the contractors aim to strengthen their dominance by extorting the forces of production. The discrepancies between the socioeconomic classes ultimately will lead to conflicts.

**CONCLUSION**

According to Lawson (2008), “Steinbeck creates a moving portrait of the dispossessed. The novel ends with little hope for material and physical comfort, but the Joads have risen above their condition of abject poverty, spiritually and emotionally, to show the dignity and humanity of the poor” (p. 61). In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck underscores the levels of poverty amongst the American people during the Great Depression Era. From the study, readers would realize that the working class across the regions studied remained downtrodden and underprivileged although their bourgeoisie counterparts continued to live in luxury and prospered.

According to Marxist literary critical analysis, the novel presents an accurate representation of both the sociological and psychological states of the lower class during the Depression Era. Steinbeck crafted a novel that gives firsthand account of the lives of the poor, white, tenant farmers and many other migrants who fled to California in order to secure jobs and provide the basic needs of humanity. The working class became subjects of an impoverished society because they had no control over the means of production, the base and superstructure.
According to Marxism, the bourgeoisie own the means of production, base and superstructure and as such, create the material circumstances of the proletariats in order to enjoy the prestige and profits of their labor. Similar to the Joad’s family, the Californian migrants pursued every possible path to create an income stream that would enable them to adequately provide for their families. However, the bourgeoisie rewarded their efforts with a leash of deceptions, which led to them mourning the untimely deaths of families and battling severe depression.

While the authors’ representations of the Depression Era are not as striking today, inequality of the nation’s wealth remains more or less the same as represented in the focused novel, where the richest one (1) percent in the United States now own more wealth than the bottom ninety (90) percent (Cagetti and De Nardi, 2006, p. 1).


Abstract:

In a qualitative study, eight private school teachers were interviewed to determine how they address issues of poverty with their predominantly middle to upper class students and how participants' own backgrounds influenced their ideas about poverty. Results indicate that teachers’ own experiences with poverty do influence what and how they teach about poverty issues, and several participants have implemented a variety of lesson plans in order to help students broaden their views about people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
Context of the Study

Despite the label “The Land of Opportunities,” America is far from being a paradise for all. The gap between the upper and lower classes seems to continually grow. Johnson (2006) refers to our system of inequalities as one of privilege in which dominant groups in society use differences to oppress or exclude less powerful groups of people. He argues that a system based on privilege and power will “perpetuate a class system based on widening gaps in income, wealth, and power” (p. 44). Trying to change such an unjust system seems daunting, and until more people bring awareness of the problem to the forefront, things will remain status quo.

I have been an educator in private schools for 20 years, teaching primarily the privileged and powerful that Johnson writes about. My students often have very little contact with anyone who is not from their world, and, therefore, often speak out in ignorance about people in lower socio-economic situations. I have felt an urgency to make sure my students become better informed, more compassionate people. I decided to find out what other teachers in similar private school settings are doing to address the issue of social justice, and discovered an eagerness of secondary school educators to share their ideas and learn about new ones.

Several researchers (Philpott & Dagenais, 2011; Ritchie, 2012; Turpin, 2008) discuss various challenges to teaching social justice in any environment, including the lack of support at school sites, the pressure to teach to standardized tests, and inconsistency between “the widely held views of social justice in academia and the views of social justice that circulate broadly in schools” (Philpott & Dagenais, 2011, pg. 96). Other studies found that while schools often focus on compassion and service to the poor, very few focused on structural and societal causes of social problems (Bamber, 2011; Brummellen & Koole, 2012). Finally, other studies (Fox, 2010; Mistry, Brown, Chow, and Collins, 2012) include practical curriculum research involving
explicit teaching about poverty to children, and while these studies show mildly positive results, all of them discuss the challenges to justice education in schools today.

Aims and Objectives

I wanted to understand specifically how private schools who cater to a privileged population address ideas concerning the poor. In order to pursue this issue, the following questions were considered:

1. How do teachers’ own beliefs and practices about poverty influence their curriculum and classroom practices?

2. How do secondary private school educators create pedagogical spaces in their classrooms in order to address issues of poverty?

Methods

I used a narrative inquiry approach as I conducted interviews of eight teachers from four different private schools of various sizes. All schools were self-identified as Christian, one Catholic, one Baptist, and two nondenominational. A focus group was also held and attended by half of the participants. Open-ended questions were asked both in interviews and during the focus group, and they were digitally recorded and transcribed. Reading through transcripts, I practiced open coding, looking for common themes from all data collected and grouped together those themes that were closely related, and eventually focused on themes that addressed my initial research questions.

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) define credibility as “to whether the participants’ perceptions match up with the researcher’s portrayal of them” (p. 112). I made use of member
checks in order to give participants an opportunity to view my portrayal of them and to give input if they felt misrepresented in any way. I met with the focus group to strengthen my interview findings and asked participants to elaborate on their views of social justice in a writing protocol. Triangulation provides another layer of trustworthiness and can help “shed light on a theme or perspective” by providing other types of evidence to document specific themes (p. 251); so throughout my research, I kept systematic notes, carefully-labeled transcriptions, and extensive coding lists in order to maintain the dependability of my research.

Results

The results of this study indicate that teachers’ own experiences with poverty do influence what and how they teach about poverty issues. Furthermore, teachers have strategies to combat extemporaneous stereotypical remarks concerning the poor, and some plan extensive lessons to address poverty issues throughout their curriculum. In order to discuss the ways in which the participants implemented purposeful lessons concerning the poor, I borrowed the metaphors for teaching and learning from Badley and Hollabaugh (2012): teacher as transmitter, facilitator, and catalyst.

The Transmitter Metaphor

Transmission metaphors invoke traditional scenes of students sitting in long rows of desks with teacher at the front of the class lecturing in order to pass down the important knowledge to the next generation. And while today transmission metaphors “carry strong negative connotations for some,” lectures and rote memorization “both are essential for some forms of learning” (Badley & Hollabaugh, 2012, p. 55). While the majority of curriculum practices shared in the interviews do not fall under this metaphor, a few planned lessons do fall under this category. During one lesson, the teacher shows the film “God Bless the Child,” as a
way to transmit what “the spiral of downward poverty looks like.” In another lesson, Ben, one of the teachers in the study, takes students on buses around the city and points out ways adults are taking responsibility and making a difference for the poor today. Even though the information in both situations is directly “transmitted” to students, both lessons still utilize alternatives to the traditional classroom metaphor. However, many of the participants made clear statements that lecturing about issues concerning the poor is not effective.

**The Guidance Metaphor**

Several of the lessons planned purposefully by teachers fall under the facilitation or guidance metaphors. Badley and Hallobaugh (2012) describe situations where “learning comes primarily from within students but teachers seek to put in place optimal conditions for [that] learning” like those included in facilitation metaphors (p. 57). Several teachers design individual lessons or entire units around issues of inequality and injustice in hopes their students will be enlightened to some of the truths about their world.

For instance, the entire Social Justice class of Ben revolves around these very issues. He creates activities that help students experience real-life issues that broaden their views. For example, after a day of riding city buses downtown and working at the Salvation Army and other homeless shelters, the students return to the school and begin an evening and night at a “mock shelter.” Students are given the equivalent amount of money they would receive if they qualified for food stamps. They must walk to the nearest grocery store, buy what they can, and return to the “shelter.” Then boys go to one room, girls in the other, and the lights are out at a strict 10:00pm. At 6:00am, everybody has to get out and vacate the place. For 24 hours, students experience certain aspects of what homeless people might experience.
Ben organized the day’s events and experiences for his students, creating a space in which they can experience another way of life and begin to develop a slightly broader view of how other people live. Until students can get to a place of even surface understanding, it would be impossible to discuss with them the possible injustices in our current society.

Other than facilitating experiential learning activities designed to build empathy in his students, Ben tries to point out to his students that happiness does not depend on how many material possessions one has. He introduces students to Aristotle and his philosophical argument about happiness. He uses Aristotle because students can relate to Aristotle’s ideas that everyone wants to be happy, and that many believe “if only I was popular…” He describes the discussion:

And a lot of the kids can say, I can see that—if only I had more friends—if only I was captain of the football team or the cheerleading squad. Other kids buy into his thought that if only I had things, I’d be happy...According to Aristotle, really true happiness comes from the 3rd path—which is one of virtue. The kids have the same reaction...Darn it! I really thought I’d be happy if I was popular and wealthy.

Clearly, Ben provides numerous opportunities for his students to develop broader perspectives of different people in the world as well as to help students contemplate truths of Biblical teachings about the poor and material possessions. He guides his students, but allows them space, and the experience itself appears to be more powerful than a simple lecture could be. This emphasis in his teaching is directly connected to his experiences in an Eskimo village when he was in college. He witnessed a community that supported one another despite no indoor plumbing, little electricity, and subsistence-type of living, and the impact of these experiences are reflected throughout his social justice curriculum.
Mei, another participant, also infuses teaching about injustice and the poor into many of her U.S. History units. She uses games, simulations, and role playing to help students grasp some of the complex ideas about economic injustice and unfair systems. She describes the simulation:

_We play a game so that they get the idea of the Carnegies and the Rockefellers—how they are making monopolies and the ways they are making monopolies. [Students] are into the game...they are just trying to win the game, and then one of the things they realize is that the game is really unfair. So we talk about the phrase “It’s a dog-eat-dog world”—the idea that that’s just how life is....so then I question that and say, “Is that really true—that that’s how the world works?” (Interview)._

Mei connects this activity with the idea of capitalism. Her premise is that capitalism is actually based on justice, but requires a contract being honored. She tries to get her students to understand that if you don’t honor a contract, you “don’t have any trust in business.” Then she connects that idea to ethics and trust. She provides her students a hands-on learning experience and then facilitates a discussion that allows students to critically think about the situation and help them understand that there are “catalysts of actual injustice of people doing unethical things” during economic down turns. “[Captialism] doesn’t work if the rules are not being enforced” (Interview). So she connects ethics and economic injustice and addresses some of the structural issues involved in the creation of poverty.

In her Industrial Revolution and Progressive Era units, she discusses how people and organizations were developed to address the injustices developed during the Industrial Revolution. Students are given the opportunity to research one organization, like Salvation Army or Red Cross, to see what problems these groups were, and still are, trying to solve. She asks them questions such as “Does that give you a thought about what you’re doing today?” Or she
reminds them that in giving blood—in one hour—you can help three people. “That’s not a bad hour of your day.” She further challenges them, “What are the ways you can help people as a way of life?” She then points out that not everyone has to be a professional lawyer or doctor, and opens the possibility of their future in an organization that truly makes a difference (Interview).

She also designs experiential lessons, such as during the Depression unit. Students are asked to go without certain things such as snacks in between meals or technology for a few days. She not only wants them to consider what it is like to go without, but also to build character in helping students learn how to deal with not having everything they want. “Can you actually find ways to improve your life?” she challenges her students. She hopes they will find some joy in simplicity and discover that relationships might actually be more significant with face-to-face conversation (Interview). Mei herself grew up in a single-parent home, just above the poverty line. She faced at least the possibility of being homeless, so it is no surprise that many of her curriculum units help students understand America’s economic system, the injustices that arise, and the possible solutions to the problems.

Clearly Ben and Mei purposefully guide students to discover truths about poverty, about injustice, and about treating others fairly and compassionately. Marge, a third participant, plans a smaller, but purposeful lesson designed to help facilitate students’ thinking about economics and poverty. Marge incorporates one exercise into her World History class.

_The kids do an exercise on what does the world look like when we shrink it down to one hundred people. It’s basically a percentage and my kids then had to anticipate how many are white? American? How many are Christian? They had a whole list of things. Then we watched a really short video. They learn that 50% of the world is malnourished, and 53% live on less than two dollars a day. And so my kids started having a little bit of conversation about poverty. Eighty_
percent of the world lives in substandard housing. They are shocked at almost every level. The fact that half of the world lives on less money than they spend on their way to school at Starbucks, it’s such a hard thing for them to wrap their brain around (Marge, Interview).

This activity opens the dialogue for Marge’s students to consider what the expectations for Americans and our obligations to the rest of the world should be. Similar to Mei and Ben, she creates an exercise that helps students visualize a reality that they were oblivious to, and through that exposure, broaden their world view a little. But she does not simply state the facts. She gives students an opportunity to consider their existing knowledge and then, when those ideas are contradicted in the video, she asks open-ended questions to help them process their new knowledge. At one point Marge discussed an early trip to Mexico where she witnessed a poverty “that far exceeds that in America,” so it’s not unexpected that she wants her students to understand how extensive poverty is throughout the world.

**The Catalyst Metaphor**

Mark falls under the third teaching and learning metaphor: the catalyst. In catalyst metaphors, according to Badley and Hollabaugh (2012), “teachers are to insert pedagogical grains of sand and thereby irritate their students’ thinking…Teachers in this role consciously weave hard-to-answer questions into the course materials and instructional plans” (p. 62). He asks very difficult questions to his students in hopes that they will question the world in which the comfortable middle-to-upper class life they’ve always known and challenge their existing world views.

Mark, in one of his Bible classes, tries to get his students to understand the concept he labels “gospel” or “kingdom living,” which references Jesus’ challenge to the rich young man to “go and sell all you have and give to the poor” (Interview).
So I try to get them to understand that as a believer, sometimes as a good Christian kid, the mindset that they’ve been trained—maybe their parents haven’t said this, but we want you to go to a good private school, so you can get a good education with a Biblical basis, so that when you try to sign up for college, you get a good college scholarship, so you won’t be in debt and so you can get a good degree so that when you get out of college, you can have a good job, so you can provide for your family, so you can have that nice house and car—just living a nice life—is there anything wrong with that? No, but is that gospel living? Is that really living out what Jesus has called us to do? What is the point of our education? Why do we do this? So [I’m] trying to get them to think bigger picture (Mark, Interview)

Mark wants his students to come to a realization about why they want to get a certain degree or become a doctor to determine if selfish ambition or Christ-centered living is at the heart of their goals. He completely challenges a lot of their, and probably their parents’, tightly-held beliefs in hopes that some students will question their ideas and that their own lives might be transformed in some way. Mark’s own childhood experiences with the poor are quite extensive. His father, a police officer, would often bring home children from a nearby orphanage on many holidays, and Mark himself purposefully bought a family home in a rather poor area of town in order to establish relationships with people there.

All of these activities, lessons, and discussions reveal these participants’ desire to challenge their students to think outside their narrow views and see the world in a different light. They create spaces through different curricular activities because they want their students to live responsibly, humbly, and compassionately just as Jesus Christ modeled throughout his own life. They want students to understand that poverty is often a result of an unjust world. And they want students to recognize that there are historical, sociological, and economic factors continuously at
work in their own lives and in the lives of others. Furthermore, they offer students a look at their future and that instead of pursuing high-paying jobs, they consider meaningful paths they might take to truly make a difference in the world.

Overall, private school educators are interested in issues concerning the poor. Their own personal experiences have influenced the way they plan lessons. They see the importance of broadening their students’ views of the poor and they often challenge their students to question accepted norms in society; however this work is up to the individual teacher’s discretion, and apart from the Catholic school, no evidence of a school-wide implementation of a poverty curriculum was discovered at any of the other schools.
References


The Other Latino/a: Highly Educated, Highly Motivated, and Highly Global

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ACRONYMS
COD: Country of destination.
COO: Country of origin
HEI(s): Highly educated immigrant(s)
HEIW: Highly educated immigrant women
“That’s what makes [America] unique—not how rich it is, they say there are so many opportunities, but the most important opportunity is the opportunity to reinvent yourself” Mikel Murga (Amrhein, Lindquist, Yale-Loehr, & Danielson, 2011, p. 111)

**Background of the Study**

With the goal of eliminating political and commercial barriers between nations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of 1993 between the United States and the European countries created a new global economic system (Crafts, 2004). The economies of developed nations, then, experienced a massive shift from an economic system based on production to a system based on knowledge that required a highly educated labor force to compete in a globalized market. Highly educated labor can be defined as employees with at least a bachelor’s degree who are able to produce new ideas, innovate at faster rates than the competition, take advantage of technological advances, and analyze complex information (Solimano, 2008). However, in the United States, educational attainment rates of the native-born population are generally inadequate to satisfy the demands of labor markets hungry for highly educated workers, especially in industries such as engineering, health care, education, and information technology (National Science Board, 2012). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012) in 2010, 19.6% of the native-born workforce aged 25 years or older had earned a bachelor’s degree, and 10.5% had earned a master’s or doctoral degree. Despite the important role that graduate education plays in the economic and social development of America society, only one quarter of the students who received a bachelor’s degree went on to earn a master’s, doctoral, or professional degree with 10 years after completing their undergraduate program. Enrollment in graduate programs represents only 3% of the student body enrollment at all levels of education (Wendler et al., 2010).
Statement of the Problem

This gap, between educational attainment and economic demand, has been difficult to close (Camarota, 2012; Iredale, 2001; Keeley, 2009). One of the strategies to meet the demands for educated labor, governments and employers have been able to attract foreign human capital through immigration policies. However, not all highly educated immigrants come into the country through policies designed to recruit highly educated labor. Highly educated immigrants (HEIs) also come into the United States using other types of visas, including family reunion, humanitarian (refugee, political asylum), and lottery (Solimano, 2008).

However, there are social structures that make the use of the HEI’s human capital in a foreign country difficult. The difficulties experienced by immigrants striving to achieve economic integration (the ability to achieve economic parity with a native born population with similar characteristics) have been highlighted in several studies. One of the barriers to economic integration consists of holding college and university degrees from institutions outside of the US. (Batalova, Fix, & Creticos, 2008; Docquier, Rapoport, & Salomone, 2006; Faist, Fauser, & Kivisto; 2011; Özden, 2006).

Some studies have showed that the labor market penalizes HEIs because of the lack of educational credentials and professional experience in the country of destination (COD). Highly educated immigrants’ poor language skills, difficulty in adapting to the COD’s culture, and lack of cultural networks are also barriers to integration into the labor market (Al-Haj, 2002; Aydemir & Skuterud, 2005; Bauder, 2003; Ferrer & Riddell, 2008; Liversage, 2009; Reitz, & Brenton, 1994; Salaff & Greve, 2001). However, some studies on HEIs show that this group of immigrants could achieve similar incomes, and in some cases surpass, the economic performance
of the native-born population with similar credentials after ten years of living in the COD (Kaushal, 2011; Tong, 2010).

The literature explaining how HEIs achieve economic integration is not extensive. Some of these studies show that some highly educated immigrants choose to go back to school to change careers, by way of acquiring new credentials, skills, and knowledge. This last option is known as the re-education pathway (Akresh, 2007; Kaushal, 2011; Liversage, 2009; Tong, 2010; Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, & Gonzalez, 2008; Zeng & Xie, 2004; Zikic, Bonache & Cerdin, 2010). However, there is a gap in the literature explaining how the college experiences of those HEIs choosing the re-education pathway have affected their social and economic integration.

Therefore, this study explores how college experiences in an American college or university facilitate or hinder the transfer and gain of different forms of capital among highly educated Latin American immigrants.

**Research Questions**

1. How do highly educated Latin American immigrants gather and transfer different forms of capital while attending an American college or university?
2. How do highly educated Latin American immigrants use their gained capital to integrate themselves socially and economically into American Society

**Method**

This study will interview between six and ten highly educated Latin American immigrants who: (a) have completed a higher education degree in their COOs, (b) have migrated
to the US under any immigration category other than student or scholar, (c) have completed or are in the way to completing a degree in an accredited US college or university, (d) Lives in the state of Florida (e) was born in Colombia.

Information will be collected with two in-depth phenomenological-based interviews

**Outcomes**

This study has several expected outcomes that closely linked together. First, this study will help higher education institutions to understand the challenges that HEIs face in accessing higher education in addition to challenges HEIs face in changing careers as a means of social and economic integration. In addition, this study will help to identify which college experiences (programs, services, and extracurricular activities) are meaningful in helping this group of immigrants transfer their human and cultural capital to their new country. Additionally, knowing the educational needs of this specific group will help higher education institutions to better meet the needs of these immigrants with recruitment strategies, advising services, academic and career services, involvement opportunities, and retention strategies (Gray, Rolph, & Melamid, 1996).

In the case of Latin Americans and Hispanics, the literature shows the importance of parents’ educational level in the degree attainment of children and college students (Cabrera, Nora, & Asker, 2000). Socio-economic mobility of these immigrants would help their children to access better resources to be successful in college, especially in terms of degree attainment. Additionally, the experience of earning a college degree in the COD provides HEIs with the necessary information and experience to help their children make better educational decisions and successfully navigate the higher education system.
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Preparing pre-service teachers to teach English learners (ELs): A phenomenon in teacher education programs

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English Learners (EL) total enrollment in Florida public schools mainstream classrooms has increased from 197,059 in 2003-4 to 251,896 students in 2012-13, showing a cumulative increase of 27.8 percent in ten years (Florida Department of Education, 2013). Percentages of ELs in public schools in the whole U. S. have also risen between 2002-2003 (8.7 percent, an estimated of 4.1 million students) and between 2011-12 (9.1 percent, an estimated of 4.4 million students) (The National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, 2014). More alarming statistical results show that the achievement gap in evaluation between the “Hispanic group” and the “White group” (native English speakers) has not narrowed both in Mathematics and Reading for 4th, 8th, and 12th graders in the whole country since 2009 (The National Assessment of Educational Progress, NAEP, 2014).

Consequently, content area teacher candidates (TC) need to be prepared to face the new challenges that the described situation involves. Teacher education programs, teacher educators and curriculum developers need to face the challenge of preparing future teachers to understand and be able to teach diverse populations in public schools mainstream classrooms (Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; McGraner & Saenz, 2009; Menken, Antunez, Dilworth & Yasin, 2001; Nutta, Mokhtari & Strebel, 2012).

The Consent Decree is the state of Florida's framework for compliance with federal and state laws and jurisprudence regarding the education of ELs. In an effort to comply with the requirements established by the Consent Decree, every teacher candidate attending a teacher education program is required to attend (at least) one course about theory and practice of teaching English Learners (EL) in primary and secondary mainstream classrooms.
Theoretical framework

Phenomenology as a research approach is used to question how we experience the world we live in. In phenomenological research, individuals have the intention to question the secrets that constitute the world and by means of theorizing about it, we completely become a part of this world (Van Manen, 1990). Creswell (2013) focuses on the collective meaning that individuals develop of their common lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon. As explained above, phenomenologists look for the essential, innate meaning of an experience and to reach that objective, researchers recognize a phenomenon, collect data from participants who have experienced the phenomenon and offer an interpretation of the essence of the common experience (Creswell, 2013).

Phenomenology as a research approach has been widely used in the social and health sciences (Creswell, 2013). Dall’Alba (2009) recognizes a renewed interest in phenomenology as a philosophy and research approach among educational researchers, as well as in other areas within the humanities and social sciences. This fact has re-focused attention on old assumptions about our lives in the world and brought new insights into complex phenomena we find ourselves involved in while living in our dynamic and changing present reality. Thus, educational researchers have started to explore their challenging realities at the same time that they have started to design phenomenological studies that address different issues within educational practice and research.

Purpose statement

The purpose of the present study is to understand and describe content area teacher candidates’ experiences while attending a specialized course about English for Speakers of Other
Languages (ESOL) content. The following research questions have been posed to guide the study:

1- What are the experiences with learning strategies necessary to work with English learners (EL) that teacher candidates (TC) from varied education majors or minor programs experience in a theory and practice course (of teaching ELs in primary and secondary mainstream classrooms) while attending a teacher education program?

2- How, if at all, do TCs from different education (majors or minor) programs experience the learning of strategies necessary to work with ELs in a theory and practice course (of teaching ELs in primary and secondary mainstream classrooms) while attending a teacher education program?

**Literature Review**

**Preparing content area teacher candidates: A historical overview**

Teacher education courses geared towards preparing TCs for teaching diverse populations and understanding diversity in schools have received numerous criticisms due to a lack of innovation in the last thirty years (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; McGraner & Saenz, 2009). Some changes had started to be noticed with the inclusion of field experiences intended to develop teacher candidates’ abilities to work with diverse groups in schools and other sites (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; McGraner & Saenz, 2009). However, the literature still shows scarcity of scholarship and research studies dedicated to analyze adequate preparation of content area teacher candidates to work in multicultural mainstream classrooms (Lucas et al., 2008; McGraner & Saenz, 2009; Menken et al., 2001; Nutta et al., 2012). This challenge involves every actor in the educational enterprise beyond teachers and include teacher education
programs, teacher educators and curriculum developers (Lucas et al., 2008; McGraner & Saenz, 2009; Menken et al., 2001; Nutta et al., 2012).

Innovation configurations have been used as professional development guides to improve educational methodologies in the last thirty years. A thorough review of the literature on mainstream teacher education programs designed to develop instructional practices to teach ELs has recognized content areas of innovation which can be used as a guide or tool to evaluate content and quality of teacher education programs. (McGraner & Saenz, 2009). These contents include: (a)- development of effective instructional practices in teacher education, (b)- teaching and learning of specific academic content, (c)- English language development and instruction and (d)- the study of sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts in which ELs are exposed to the teaching and learning process.

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) developed five main standards looking for a more effective pedagogy and instruction that would benefit all students in the classroom, but specially, diverse populations. These standards were issued as ideas for best teaching practices: (a)- teachers and students learn in common productive activities, (b)- language and literacy development across the curriculum, throughout instructional activities, (c)- meaningful lessons design by connecting curriculum to students’ experiences, (d)- teaching higher order thinking, (e)- teaching through instructional conversation (CREDE, http://manoa.hawaii.edu/coe/credenational/, 2014, McGraner & Saenz, 2009).

Following the main topics found in the teacher education literature, as discussed above, some recommendations have been issued as a guide to be applied in teacher education programs to maximize the quality preparation of content area teachers. These recommendations include: (a) the development of content knowledge and EL-specific pedagogy, (b) the development of
knowledge and skill in direct and systematic ELs’ instruction, (c)- the development of knowledge on how to access ELs expertise resources along their professional practice, (d)- the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions required to teach academic content to ELs (Ballantyne, Sanderman & Levy, 2008; McGraner & Saenz, 2009; Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

Researches and authors continue focusing on the need that teachers develop expertise to reach every learner in the classroom, but emphasize the fact that the presence of ELs in mainstream classrooms brings a special dimension to the discussion of teacher education programs. Departing from the previous discussion, these authors add the important element of culture which cannot be disregarded in teacher education programs. De Jong and Harper (2005) and Nutta el all. (2012) explain that TCs need to: (1)- develop linguistic and cultural knowledge that guarantee effective teaching practices, (2)- become sensitive to diversity and to the needs of all students, especially of ELs, (3)- apply both instrumental and cultural knowledge specific to every student’s needs. Nutta el al. (2012) recognize the impossibility of educating content area teachers as English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. However, they enforce the design of improved teacher education programs in which TCs: (1)- develop basic understanding of the nature of language and the processes involved in second language acquisition (SLA), (2)- learn and recognize ELs’ different levels of English language proficiency, (3)- learn, understand and apply strategies to accommodate instruction and assessment according to ELs’ learning needs, (4)- analyze and study discourse characteristics in their own disciplines to better support learners’ needs, but most specifically analyze ELs’ needs, to develop language, literacy and content learning in English. De Jong and Harper (2005), on the other hand recognize three dimensions according to which they describe EL- specific knowledge and skills: (a)- the process of second language acquisition and acculturation, through understanding the similarities and
differences of L1 and L2 literacy development, (b)- awareness development of the role played by language and culture in the teaching and learning process, (c)- the inclusion of linguistic and cultural diversity in order to develop students’ language proficiency by means of content and language integration. With this model the authors try to account for the most important variables that affect ELs’ learning processes, namely linguistic and cultural diversity. The importance of including ELs in educational policy and practice is stressed in order to guarantee their educational success.

**Research on pre-service teachers’ preparation and beliefs of preparedness**

Research studies reviewed for the present discussion have reported on pre- and in-service teachers’ feelings of preparedness to appropriately accommodate content to help ELs develop the English language and academic content proficiency (Coady et al., 2011; Durgunoğlu & Hughes, 2010; Lucas et al., 2008, Nutta et al., 2012, O’Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez, 2008; Polat, 2010; Zeichner, 2011). The following table summarizes these research studies’ main discussion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Study Objectives and Methodology</th>
<th>Results</th>
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| O’Neal, Ringler and Rodriguez (2008)   | 24 subject area teachers from grades K-5; they had received professional development in ESL | -survey -interviews in focus groups | -teachers perceived the lack of importance that teaching ELs had in their teacher education programs  
-75% reported not feeling prepared to teach ELs  
-21% reported certain levels of preparedness due to the in-service professional development received from the school district  
-participants reported not having positive initial experiences with ELs, but they have learnt with practice. |
| **Polat (2010)** | 83 in-service teachers (52 female and 31 male) and 88 pre-service teachers (56 female and 32 male) | -3 stages -analysis of differences between male and female, pre- and in-service teachers’ beliefs, service, gender effects and role of background on beliefs and beliefs about necessary improvements for future pre-service teacher classes. -three questionnaires. -readiness and competencies questionnaire (BRCQ) instrumented to identify participants’ levels of self-competency and readiness to face multicultural classes | -in-service teachers reported higher beliefs about overall self-competency in supporting ELs. -in-service teachers reported more confidence than pre-service teachers about linguistic knowledge and preparation to support ELs’ literacy and academic development in mainstream classes. -pre-service teachers reported higher confidence levels in socio-cultural awareness competency. -neither group felt strongly positive about their overall self-competency in helping ELs in mainstream classes. |
| **Durgunoğlu and Hughes (2010)** | sixty-two pre-service teachers | -two sub-studies: (1)-a survey research to cater for pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy, attitudes and perceived preparation to work with ELs, (2)-an evaluation of participants’ knowledge of ELs in high school classes. -survey questions included five constructs: (1)-self-efficacy to teach ELs, (2)-attitudes towards ELs, (3)-attitudes towards ELs parents, (4)-knowledge perception and (5)-preparation perception | -pre-service teachers reported neutral views on their preparedness and effectiveness to teach ELs. -participants obtained average scores in a knowledge test, which confirms lack of preparedness. -classes observations confirmed lack of preparedness and lack of ability to engage students in activities and class discussions and lack of knowledge of cultural and linguistic differences. |
More research that focuses on the general experiences lived by teacher candidates while attending teacher preparation courses would be necessary. By conducting such research, the readership will obtain a deeper insight into the experiences and learning processes that prepare teacher candidates to face their future work in mainstream content area classes.

**Methodology**

**Participant selection**

Teacher candidates participating in the study attended the same methods course and were exposed to the same kind of contents during the semester, namely instrumental and cultural content to work with ELs in diverse classrooms. They participated in the same kind of field
experiences, and were in the position of building a collective meaning of these common lived experiences together. The study was conducted at the College of Education, at a southeastern research university. The methodology course used as study frame, is divided in 14 sections that contain a maximum of 500 students. These students characteristics are as follows: (1)- attend education major or minor programs, (2)- currently attend sophomore, junior and senior years, (3)- the majority of students attend major or minor programs in Early Childhood Education and English Language Arts. These students stand out because they will attend one more course on ESOL content, (4)- the rest of the students’ programs distribution includes Science Education, Mathematics, Liberal Studies, Music, Physics, Political Science, Psychology and Social Science, (5)- attend an ESOL infused teacher education program.

TCs attending this course constitute a purposeful sample, since they were exposed to the same contents and experiences, they could inform the researcher about their understanding of the problem and central phenomenon of the study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). At the same time, it is a homogenous sampling, since these participants have common attributes and characteristics, namely, they are all teacher candidates in sophomore, junior or senior years, who have attended the same course with exposure to the same contents (Goodson & Sikes, 2001).

**Instruments and data collection procedures**

The researcher selected one section of the course and conducted observations during face to face classes in order to observe the phenomenon occurring in the class. The researcher took the position of a nonparticipant observer, staying outside of the group being studied. A nonparticipant observer, observes and takes notes from a distance, without taking any active participation in any activities going on in the site (Creswell, 2013).
The researcher designed instruments for data collection which include: (a)- two literacy questionnaires devised to elicit participants’ past and present literacy experiences which were administered during the second and last months of classes, and (b)- an interview protocol containing questions to elicit information as regards participants’ experience. The researcher conducted the interviews at different moments during the semester: (1)- the first one occurred around midterm, (2)- the second one near the end of the semester, after TCs have completed their service learning field experiences.

Finally, “end of the semester” reflections and lesson plans, handed in as final evaluation of the content learnt in class and in field experiences, were collected. Other data sources were field notes, instructor’s and researcher’s reflections about the phenomenon and about their own continuous learning processes.

Data analysis

In order to have a better insight into the data and discover its meaning, the researcher conducted a grounded theory analysis through coding. By means of coding researchers can analyze data into sections or categories, at the same time that they offer a summary of the themes contained in each section Charmaz (2001).

The first step followed was line by line coding which consists of naming each line in the transcribed interviews and other written data (Glaser, 1978, Charmaz, 2001). The next step, focused or selective coding, afforded the researcher the opportunity to gather the most significant and frequent initial codes together. By means of this process the researcher was able to synthesize, integrate and organize the codes obtained in the previous stage into different categories (Charmaz, 2001). The next step, called axial coding, guided the researcher to re-
organize data, and make new relationships to categories and subcategories in order to give coherence to the analysis being carried out (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998; Strauss, 1987, Creswell, 1998, Charmaz, 2001). Finally, the last step, theoretical coding, afforded the opportunity to conceptualize substantive codes related to each other as hypotheses that can be integrated into a theory (Glazer, 1978, Charmaz, 2001).

Results and discussion

Results from data analysis include TCs’ reflections about their present position as students, their learning experiences and their projections as future as teachers. As explained before, axial coding guided the researcher to categorize codes related to each other into specific categories and subcategories, thus giving coherence to data analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998; Strauss, 1987, Creswell, 1998, Charmaz, 2001). Codes were categorized in the following four categories: (1) – TCs analyze their learning process, (2)- TCs analyze their process of awareness, (3)- TCs analyze their process of professional career development, (4)- TCs analyze their experience with ESOL content. Each of these categories also include subcategories, which afforded a thorough analysis of TCs’ experiences. The diagrams below show the categories and subcategories including a brief discussion and examples from the data set.

1- TCs reflect upon their learning and educational processes while developing new instrumental and cultural knowledge necessary to work with ELs in mainstream classrooms. Diagram 1 shows categories, sub-categories and examples from data set.
2- TCs analyze their own process of awareness reflecting about themselves and their environment. This process helps them become aware of diversity in the classroom, school and country. Most importantly, they become aware of the needs of others, especially ELs, with whom they will be working in the future. Their new understanding of diversity affords them the opportunity to open their eyes to understanding their own and others identities (especially in the ELs population). They can also recognize ELs’ needs and difficulties with understanding language and content due to their language barrier. While recognizing that they are not prepared to teach the English language professionally, they argue in favor of providing a positive learning atmosphere for ELs. The application of the strategies learnt in
class is important, because TCs understand that every learner deserves the best education possible. Diagram 2 shows categories, sub-categories and examples from data set.

Diagram 2

Teacher candidates analyze their process of awareness

- Recognizing ELs have needs
  “(…) such as adding more visuals and (…), they are such simple and easy fixes to help close this sometimes giant gap that we find with ELs (…)” (Part. 27)

- Finding new knowledge (difficulties ELs have with a new language and content in the new language)
  “(…) (studs) cannot speak English and having to work with them is totally different (…) because that language barrier (…)” (Part. 26)

- Learning to respect ELs struggle and needs
  “(…) to have a great classroom you need to make these students feel comfortable(…)” (Part. 11)

- Analyzing the need to have prepared teachers to teach ELs
  “(…) I would like to do more, just so I can have a good experience for my EL students and have a good education (…)” (Part. 11)

3- TCs also analyze the process of career development within which they start thinking and positioning themselves as teachers. They analyze teachers’ knowledge, practices, attitudes, feelings and believes. TCs’ capacity of positioning themselves as future teachers, from their present situation as students, is encouraged by authorities, coordinators and instructors.

These agents organize field experiences, such as, service learning, in which TCs come into contact with the real situations and face the challenges of being teachers from the first stages of their teaching career. Most importantly, TCs’ argument in favor of the professional development that teachers need, to work effectively with ELs. TCs need to think in
innovative ways, accommodate content and apply strategies to help ELs understand and advance in their learning process. At the same, they recognize the need to create a non-threatening space in which every learner feels welcomed and supported. Diagram 3 shows categories, sub-categories and examples from the data set.

Diagram 3

Teacher candidates analyze the process of professional career development

- Getting specialized certification (ESOL)
  
  “(...)but I am thinking of minoring in ESOL just because I think it will benefit me more to have that extra endorsement on my resume, on my professional documents (...)”(Part.26)

- Analyzing teachers’ knowledge
  
  “(...) I do feel that a future educator pursuing a career in teaching EL students should have a class or two on different cultures to get a base knowledge (...)”(Part.27)

- Analyzing teachers’ practice
  
  “(...) Students want to learn, but teachers just have to change certain things in the assignment that the student can understand in English better (...)”(Part. 11)

- Analyzing teachers’ attitudes, feelings and beliefs
  
  “(...) I think providing for these students you need to have an open mind and meeting their needs (...)”(Part. 11)

4- TCs reflect about their present learning experiences revisiting past experiences as students and/or as member of multicultural families. Professional development and specialized certifications are necessary for their work in the future, while they take their present field experiences in Service Learning very seriously. Service learning becomes fundamental as an authentic path to apply their knowledge to practice and develop interest in further education in ESOL content. Departing from an initial lack of accurate information as regards their
programs of study, they gain knowledge and security. They value the course as a vehicle to secure their preparedness for their future students’ success. Diagram 4 shows categories, sub-categories and examples from the data set.

**Diagram 4**

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Teacher candidates analyze their experience with ESOL content

- Analyzing the experience
  - “(...) just by being able to learn how to communicate, how to work with ELs, is definitely an advantage from this... I think my experience (..) it just has been an enlightening one (..)”(Part. 26)

- Analyzing field experience: Service learning
  - “(...) (service learning), has been a good experience for me, cause, they are students (...) they don’t let the language get in the way of their learning (..)”(Part. 26)

- Interest in further ESOL education
  - “(...) I would like to further my education taking another TSL class to get an endorsement (..)”(Part. 17)
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**Conclusion**

The discussion above shows how TCs revisit their past and present experiences while preparing themselves for their future profession. Their present learning experiences enlighten their process of awareness development. It is relevant that they start developing their own teacher identity parallel to their discovery of others’ identity and the existence of diversity in society. This awareness process is fundamental in TCs’ positionality as future teachers who can be instruments of change in school communities.
Pedagogical implications

Based on the results and discussion of data analysis, some pedagogical implications can be made. Teacher candidates attending methodological courses would benefit from the creation of non-threatening reflective spaces in which TCs can exchange ideas, reflect upon their learning experiences and elaborate actions for future implementation. Classroom practices benefit a lot from the application of dialogic interactions that collaborate to build a sound community of practice, rooted in deep reflection and collaboration with colleagues in the construction of meaning. Thus the creation of communities of practice among TCs, is strongly recommended in order to build up a network that will secure future support and collaboration among colleagues in the field of education. Finally, reflective practices need to be fostered in order to help TCs improve their learning experiences.

Limitations of the study and areas for further research

The main limitation of the present study is related to the participants in the study. They are TCs attending one session in a course about theory and practice of teaching ELs in primary and secondary mainstream classrooms during the Fall semester 2014. Data has been collected by means of instruments created for the purpose of investigating the learning phenomenon in the methods course and have been administered to the students present in the class during face to face meetings.

Areas for further research include, reflexive practices in teacher education courses, dialogic interactions among teachers’ communities and the building of deep rooted teachers’ communities of practice.
References


Not Available
Not Available
I See Myself in This Book!: Understanding the Dialogic Schema Activation Applied by Culturally and Economically Disadvantaged Elementary Students During Read Alouds

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Abstract

Today’s 21st century public school classrooms are microcosmic representations of the larger multicultural population that characterizes much of the United States. As such, these modern classroom environments should reflect the cultural and economic diversity of today’s society by creating environments that enable all of its student members to engage in such learning opportunities that are truly reflective of their unique sociocultural experiences and encourage students to develop an eventual empathetic sense of respect and appreciation for other cultural and economic backgrounds different from their own. The purpose of this study is to examine how students with different cultural backgrounds and low socioeconomic statuses in a Grade 2 elementary public school classroom from a state in the south of the United States reference their cultural lenses and resultant personal experiences as a means by which to interpret and engage in sense-making of traditional African-American children’s literature. The exploratory case study, based largely on Lawrence Sipe’s (1998) analysis of second graders’ talk during storybook read alouds, examined the literary conversations and talk students produced during read alouds and how this talk was conceptualized from within the students’ sociocultural constructs (Bakhtin, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Using both constructivist and sociocultural lenses to filter and code students’ dialogic exchanges during the read alouds, the results implicate the urgent need for public schools to rewrite curriculum to include multiple voices and further suggests that, by so doing, critical thinking and comprehension skills will be significantly facilitated when the literature is closer to a student’s cultural and economic background.
Session Summary

Our discussion focuses on a broader narrative regarding the urgent changes needed in and the access to quality and types of literature that is offered to minority students.

Rationale

The Culturally Responsive Classroom

Today’s classrooms are microcosms of the larger society of the United States: an ocean of individuals representing a plethora of cultures, races, religions, and ethnicities. The classroom community should reflect society’s diversity and allow all its members the opportunity to be respected in their own unique sets of differences, while encouraging them to develop a sense of respect and appreciation for other cultural and ethnic backgrounds different from their own. A high-quality and balanced literature curriculum is vital to creating this reflective classroom community. The responsibility of elementary teachers is to select texts that speak to their students’ cultural heritage and broaden their respect and appreciation of heritages of diverse group (Stallworth, Gibbons, & Fauber, 2006).

Connecting to a Story by Activating Existing Schema

Researchers have found that readers who become personally involved in a story obtain a higher level of understanding than students who read efferently, or primarily to recall, paraphrase, or analyze (Cox & Many, 1992; Rosenblatt, 1976). African-American students, in particular, are sensitive to literature containing “authentic” depictions of their own ethnic group (Brooks, 2006). In order to address comprehension strategies and instructional conversation in the classroom, one must be aware of the changing face of American education. With a steady rise in the number of minority, ELL, and immigrant students, it is important that we deepen our
current understanding of how readers of different ethnicities use culture to interpret literature and respond to “culturally conscious” African-American children’s literature. Brooks’ qualitative research study explored how middle school students read and responded to “culturally conscious” African-American children’s books (2006). Carol D. Lee described students’ cultural data sets as the multiple “texts’ (from written texts to videos to lyrics of spirituals) that students learn to comprehend and interpret as part of their routine, everyday lives; the comprehension and reasoning skills applied to these texts are the same as those required for comprehending texts read in school. Lee referenced the design of a robust learning environment purposed to leverage the knowledge of culturally diverse students the Cultural Modeling Framework. Lee argues that the emerging body of research must move beyond the mismatch problem of language of home/communities and the language of instruction in classrooms to document and develop new ways of proactively leveraging everyday language as a resource for subject-matter specific learning. Based on these models, the focus of this study was to detail the construction of literary meaning of African-American literature through the eyes of its student consumers.

**Reading Aloud**

Reading aloud is an accepted and effective practice in early childhood settings, often taking place several times a day. A daily time during which teachers routinely read aloud with students is standard in most elementary classrooms today. This is a time during which students may share a variety of literary experiences by discussing different texts. Research has shown that reading aloud children’s literature facilitates literacy development in young children and promotes a love for books and reading (Galda & Cullinan, 2003). Many children begin to learn to read through their responses to stories and books read aloud, and develop preferences for particular genres.
There are a number of young children’s literature books that are entertaining, fit the curriculum, and teach social justice and compassion. Often times, however, there is a disconnect between the literature chosen and the cultural backgrounds of the students being read to. It is important to consider both the author’s representation of reality and those assigned to the text by the teacher while reading (Shannon, 2002). Teachers assign value to books simply by the choices of literary pieces they share with students. There is an element of personal judgment that accompanies book selection by educators. That judgment determines the messages expressed to the listeners—messages that are influenced by our beliefs. Our beliefs are, in turn, influenced by our “cultural, economic, social, and political diversity” (Shannon, 2002). Knowing this, reflective professionals are conscious of how our decisions in text selection are impacted by our personal beliefs.

It is important to foster positive self-identities and accurate perceptions of the world. Choosing to include culturally authentic books as part of read alouds is one way to approach this task. Young children see themselves as the center of the world and desire to see themselves in the stories they read (McGlinn, 2001). It is critical for educators to be aware of the personal biases and to consider children’s cultures when selecting books to read aloud. Making the task of selecting appropriate texts more difficult is the fact that books about people of color made up less than 10 percent of the new books published in 2004, a percentage that has remained steady over the past several years (Horning et al, 2005). Only about four percent of the books were actually written or illustrated by people of color, and many cultures “are all but invisible in contemporary literature for children” (Horning et al, 2005). The growing diversity of the U.S. population dictates that culture is an increasingly complex mixture of ethnicity, family structure, socioeconomic status, values, and beliefs. Teachers’ messages promoted through the books they
choose to read aloud to students should reflect their respect and acknowledgement of diverse cultures. America is diverse. Classrooms are diverse. The books teachers choose should be too.

The problems of literacy education for African-American children have eluded meaningful improvement in the past 25 years, despite widespread efforts and numerous studies. Comparative studies, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2011) show only miniscule increases in test scores but substantial differentials between the performance of African-American youth and white youth. Literacy education and opportunity persist elusive commodities in disproportionately high numbers of children and youth of African ancestry. Several explanations have been suggested for the educational disparities between the performance of minorities and the majority culture. Some theorists have insisted that the problems derive from a genetic deficit, concluding that minorities do not have the necessary genetic capability or “intelligence” required for qualitative educational performance (Jensen, 1969). Inadequate home environments and early socialization have been attributed to the low performance of minority children on standardized indicators of school success (Ramey & Suarez, 1985). According to class analysts, the lower socioeconomic status of minority groups is responsible for their lack of educational parity (Bond, 1981).

**Context of the Study**

For this study, a rural Grade 2 classroom in a Title I public elementary school in a state in the south of the United States was selected in which to examine the dialogic engagement of students using traditional African-American children’s literature during whole-class picture book read alouds. A “Title I” school is defined as having a student population with a large population of students (typically over 40%) identifying as having low socioeconomic status (SES). The
overall population of this school is 416 students with 75% identified as having low SES. The classroom teacher is an African-American female with seven years teaching experience. The classroom consists of 13 students, eight Whites and five African-Americans, reading at different levels as determined by classroom-based and state reading assessments. For the read-alouds, three African-American picture books for the sessions were selected for the study. These include: (1) *Meet Danitra Brown* by Nikki Grimes; (2) *Uptown* by Bryan Collier; and (3) *Precious and the Boo Hag* by Patricia McKissack.

**Aim/Objectives**

**Problem**

While there has been an abundance of literature relating the importance of phonological awareness and phonics in the primary grades for textual sense making, there is the more recent suggestion among theorists that even the youngest readers need opportunities to be “code breakers, meaning makers, text users, and text critics” (Muspratt, Luke, & Freebody, 1997). There is far less research available on how young children comprehend or use texts to acquire new knowledge and critique the world around them based on their prior knowledge and experiences. The problem examined in this study is how students activate prior cultural schema during collaborative read aloud dialogue with classmates and the teacher to make sense of and extrapolate meaning from the selected text.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to detail the construction of literary meaning of African-American literature by elementary students. The conceptual framework was constructivist in nature, with some race and culture theory fundamentals. The ontological perspective of this study suggests that no ultimate truth exists and that individual truth is socially constructed by the students (Freire, 1972). The epistemological perspective suggest that reality exists thorough our personal and cultural backgrounds (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, students were given the freedom to interpret texts based on their own sociocultural lenses. The axiological perspective values the bias of the researcher’s historically or culturally sensitized reality. It was important for us to acknowledge that as an African-American female and Caucasian female, there were certain cultural biases with which we entered the research study. From a rhetorical perspective, it was important for us, as researchers, to tell the story exactly as it occurred. We transcribed the students’ talk accordingly - exactly as it occurred. In addition, samples of students’ writing were used for analysis as well.

Research Questions

The construct of this study is framed around the following three qualitative research questions:

1. How do students construct literary understanding in oral response to African-American themed picture book read alouds?
2. Does the specific use of African-American literature during read alouds allow students to activate existing cultural schema as a means by which to extrapolate meaning from the text?

3. What types of dialogic engagements are revealed as students respond to texts with African-American cultural themes?

Methods

Participants

The participants for this study included one female African-American teacher and 13 students in her Grade 2 class which included 5 African-American students and 8 White, non-Hispanic students. Of the students, all 5 African-American students and 3 of the White students were identified as low SES. The remaining 5 White students were identified as mid-upper SES.

Data Sources

Data for this study were gathered during the daily whole-class read-aloud sessions. Each session lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and varied according the length of the text and richness of student dialogue as they interacted with the text. The dialogues among the students and between the students and teacher were recorded and transcribed for later thematic coding.
Data Analysis

Using the qualitative technique ascribed by the Constant-Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the transcripted conversations were examined for common themes which were later reduced and coded and organized into the following emergent categories:  (1) Analytic Responses interpreting text and illustrations; (2) Intertextual Responses connecting the text to other stories and/or media; (3) Personal Responses connecting the text to self; (4) Transparent Responses merging the real world to the secondary literary world and; (5) Performative Responses where students manipulate the text for creative purposes.

Trustworthiness of the Data

The reliability and validity of the data were addressed during the data analysis stage. The primary issues in terms of trustworthiness were identified as the following: (1) The teacher’s cultural biases in selecting the texts; (2) The teacher’s personal intonations when reading the texts and how those may affect the students’ responses and; (3) The teacher’s misinterpretation of certain cultural references made by students during the read alouds potentially preventing authentic student engagement.

Results

Analytical responses interpreted the text and illustrations in the manner of New Criticism (Ransom, 1941) by engaging in a close reading of the text, addressing the traditional elements of narrative (plot, setting, characters, and theme) and narrative techniques such as foreshadowing. Children also discussed illustration media and sequence, conventional visual semiotic codes
(such as the semiotic significance of color), and the relationship of text and pictures. Students would engage in the texts I read by making references to visual clues, both textual and pictorial:

*Uptown is a row of brownstones.*

*I like the way they come together when you look at them down the block. They look like they’re made of chocolate.*

S2: They do.

S3: I wanna eat it.

S1: I’m gonna eat this page.

S1: I see a real life picture.

S3: I see two of them. And I see some real flowers.

S1: He’s combining so much!

*Intertextual* responses connected the text being read aloud to other stories, the work of other illustrators and artists, television shows, movies, and other cultural products. The children interpreted and placed texts in the literary matrix they were constructing, showing an awareness that stories lean on other stories (Yolen, 1981). The students who participated in my study made a number of text-to-text connections in both conversation and writing about the read alouds. The following is an example of a student’s writing sample:

*One of the symbols on the front of the book remind of A letter to Amy, and when the boy was playing basketball it remind me of Jamacia Tag-Along.*
Yet another example of textual connections can be found in the following excerpt from one read aloud:

Teacher: What do you think the Ruckers is?

S1: A basketball team.

S4: It reminds me of the story *Jamaica Tag Along* when the girl went to play basketball and she tagged along.

S3: And this sign right here with the leaf on it reminds me of the flag of Canada.

*Personal* responses connected the text to themselves by finding points of similarity between their experiences and the experiences of characters in the story, making life-to-text and text-to-life connections (Cochran-Smith, 1984), and by commenting on what they would do if they were a certain character. Many examples of text-to-self connections emerged as students discussed and wrote about the read aloud texts.

Teacher: What does it mean to be the lady of the house?

S1: Take care of it.

S4: Take care of your mother.

S3: Maybe you can take out the trash. Cause every Tuesday I be having to do that.

S4: Clean your yard.

S3: I don’t have no rake at home.

The following is a second example of text-to-self connections:
S3: They have apartments. Me and Mrs. Moore live in Phenix City.

S4: I live in Seale.

S1: Barbershops.

S3: That’s how I got waves in my head.

Teacher: Did this book remind you of your own family?

S1: Yeah. The place with the photographs. There’s lots of black and white pictures at my house, of my dad’s parents.

S3: Well about the grandparent’s wedding? There’s a big photo album of my mom and my dad’s wedding. June 19th, 1999!

S1: The year before I was born!

All: Me too!

S4: The picture when they was at church. Cause we go to church on Sunday.

Transparent responses suggested that the children were so engaged in the lived-through aesthetic experience of the story (Rosenblatt, 1978) that, momentarily, their world and the secondary world (Benton, 1992) of the story had merged with and become transparent to each other. Children may display this type of engagement through silence, in which the responses are so limited or so inadvertent as children spontaneously talk back or become one with the story. Although these responses were fewer in number than others, there were a couple of instances in which the students engaged personally with the story world.

Uptown is chicken and waffles served around the clock.
At first it seems like a weird combination, but it works.

S3: Hmmm! I love waffles.

S1: I’m thinking about pizza. It looks like pizza.

Performative responses manipulated the text, utilizing it as a pretext (O’Neill, 1995) for the children’s own creative purposes, in a playful (and sometimes subversive) carnivalesque romp (Bakhtin, 1984). Like little deconstructionists, the children regarded the text as their playground, as an anarchic array of signifiers with potentially infinite meanings, and over which they exercised complete control. Sometimes, the students would become so engaged in the story that they were able to humor the other students with their clever comments or comical gestures:

Uptown is a row of brownstones.

I like the way they come together when you look at them down the block. They look like they’re made of chocolate.

S2: They do.

S3: I wanna eat it.

S1: I’m gonna eat this page.

Taken together, these five categories describe what Sipe (1998) found constituted literary understanding for a group of children: what their interpretive community (Fish, 1980) valorized as appropriate ways of responding to picture storybooks. The children (a) engaged in textual and visual analysis, (b) formed links with other texts, (c) connected the text with their own lives, (d)
momentarily entered the story world, and (e) playfully manipulated or subverted the story for their own creative purposes.

Conclusions

The potential of this study lies in its ability to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge about the connections associated with culture, language, and literacy and the actual collaborative dialogic practice in elementary classrooms among students from historically diverse communities. This study recognizes the urgent need to rewrite existing curricula to include more diverse literature to encourage deeper cultural conversation and meaning among students.

One of the most effective tools that any government can use in the suppression of its citizenry is the control of access to educational opportunity. There is nothing more threatening to a group in power than an educated populace. There are significant examples that permeate our world history dating as far back as the pharaohs. However, we do not have to travel very far in our own national history to find prime examples of how local and state governments have manipulated our public schools through the judiciary vehicle for overt political purposes in a concentrated effort to marginalize a specific population. For the United States, this marginalization is particularly noted in the southern states whose rich and soulful traditions are still clouded by their long time struggles with racial oppression among historically black communities.

In the wake of recent events in Sanford, Florida and Ferguson, Missouri, there is no more critical time to engage in a national dialogue about the relationship that our black youth have to different authoritative systems, including public education. These tragic events are really the
symptom of a larger underlying problem that must be placed at the forefront of our national conversation about the current state and future prospects of our young black student population. Before we can provide a treatment for these emergent symptoms, we must address the underlying malady that is the root cause of these outbreaks. For any nation, the education of the citizenry is a powerfully equalizing force. The persistent marginalization through lack of consistent educational opportunities in any society can only have one outcome, and we are witnessing the results of these exclusions play out in the streets of our historically black communities. Here, we must refocus our discourse with a tremendous sense of urgency to address the critical need of providing the essential educational opportunities for our young, black students in order to help mitigate future Sanfords and Fergusons.
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The Nutrition in a Knapsack (NIK) Program
A Component of CROS Ministries Community Food Pantry Program Excerpts from the
Final Evaluation Report at Pine Grove Elementary School, Fall 2014 Full report
available upon request from jgoode@crosministries.org

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The Nutrition in a Knapsack (NIK) Program

PURPOSE

In an effort to combat child hunger in Palm Beach County, CROS (Christians Reading Out to Society) Ministries launched the Nutrition in a Knapsack (NIK) program, a component of their Community Food Pantry Programs, in January, 2013. The purpose of the NIK program is to address chronic hunger among elementary-aged children in public schools. NIK works with select Title I schools, where at least 40% of students are from families with low incomes, to provide food for children identified as being chronically hungry or suffering from food insecurity. During the school year, NIK provides enough child-friendly, nutritious, shelf-stable food items to sustain these children over the weekend when they are unable to receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch at their school. Each “knapsack” includes foods such as cereal, oatmeal, mac-n-cheese, ready-made tuna or chicken salad packs, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, pudding, fresh fruit, granola bars, fruit juices, and milk.

HOW NIK WORKS

Paid and volunteer staff work together to implement and manage the Nutrition in a Knapsack program. A NIK Program Assistant helped to manage the NIK program evaluation; her primary responsibility was to organize and execute the different meetings with the program evaluator, the Community Outreach Coordinator, teachers, parents and children. Volunteers mainly carry out the different phases of the program, including packing, delivering food to the school, and tracking volunteer hours and students’ attendance. Currently, 34 volunteers work with the NIK program at Pine Grove.

Food is ordered from an approved list of healthy items and delivered to the different packing locations, where volunteers sort and stack the amount of items needed each week.
On Thursdays, a group of volunteers (usually around 6 people) from churches, women's clubs, or schools gather at various locations to pack food items into plastic bags and store them in designated bins. Each student receives one plastic bag (knapsack) with enough items to have breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks on Saturday and Sunday.

On Friday morning, the bins are picked up by three volunteers and delivered to the school. There, volunteers transport the bins to each classroom, where NIK children receive their bags of food. Once distributed, the volunteers return the bins to the warehouse. This cycle continues each week throughout the school year; adjustments are made when a school holiday falls on Friday.

NIK AT PINE GROVE ELEMENTARY

Currently, 150 students participate in the NIK program at Pine Grove Elementary. As children are removed from the program for various reasons, such as withdrawing from the school, other children on a waiting list are added. Through careful monitoring of enrollment and attendance, the NIK Volunteer Coordinator at Pine Grove is able to ensure that the program is serving as many students as possible up to the 150 participant limit. It goes without saying that this level of tracking takes time and effort, but is essential to ensuring that NIK serves as many children as possible.

During September, October, and November, 1609 knapsacks were distributed to approximately 150 students. Although the number of knapsacks distributed is effected by the number of weeks each month the students are actually in school, the average number of knapsacks distributed each month is 513. Teachers estimate that more than 350 Pine Grove students are in need of the NIK program, but due to funding limitations, only 150 of the most needy are served.

Review of the Literature

THE "HIDDEN TRAGEDY" OF FOOD INSECURITY

There is a critical problem facing American children, and it is the "hidden tragedy" called food insecurity (Center on Hunger and Poverty, 2002, p. 2). Food insecurity is defined as a lack of
access to food for financial reasons (Kirkpatrick, McIntyre, & Potestio, 2010) and affects 13 million children in the United States. Fifteen percent of American families in 2008 reported some compromise with amount and quality of food consumed, and forty percent of low-income children live in homes that do not have access to nutritionally adequate diets. The majority of hungry children in America are White with one working parent; yet the tragedy affects 30% of Black and Hispanic children. Half of all children enduring food insecurity live in two-parent households (Center on Hunger and Poverty, 2002). One in four children in Palm Beach County live in poverty, where there has been an 83% increase in homelessness in school-aged children (Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap, 2014). The stress associated with food insecurity causes both physiological and psychological problems that interfere with children's ability to learn (Park, 2010).

A 10-year study conducted by Kirkpatrick et al. (2010) found that children who went hungry at least once in their lives were two and a half times more likely to have poor overall health 10-15 years later. For reasons still unknown, girls and younger children suffer more long-term effects than boys and older children. Food insecurity leads to increased stress, negative general effects on health, and increased risk of chronic diseases, including asthma. Food insecurity is not associated with body weight or obesity; rather, it is poor nutrition that causes these problems (Kirkpatrick et al., 2010). Research on child hunger resulting from food insecurity shows a direct link between inadequate food and poor developmental outcomes (Center on Hunger and Poverty, 2002). Table 1 summarizes the consequences of hunger and food insecurity for children based on a review of multiple scientific studies.

A study of African American children whose families received food stamps found that food intake declined toward the end of the month when food stamps ran out. The resulting poor nutritional intake increased children’s risk of school failure. As diets worsened over the course of a month, task performance likewise showed deterioration. The study concluded that because this pattern has the potential to repeat itself month after month, it is important to ensure that children
have access to food and nutrition on a constant and consistent basis (Worobey, Worobey, Johnson, & Hamm, 2001).

In his review of the literature, Taras (2005) analyzed studies of food insufficiency in the U.S. and found that food insufficiency results in decreased cognitive functioning, decreased school attendance, and diminished academic achievement.

**Table 1: Consequences of hunger and food insecurity for children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Psychosocial and Behavioral</th>
<th>Learning and Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorer overall health</td>
<td>Poor mental health</td>
<td>Higher rates of school failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent doctor visits</td>
<td>Withdrawn or socially disruptive</td>
<td>Impedes cognitive development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick more often: sore throats,</td>
<td>Greater rates of behavioral disorders</td>
<td>Lower test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colds, stomach aches, headaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to have ear infections</td>
<td>Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>Poorer overall academic achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher rates of iron deficiency,</td>
<td>Depression, Fatigue, Irritability</td>
<td>Repeating a grade in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anemia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalized more frequently</td>
<td>Higher rates of suicide in 15-16 year olds</td>
<td>Increased school absences, tardiness, and school suspension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Adapted from Center on Hunger and Poverty, 2002, p. 6.*

Weissbourd (2008) included child hunger in his list of "quiet" troubles of low-income children. When children are not loud, aggressive, or violent, their troubles associated with living in poverty are frequently overlooked. Health, emotional, academic, and social problems may not be easily discernible in these quiet children, yet they can still negatively affect a student's academic ability. Hunger, dehydration, asthma, depression, anxiety, and fear of utter destitution all affect a child's ability to learn and concentrate. Parents living in poverty often experience the same symptoms, which makes them less able to attend to the physical, emotional, educational, and social needs of
their children. Weissbourd noted that schools often create partnerships with public health and community-based organizations in order to better meet the needs of children who may otherwise slip under the radar. This study recommended programs to increase parental engagement and awareness to support children who are suffering, but whose troubles may be more difficult to discern.

Methodology

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine if and how the NIK program had direct and indirect positive effects on the children and families who participated in the NIK program at Pine Grove Elementary School. For purposes of this evaluation, positive effects were defined according to the research literature as decreased stress due to food insecurity and improved relationships, health, attendance, and behavior.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions addressed by this evaluation were:

1) How does the Nutrition in a Knapsack (NIK) program effect the lives of participating children?

2) How does the Nutrition in a Knapsack (NIK) program effect the families of children who participate in the NIK program?

DATA COLLECTION

Questions on the survey and focus group protocols were developed after reviewing the literature on food insecurity and child hunger. Efforts were made to determine if the NIK program was helping to alleviate the negative effects of food insecurity identified in the research as well as if the program was improving the lives of the participating families. Data collection occurred in three phases.
Phase 1: Focus Group Conversations.

The program evaluator facilitated and audio-recorded focus group conversations with a total of 17 teachers who came in three groups during their regular lunch periods. The evaluator then transcribed the audio-recorded conversations for analysis.

Phase 2: Parent and Children’s Survey Administration.

After receiving a brief training from the program evaluator, bi-lingual volunteers administered the parent survey to parents grouped at tables according to their native language or the language they preferred. The volunteers read the survey out loud to each group in the designated language to assist parents with low literacy levels and to increase response rates. Parents were asked to circle those responses that most closely represented how they felt. Survey administrators provided writing assistance to parents who needed help responding to open-ended questions.

Three Pine Grove teachers administered the children’s survey. The children were separated into three classrooms based on the recommendation of the Community Outreach Specialist: (a) children in grades 1-2, (b) children in grade 3, and (c) children in grades 4-5. Teachers and children were accompanied by at least one CROS or FAU volunteer who provided one-on-one assistance and also guided the fun activities provided for the children after they completed the survey.

Phase 3: Children’s Survey Administration.

NIK children in the after-school program were invited to a separate area and seated in two groups: children in grades 1-3 and children in grades 4-5. The NIK Program Assistant read the survey out loud to one group at a time while the program evaluator assisted the children.

Data Analysis: See full report Discussion & Recommendations

POSITIVE IMPACTS ON STUDENTS

Based on the findings of this program evaluation, we report that the NIK program does have a positive impact on the lives of children who participate in the program. We cannot, however, answer research question two (How does the NIK Program effect the families of children who participate in the NIK program?) due to the low numbers of parents who completed the survey.
Students reported that the food helped sustain them through the weekends, and teachers saw more energetic, focused students on Mondays. Additionally, teachers have noticed that some students are “filling out” and looking better. Teachers, parents, and students report that students appear to be in good health. Finally, students feel very cared about, and are extending that caring and altruism to others in the program. The NIK program appears to be decreasing stress about food in the home, is helping students to stay healthy, is playing a part in students’ ability to focus on academic tasks, and is promoting pro-social and caring behaviors among the students in the program and then with the adults who care for them. That said, results of a statistical test revealed that there was disagreement as to whether the amount of food provided was sufficient, and parent and teacher comments support this finding. This warrants further exploration and consideration.

**Recommendations:**

*Increase funding and expand program.*

Based on the positive effects of the NIK program, additional funding should be secured so that all students in need are able to receive the knapsacks of food. Many of the teachers expressed a desire to see the program expanded to include all students at Pine Grove who are in need. It is likely that program growth and expansion will require additional paid and volunteer staff support, and these costs should be calculated when seeking additional financial support for the program.

*Determine if more food is needed in the knapsack.*

Interview data call attention to the kind and amount of food some children have available to them in their homes. Survey findings raise the question as to whether or not the food provided in the knapsack is enough. We recommend that CROS Ministries dig deeper into determining if more food is needed in the knapsacks. At the same time, we recognize that this program is a stop-gap solution and does not address the larger problems of poverty and food scarcity. Families should be continually reminded about and encouraged to supplement the NIK food by using other food programs in the area, including the following CROS Programs: Community Food Pantries, the
Caring Kitchen, and the free bag lunches available at Cason United Methodist Church on Saturday mornings.

**SCHOOL SUPPORT**

Much of the success of the NIK program at Pine Grove Elementary School hinges on the extraordinary people who both work and volunteer at the school. Pine Grove has high levels of support from administration, faculty and staff. Such caring is vital for students living in poverty, especially minority students (Day-Vines & Terriquez, 2008; Tosolt, 2010), and it was clear in both teacher and student responses that students feel cared about, and even special, by participating in the NIK program. The value of this bond cannot be underestimated or downplayed, as it has an impact on academic performance, attachment to school, attachment to adults in the school, and pro-social bonding. The stories told by the teachers are evidence that this is happening at Pine Grove, and that the NIK program is one element that promotes and encourages pro-social behavior and caring.

**Administrators.**

The administration at Pine Grove gives full support to the NIK program. From the beginning, the Principal was very supportive, saying they would help in any way. When asked if teachers who assisted with the program evaluation could be given comp time for their efforts, the Assistant Principal did not hesitate to say yes. This AP was also present at other NIK events, and clearly understood the benefits of working so closely with community-based organizations such as CROS Ministries.

**Community Outreach Coordinator.**

The Community Outreach Coordinator is pivotal in determining who participates in NIK, but not every school will have a dedicated professional who advocates so passionately for the children. Additionally, while the work of the Community Outreach Coordinator is commendable, the sustainability of the NIK program comes into question should this person leave or retire from this position.
Teachers.

Teachers who buy into the program play an important role in identifying participants. Teachers are the ones who know their students’ needs more than anyone; they identify potential participants; they send the permission form home to parents who don’t always respond. “Parent involvement is not a huge thing here.” This is true of many Title I schools, and often teachers carry extra responsibilities in making sure students receive the education and services they need and deserve. Many teachers at Pine Grove buy into the NIK program and put in extra effort to talk to parents and make sure children who need food get it.

Recommendations:

Assess buy-in from teachers, administration, and support personnel.

Teacher and administration buy-in greatly contributes to the success of the NIK program, and is something that must be built and cultivated at other schools if the program is to expand. It is vital to fully understand the structure and personnel involved at each school, as it is likely that context does matter and that these factors can play an integral role in the success of the NIK program. Not every school may experience the levels of support and care found at Pine Grove, and buy-in should be carefully assessed before expanding the program to future sites. Presenting all aspects of the program first to administration and then to faculty will allow CROS program managers to assess the level of buy-in. This includes discussing the amount of time teachers will need to spend following up with parents so that permission forms are signed and returned. It is vital to secure teacher and principal cooperation prior to starting a program at another school.

Establish clear eligibility criteria.

CROS should consider how it can educate school staff about the consequences of food insecurity and child hunger. It is possible that clearer criteria could be developed to determine level of need, especially if only those most in need can participate in the NIK Program. It is important to ensure that priority for resource allocation be given to students who need it most by accurately identifying them and assessing their need for food.
CROS STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

The initial grant funding from Quantum Foundation enabled CROS Ministries to hire a NIK Program Assistant for 15 hours a week during the course of this evaluation. She also had responsibilities for administering the NIK program at Jupiter Elementary, which was not included in this evaluation. Thus, the NIK program is currently successful with only minimal professional support from CROS staff due to the efforts of volunteers who manage the day-to-day operations. The fact that so much of the program is reliant upon volunteers is commendable and reflects well upon CROS Ministries’ ability to recruit, train, and retain such a dedicated volunteer force. For example, a highly competent and dedicated volunteer is on site regularly at Pine Grove to administer the program and work with the teachers and children. However, to ensure program sustainability and growth, it is important to invest in part-time or full-time staff to manage the current program and any forthcoming expansion.

**Recommendation:**

*Increase level of professional support.*

A dedicated staff person is needed for a minimum of 15 hours a week to manage the NIK program in its current state. This position may need to evolve into full-time depending on the growth of the NIK program. Program growth will be reliant upon adequate professional staff support and sustainable funding.

**Recommendation:**

*Recruit highly skilled volunteers.*

CROS should continually recruit and train high-caliber volunteers with the skills and abilities necessary to oversee and manage a program of this nature so that there is no interruption in service should one or more volunteers choose to no longer participate. These volunteers should ultimately be responsible to the dedicated CROS Ministries staff person described above.
References


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Context of the Study

In Central Florida, one in four children face food insecurity (Second Harvest, 2013). Within miles of the world famous Disney World and our educational institution, the University of Central Florida, there is a community known as Mercy Drive. Mercy Drive is commonly known as a food desert (USDA, 2015), meaning access to fresh fruits and vegetables are limited or not readily available in the immediate geographical location (maps.google.com).

Crime, poverty, homelessness, and boarded up housing are characteristics of the Mercy Drive community. The demographics in the area indicate a large population of single parent households, a reliance on public transportation, and a predominance of low income households (City-data, 2013). The students that we worked with during our project reflected the demographics of Mercy Drive.

Setting and Participants

The program took place at the Bridge to Independence School in Pine Hills – Orlando, Florida. The school is located in the midst of an urban food desert. There is a convenience store in that area that mainly sells beer, wine, milk, boxed food, and lottery tickets. Almost all of the student participants lived within a two mile radius of the school.

The school did not have a formal curriculum for health, diet, and nutrition. Additionally, the physical education teacher admittedly did not integrate health, diet, and nutrition during instruction. During the two month study, students participated in a 40 minute Junior Chef intervention once per week as a part of their health and physical education class. The Junior Chef curriculum focused on introducing students to new foods, child friendly food preparation techniques, and nutrition knowledge. Students were taught to identify proteins, carbohydrates, fiber, and fats (both good and bad) and the sources of these categories of food.
**Aim and Objectives**

The intent of the proposal includes providing educational perspectives of teaching nutrition with underserved populations of learners. The problem: Typically, those in a high poverty and low socioeconomic areas face food insecurity and in turn do not always consume healthy and nutritious foods (Pfingst, 2010; Robaina & Martin, 2013). The result of not eating and living a healthy diet can increase the risk of long-term chronic illnesses including but not limited to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Research supports the need for nutrition learning among children. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the *National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy* identified the need to “support[ing] lifelong learning and skills to promote good health” (p. 16).

The Sustainable Eating Project (Tony Jennings Exceptional Education Institute at the University of Central Florida) researched the instruction of healthy eating among 4th and 5th grade students, in one of the poorest areas of Central Florida. Students were educated on topics such as good fats vs bad fats, protein sources, carbohydrate sources (good vs better), and cooking and preparation techniques, and introduced to new foods in the context of the Junior Chef program. According to Li Chiu (2012) research children’s cooking confidence increased and food choices became healthier as they learned to cook.

The purpose of the study was to seek solutions that would enhance knowledge and change eating behaviors of underserved students. Our research questions were:

Question 1: Does the completion of the *Junior Chef* program influence food and diet knowledge?

Question 2: How does the completion of the *Junior Chef* Program influence healthy eating behaviors?
Method(s)

Qualitative findings of a mixed-method study obtained through surveys, interviews, video observations, will be presented as they relate to poverty. Further the presentation will include field notes from the researchers related to implementing in an underserved population will be shared. All students in grades four and five were included in the study. There were no exclusions among the population. However, not every student completed every instrument connected to the program.

Outcomes

A sampling of the outcomes as they directly relate to poverty are indicated below. It is our intent to present these and other outcomes.

Children: Most students were excited to discover what foods they would be eating during the lessons. Some of this excitement was due to the chronic scarcity of food sources at home and in their daily lives, and other students were adventurous and tried foods that they may not have been exposed to before. Some foods often considered common, the underserved students deemed foreign (e.g. blueberry, fresh corn versus canned corn, olives, and fresh versus processed foods).

Communication: Getting families to trust and communicate with the researchers was difficult. Some families did not want their children participating from the onset of the study out of fear or lack of understanding.

There were some encouraging perceptions as well as the struggles. Problems with poor behavior, chronic absenteeism, and tardiness prevented some students from completing all instruments and instructions. Although the children appreciated some of the new food knowledge, some expressed familial hesitancy to adopting new found food knowledge. In turn, the children
were skeptical in the following weeks to accept or try new foods or ideas out of fear of disloyalty to their family and friends.

**Conclusion**

Findings indicated, many students understood healthy eating and its role in healthy living but changes were not always supported at home due to lack of economic resources. One other deterrent for improving healthy eating habits related to living in a food desert and the lack of accessibility to fresh produce and better quality foods. It was more cost effective and attainable to purchase unhealthy foods.

Because of the lack of familial support, future research could include family participation in nutrition education, finding ways to increase access to fresh produce and better quality foods in the local community. Some suggestions include developing and researching the effectiveness of family gardening classes or implementing public transportation trips to accessible fresh food sources. Finally, more research is required to understand the effectiveness of other programs and strategies for improving healthy eating habits in underserved populations living in food deserts.
References


International Perspectives of Women in Technology

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Context

Access and opportunity are often lacking for women entering technology fields on the grounds of gender bias. A review of women in computing over a 40 year time period (1966 – 2006) indicated that enrollment of women in computing careers has held a steady decline for the last 20 years. A decline so drastic that if continued, it has been projected that there will not be any female college graduates in computer science by 2032 (Misa, 2011). Furthering the issue, women working in the computer science fields for over 10 years have been leaving the profession. The combination of women no longer entering the field and women leaving has reshaped the contributions of women in computer sciences. “No other professional field has ever experienced such a decline in the proportion of women in its ranks” (Misa, 2011, p. 5). Some researchers hypothesize “the educational and workforce tail-offs together actually reflect some broader, as-yet-unrecognized social or cultural shift” (p. 6).

In addition to the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields struggling to retain and recruit women, research from the human resource field \(N = 2,493\) on science, technology and engineering (STE) (Servon & Visser, 2011) indicates that cultural practices in STE careers are unsupportive of women at the managerial level. Reports indicate high numbers of participants identifying their work places as “predatory” and “demeaning” (p. 276). When asked about types of behaviors experienced in their fields, women reported occurrences of sexual harassment (64%), beliefs that women are viewed as less capable than men (27%), felt there was a perceived bias in performance evaluation (46%), and reported unwanted attention from men based on feminine appearance (Servon & Visser, 2011). Furthermore, analysis of large U.S. based corporations with international influences were reviewed in terms of gender representation for women engineers as shown in Table 1. The data showcases the disproportionate ratio of women in technological corporations (Chou, 2014; Perry, Aug. 2014; Perry, Oct. 2014).
Table 1.  
*Percentage of Women and Men Engineers in Technology by Company*

<table>
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<th>Company</th>
<th>Percentage of Women in Computer Software</th>
<th>Percentage of Men in Computer Engineering Workforce</th>
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</table>

*Note.* Data Sources: Chou, 2014; Perry, Aug. 2014; Perry, Oct. 2014;

Some women have indicated that they did not enter technology fields because the subject was boring or lacked relevance to their lives. Conversely, the evidence supported (Liston, Peterson, & Ragon 2008; Teague, 2002) women are selecting careers based on exposure to experiences where computing skills were connected to real-life tasks; specifically, “When asked what kinds of experiences motivated them to pursue these careers, they identified hands-on experiences, relevant curriculum, engaging staff, and project-based learning opportunities as critical for their decisions to pursue computing” (Ashcraft, Eger & Friend, 2012, p. 19). Not having these types of experiences in K-12 may contribute to the decline of women in technology.

**Aims & Objectives**

The proposed paper and presentation aims to explore some national and international programs grounded in a socio-cultural viewpoint that recruit and empower females into technology fields. A
review of literature surrounding the current state of the gender issues for women in the technology fields will be discussed for the U.S. and other cultural regions (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Asia, & United Kingdom) in addition to personal perspectives from women working in educational technology.

For over twenty years, there has been an unbalanced representation of women in STEM careers, specifically technology (Misa, 2011). Despite the declined college enrollment of women in STEM fields, programs supported by local corporations, organizations and cultural groups have made efforts to make the STEM fields more appealing to girls, in an effort to steer more females into STEM related career paths. The presentation aims to address issues of social justice for women in technology, which is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights, and opportunities.

Outcomes

Internationally, technology-centric programs and initiatives have been developed to increase awareness and foster participation among girls and women. Formal programs include curricula that encourage women to enter STEM fields, specifically technology. Examples include Women in Tech and Tech Girls. These two programs are designed to build technological capacity among women in North Africa, the Middle East, and the United States. The U.S. Department of State's, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs designed these mentorship programs to connect women and teenage girls with technology mentors in the US and in their home countries. School-based programs, the Girl Scouts of America, and other corporate programs have created programs to attract K-12 girls to technology fields.

National and global advocacy program models include small group, mentorship, after-school, networking dinners, 1:1 mentorship, professional development, summer programs, and conventions or workshops. Grassroots private organizations like Akirachicks in Kenya, Techtrails in Australia, and Girl Geek Dinners in Ireland provide awareness of fields and opportunities for women in
STEM. The Institute of International Education along with businesses and educational organizations have organized a free week long summer camp for Nigerian girls in High School and College to engage and encourage young women to enter into the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) profession. These young women create ICT projects and have the opportunity to win awards and prizes based on their work in game design, cartooning, movie making, and programming. Further, Nigerian girls can participate in monthly Hackathons for social change and development. During these events, girls work on developing android applications (Folajimi, 2015).

Collaboration, communication, and encouragement are additional by-products of these organizations. The International Institute of Education's WeTech Program supported programs to increase women entering the technology occupations and degree programs and Google (2014) helped spread women in technology awareness with Women Techmakers on International Women’s Day. Domestically, corporate sponsorships by Pinterest, Box, and Facebook, supported a 1:1 mentorship for women living in the California Bay Area for women entering and staying in technology (Westmentor, 2014). The program paired women together to improve longevity and staying power in their occupations. Effectiveness of the Westmentor program has yet to be determined.

**Conclusion**

The existing gender bias and deficit of women in technology is recognized as a social justice issue that needs recognition, research, and solutions. Our presentation and paper, provides attention to the international inequity regarding the lack of women in technology fields. Further, it is our hope to discuss current international and domestic solutions and their efficacy to address the inequity.
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Têt Ansamn: Putting our Heads Together to Improve Curriculum de L'Ecole Fondamentale, Haiti

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Abstract

The improvement of the education system was identified as paramount to the overall improvement of Haiti after the earthquake of 2010. A national curriculum does exist which often goes ignored by those foreigners assisting in the education reform efforts. Assistance must be offered in culturally respectful way, honoring what does exist and the context within which it is implemented.

Context of the Study

The devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010 brought Haiti, once again, to the forefront of donor initiatives with a resulting massive flood of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into the country. Four years later, the distribution of these donor funds and the coordination of the NGO rebuilding efforts remains slow and disjointed.

The improvement of the education system in Haiti has been identified as paramount to the overall improvement of the country. Although the earthquake brought attention to the issues associated with education in Haiti, deficiencies in the system have long existed. Haiti has the highest illiteracy rate in the Western Hemisphere and the worst educational statistics. Less than 15% of the schools in Haiti are public, and although the Haitian constitution calls for free public education for all students up to grade 6, less than 65% of primary school aged children attend school. Private schools are expensive, unregulated, and are given little guidance by the Ministry of Education (MENFP). Teachers are underprepared, and facilities and materials are lacking.

Despite the issues associated with education in Haiti, a system does exist and often goes ignored or undervalued by those foreigners seeking to assist in the education reform efforts. There is a long history in Haiti of foreign entities invading the country to seemingly provide assistance, only to then refuse to understand the context, include Haitians in the very dialogue that will shape their future, recognize the existing structures that do exist, or even show respect for the Haitian
culture. NGOs are often criticized for not only neglecting to improve conditions, but actually contributing to the problems, and in some cases making matters worse. Subsequently and whether intentional or not, sorely needed funds are spent on poorly planned initiatives or misguided projects that result in little or no sustainable improvement, and in some cases actually cause harm.

Haiti has a national curriculum that was developed in the early 1980s, and regardless of whether it is good or bad, should not go ignored by the foreign organizations that enter the country for the purposes of teacher training or to open schools. Little is written about this curriculum, and the curriculum itself, not easily accessible.

**Literature, sources, or evidence to support the argument/analysis**

There is a body of literature describing and analyzing the impact, albeit mostly negative, of NGOs operating in Haiti. Commissioned reports identify the major issues that need to be addressed in the post-earthquake rebuilding effort and clearly, education is placed at the forefront of the rebuilding effort. Reports and research pertaining to education reform do not discuss the current national curriculum. In an effort to improve the education system in Haiti, the current curriculum and the ways in which that curriculum knowledge is transferred from educational leaders to teachers must be recognized and included in the discussion.

**Aims and Objectives**

This purpose of this study was to develop a rich understanding of the primary school curriculum in Haiti and the way in which educational leaders transfer this knowledge to those who deliver the curriculum, the teachers. The resulting paper will provide a full description of the Haitian primary school curriculum and how educational leaders convey curricular knowledge to the teachers, and examine the ways others can contribute to its improvement of the education system in a culturally and contextually respectful manner.
Method

The data from this qualitative case study include transcripts of interviews with educational experts in Haiti, photographic data, personal conversations, and a review of archival documents. The data was coded, thematized, and analyzed using pre and emerging coding schemes. The preliminary findings of this study have been reviewed by informants and other educational experts in Haiti for the purpose of building trustworthiness.

Outcomes

Although final analysis is not yet complete, it has become clear that there is a working, primary level, standards-based curriculum in Haiti. There is evidence to suggest that it is not widely followed throughout the country. Teachers often do not have knowledge that a national curriculum exists, and if they do, they have not ever seen a written copy. School directors are the curriculum leaders and pass this knowledge on to their teachers. Furthermore, preliminary analysis reveals that foreign entities routinely enter Haiti, building schools and contributing to the education reform efforts, yet chose to ignore what does already exist.

Significance

It is anticipated that this study has implications for the myriad of NGOs and other foreign organizations who are entering Haiti, whether to engage in teacher training or to open primary schools. This study is significant in that there has been no such study conducted in this area, and donor funding continues to target primary school education and teacher training, resulting in a flood of ill-prepared, foreign educational organizations into the country to assist in the education reform initiative.
War Primers: Representations of War in the Pages of Children’s Literature

Presenters:

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Abstract:

This session will focus on representations of war in children's picturebooks. An examination of the themes, perspectives, and social messages conveyed to young readers through this medium will be explored. The presenters will provide a framework for looking at this literature, share reports of a content analysis of related texts, and offer ideas for mediating these texts with children.
Context of the Study:

This study was prompted by the context of the current world situation; one in which issues related to war seem to be inescapable. War is a topic of personal, national, and global significance, which children must navigate on a variety of levels. Thus, it is important to understand the nature of the messages that children receive about this very difficult topic. Picturebooks are a primary form of media and source of information in the lives of children. Therefore, the researchers sought to explore the ways in which images of war were presented in the pages of picturebooks. The researchers are both university faculty members who teach courses in children’s literature within the respective teacher education programs in which they work. They both believe that children’s books serve as an important tool for children’s learning and socialization within society. The study and related presentation are situated within this context.

Aim/ Objectives:

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the ways in which war is represented in high quality children’s picturebooks. Specifically, we were interested in the following research questions:

- How frequently do children’s picturebooks address the issue of war?
- How is war conceptualized within children’s picturebooks?
- What social messages related to war are conveyed in children’s picturebooks?

We used these questions to guide our study and then sought to situate the findings within the broader context of the role of children’s literature in schooling and general education. Our intention was to help tease out the messages that are being conveyed to children about this very important social issue and to then make suggestions for the ways in which these messages might be mediated by teachers and other interested adults.
Methods:

For the purposes of this study, we sought to identify a body of high quality picture books that contained some type of message about war. To do this, we performed a search for the term “war” through the Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database. This database contains more than 300,000 titles of notable and award-winning children’s books. After performing this search, we then narrowed the findings to include only picturebooks aimed at a target audience of children aged 4-10. We then performed a content analysis of the identified texts, using a constant-comparative method. Each text was read and reread by the researchers, who coded emergent themes for the way war was presented in each book. The themes were then compared and grouped together by like characteristics. Patterns were identified and general publication trends were identified. For purposes of reliability, the researchers coded each book independently and then compared themes. Discrepancies between reviewers were minor and resolved through discussion.

Outcomes:

In general, we found that the number of picturebooks that address issues of war is a relatively small one. Although war is a prevalent topic in global society, it is not frequently addressed within the pages of picturebooks for children. When it is addressed, war is represented in a variety of different ways, including the following:

--war literature as a metaphor

--war literature as a means for coping

--war literature as a source for information about historical events

The presentation will include discussion of each of these categories, as well as an exploration of the way that these books might be addressed within individual and classroom reading situations. Issues of representation and developmental appropriateness will be examined.
References:


Urban Poverty in YA Fiction

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Crag Hill
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Abstract

Utilizing a critical multicultural qualitative content analysis, researchers analyzed 83 Young Adult novels that depict poverty, tracking characteristics such gender, race, setting, and which character has agency. In looking specifically at the novels that portray urban poverty, researchers found a dearth of settings and an over representation of violence, crime, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and mental health challenges that may contribute to misunderstandings about those living with limited incomes.
Urban Poverty in YA Fiction

Context of Study and Objectives:

As educators, we know how important it is to choose literature that mirrors our students’ lived experiences. Literature can offer young people the chance to connect with characters like themselves, to feel validated that their story is one worth telling. Similarly, in order to promote empathy, awareness, and cultural responsiveness it is important for ALL students to learn about geographic and socioeconomic diversity and how their classmates near and far may have a different home life from them, to walk in their shoes, tattered or not. How is this possible if the current body of young adult (YA) realistic fiction, widely read and studied in schools, offers a stereotypical lived experience of poverty in general and urban poverty in particular, reinforcing the prevailing destructive images of young men and women struggling to make ends meet?

Using a sociocultural and critical multicultural framework to analyze the ways in which YA novels of the past fifteen years portray urban poverty and homelessness and juxtaposing depictions of poverty with current statistical information regarding people in this demographic who are living with limited incomes, we explored how these novels unpack the complexity of poverty, including issues of agency and power, as we sought to answer the following research question: How is urban poverty represented in contemporary realistic YA fiction, and how does this representation mirror the lived experience in the United States today?

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky’s (1993) critical sociocultural theory, specifically the concept that one’s background knowledge, culture, and experiences will impact how one sees and responds to others and the world, provides the framework for this study. We couple this theory with Rosenblatt’s (1938) reader response theory, focusing on how one’s background knowledge and experiences impact one’s understanding of what is read and provide the schema by which students make and build
meaning and apply that meaning to their lived experience and the lived experiences of their peers. We also draw from Probst (2004) who extends Rosenblatt’s urging that we utilize our readings of text into the process of rethinking our identities, our beliefs and values, and where we position ourselves in the world with others like and unlike ourselves.

**Methods**

Looking at books published from 1996 (when the PRWRORA Welfare Reform Act was enacted) to the present and using search terms like *poverty*, *poor*, and *homeless*, we identified 83 realistic fiction YA novels (Hill and Darragh, under review). Next, we conducted a critical multicultural qualitative content analysis (Botelho and Rudman, 2009), tracking the gender and race of both protagonist and the focal character who is poor, the setting, and which character has agency to substantively change their circumstances. In order to establish inter-reader reliability, both researchers individually read and analyzed a selection of novels, then discussed their analyses. The readers reached agreement on 90% of the selected novels. As the study progressed some trends emerged that resulted in the researchers establishing other categories to analyze, ensuring greater nuance in the results. As such, categories for *mental health problems*, *substance abuse*, *teen pregnancy*, and *violence and crime* were added and tracked for all 83 novels. Once all data was collected, descriptive statistics were conducted and the results were compared to the United States Census Bureau’s statistics on poverty.

**Outcomes**

The results of this critical multicultural analysis show that when looking specifically at representations of urban poverty in the United States as portrayed in contemporary realistic YA fiction, some misrepresentations occur, yielding a potential for its readers to develop negative stereotypes about people with limited income living in this demographic (see Appendix A).
First, 50 of the 74 books analyzed that take place in the United States are set in an urban/large city setting. In this data set urban poverty is over-represented. Moreover, of those 50 books that take place in an urban setting, only 11 states are represented. Twenty of those books (40%) take place in New York and nine (18%) are set in California. Other states represented are Washington (6%), Illinois (6%), and one novel each set in Florida, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Georgia, Nevada, New Jersey, and Oregon. Seven books have unspecified urban settings (see Appendix A).

Gender representations of the focal character who is poor were similar with 24 books (48%) having male protagonists, 21 books (42%) having female protagonists, and 5 books (10%) having both male and female protagonists. In addition, representations of race included 23 books (46%) having protagonists who are White, Non-Hispanic, 14 books (28%) with protagonists who are African American, 8 books (16%) with protagonists who are biracial, 2 books (4%) with characters who are Mexican, 2 books (4%) with multiple races included, and 1 book (2%) in which the race of the protagonist was undetermined.

Early in the study, we noticed some patterns emerging in the novels we were reading, so we decided to also track them, tallying representations of substance abuse, violence and crime, mental health challenges, and teen pregnancy. It is in these areas that, perhaps, some of the most egregious stereotypes emerge in the collective body of work. In 36 (72%) of the novels, issues of substance abuse are included. Similarly, in 30 of the books (60%) some sort of mental health challenge is a significant part of the plot. In over half (54%) of the books teen pregnancy is included, and in 45 of the 50 novels (90%) that take place in an urban setting there are incidences of violence and crime, including theft (20), abuse (13), rape (8), drugs (8), fighting (13), prostitution (5), homicide (10), and drug trafficking (2), among others such as destruction of property.

Despite the many over-representations that may skew a reader’s understanding of urban poverty in the United States, it was heartening to see, however, that in 47 of the 50 books (94%)
some sort of constructive action took place, the individual making efforts to effectively change his or her situation, often with help of friends, family, and community, including schools and churches. Though almost half of the novels (48%) included access to government resources such as foster care, free-and-reduced lunch, food banks, and public housing, the protagonists often had negative, lasting experiences with these resources and would not seek them out. Instead of depending on local, state, and national government agencies, as often depicted in the news media and in political discourse, these individuals joined with people they knew and trusted to not only change their immediate circumstances but also to gain the footing to ensure that such a change would not be temporary.

Discussion

In the case of gender and race, the set of novels essentially mirrors the reality in the United States today (U.S. Census Bureau). However, when comparing the demographic statistics in our study to the current national context, there is an over representation of urban poverty in general and in New York and California in particular. According to statistics from the 2014 United States Census Bureau, the ten states or districts with the highest poverty rates are: Washington D.C., Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico, Alabama, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Arizona. New York is ranked 14th and California is ranked 17th. When looking at statistics regarding the ten metro areas with the highest poverty levels, only one of the cities (Fresno, California) is represented in the novels we read (Kurtzleben, 2010).

While a correlation between mental health and poverty has been found in numerous studies (Bassuk, Buckner, Perloff, & Bassuk, 1998; Belle & Doucet, 2003; Bogard, Trillo, Schwartz, & Gerstel, 2001; Bruce, Takeuchi, & Leaf, 1991; Brown & Moran, 1997; Gyamfi, Brooks-Gunn, & Jackson, 2001; Hudson, 2005), not all who are struggling financially have difficulties with mental health. In addition, it is impossible to determine if mental health struggles such as depression and suicide ideation contribute to poverty, or vice versa. The relationship between mental health and
poverty is more complex than, perhaps, these books collectively acknowledge. Similarly, while incidences of violence and crime have also been often connected with living below the poverty line, especially in political discourse, all people who are struggling financially do not struggle with these problems, and often there are other factors that contribute to, exacerbate, and complicate this issue, such as unemployment and education level (Crime and Poverty, 2014; Plummer, 2010). Finally, though geographic location in which there are the most incidences of teen births does correlate to the states with the highest rates of poverty for children under the age of eighteen (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013), births to teen mothers are at an all-time low (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), a fact that is not borne out in this collection of novels.

Implications

In looking at the data from our study, it seems that collectively, readers of YA fiction that portrays urban poverty are getting the message that poverty primarily takes place in New York and California, and that to live with a limited income also means that one will experience violence, crime, mental health struggles, substance abuse problems, and teen pregnancy. An overrepresentation of such may inadvertently lead to over simplifying the complexity of poverty, the ways in which to leave poverty, or even promulgate fear in students who aren’t socioeconomically challenged, about those who are different from them. Adolescent readers who are experiencing poverty may see their lived experiences in these novels and then, as Probst (2004) suggested, apply their reading to their own situations, placing themselves in a position where they believe that violence, crime, and struggles with mental health are a given. Similarly, adolescent readers who do not know people who are experiencing poverty may have their view reified that poverty necessarily includes these negative attributes. Although these novels on the whole depict individuals working proactively to change their circumstances, both readers experiencing poverty and those who are not may be more likely to ascribe to the pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps axiom and hold individuals
and families wholly responsible for their circumstances, never questioning the role of local, state, and national policies that contribute to the lack of access to healthy food in poor neighborhoods, poor schools, and unsafe public housing, forces well beyond the control of individuals. Few of the novels depicted government agencies having a positive effect on individuals and communities, essentially removing them from reader’s minds as means to alleviate poverty.

As such, we recommend that care be given when discussing novels that portray poverty with adolescents. We urge teachers to choose books that offer a variety of representations of poverty with protagonists of different genders and races and who live in different parts of the country and world. We urge teachers who assign novels depicting poverty to create curriculum space to help students look at the root causes of poverty and the ways it impacts the protagonists—including both aspects that are in and out of the characters’ control. These books should not be chosen lightly nor should the depictions of poverty be glossed over. It is imperative that students of all incomes become part of conversations around what poverty is, how it affects individuals, families, and communities.

We believe that including YA novels that take place in a variety of settings with characters who have different life situations as the centerpieces of instructional units will provide our students with the foundation to unpack the underlying issues of poverty. Moreover, we believe that this careful work in secondary classrooms, illuminating the agency the protagonists have (or don’t have) and helping students gain awareness of the available resources that can help them or people they know who are struggling financially, may help this next generation better understand poverty in the United States today. That is a crucial first step to alleviating poverty in the long term.
References


Hill, C., & Darragh, J.J. (under review). From bootstraps to hands-up: A multicultural content analysis of the depiction of poverty in young adult literature.


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Hmong and Higher Education: Exploring their sense of Belongingness and the American Dream

Janet Fergus Daugherty
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College of Education and Human Performance
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Description:

This research study is a conceptual analysis of Hmong college student perceptions of their sense of belongingness surrounding social and academic issues and experienced on their motivation, educational goals, and ability to live the American Dream (Freeman, Anderson & Jensen, 2007).
Context of the Study

The researcher had been a postsecondary teacher for several decades, both in the U.S. and in Asia. After years of teaching in the classroom the research topic was selected to examine the socio-cultural paradigm of how the practice of belonginess on the university campus, influenced student motivation, retention, and educational attainment (Freeman, Anderman & Jensen, 2007). I was intrigued by the opportunity to examine the belongingness model with social and academic issues of the historically preliterate Hmong.

This study examined the lived college experiences of Hmong students’, their beliefs in how those experiences contributed to the attainment of a university degree, and their eventual achievement of the American Dream (Yang, 2003). The physical context of the study focused on the social and academic integration and belonging of Hmong in the college environment. Hence, interviews took place at two post-secondary institutions: 1) a Florida state university college and 2) a Christian college in Georgia.

Aim/Objectives

The problem examined purported that although typically grouped together with academically successful Asian minority groups such as Chinese-Americans and Japanese Americans, the Hmong Americans’ rate of university degree attainment, as well as university enrollment and retention, is the lowest among all U.S. minority groups (U.S. Census Report, 2004, 2010, 2012).

The justification for the study was to 1) gain insight into the influence of the American Dream upon educational attainment and 2) make a case for the importance of raising awareness of the Hmong community and culture.

The research study was guided by three research questions that provided the framework for the interview protocol that investigated the study’s phenomena.
1. How do U. S. Hmong college students perceive and describe their lived experiences during their college career?

2. How do U. S. Hmong college students understand their sense of university belongingness?

3. How do U. S. Hmong students perceive how earning a baccalaureate degree prepares them to participate in the American Dream?

The criteria for selection of student participants were:

- Hmong Americans
- English fluent
- Junior or senior year college
- Enrolled in a four-year U. S. college or university.
- Baccalaureate degree candidate

I decided that upperclassmen, rather than recent college graduates, were more judicious and easier to search for rather than recent graduates who may have relocated to a larger geographic radius, which could be costly and a hindrance for snowballing recruitment.

Second, unlike college graduates, upperclassmen possess current “know-how” to overcome academic and social challenges. I wanted participants to reflect on their 4-year college experience and highlight similarities and differences between the first and second half of their college career.

Finally, due to proximity in age and enrollment at the same college, it was thought that lowerclassmen connected better with older students that they resided, dined, and debated with while appreciative of credible survival stories shared by juniors and seniors.

In the case of this study, my contacts emanated from a variety of agencies that were able to identify potential Hmong American college participants. My sources for participants were Asian
American community organizations, predominantly Chinese American academicians in Central Florida, who were acquainted with Hmong U. S. enclaves.

Moustakas (1994) and Corbin & Strauss (2008) guided the study’s data analysis of interview transcripts and verbalization. In my research, the phenomenological approach suits the purpose for observing Hmong American college student perceptions on their social and academic interactions prior to declaring an academic concentration.

OUTCOMES

Content analysis of key themes is in progress, and upon completion, research outcomes will be part of the conference presentation. The findings that led to an improved understanding of Hmong college student academic and social experiences suggest how the American Dream construct influenced their pursuit of the college degree. Furthermore, researchers observed increases in self-esteem and confidence to overcome minority marginalization and garner a sense of belongingness on campus in the presence of cohesive student-teacher relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).
REFERENCES


Food for thought vs. food for the body: Hunger and food insecurity among college students

Context of the study:

This presentation will address what some scholars have called ‘the skeleton in the university closet’ or the prevalence of hunger among college students (Hughes, Serebryanikova, Donaldson & Leveritt, 2011). This finding has been corroborated by alarming figures from the U. S. Department of Education (2011), which indicate that university students are at significant risk of hunger partly due to inadequate income support. Since early 1990s studies on this emerging research agenda have tended to indicate a possible relationship between the uncertainty of food intake and educational factors (Campbell, 1991).

Method:

Several institutional policies on food banks or food pantries from various American colleges and universities will be analyzed using Content Analysis. The institutions sampled in this study are: SUNY/Stony Brook University; University of Massachusetts; Wright State University; University of Arkansas; CUNY; Florida Gulf Coast University; University of Colorado; Florida Gulf Coast University and, North Carolina Central University.

Outcomes:

Anticipated outcomes are not available.
References:


Scholar’s Life across the Borders: Procedures vs. Contextual knowledge

Rosa Cintron, Ph.D.
University of Central Florida

Shiva Jahani, Ph.D.
University of Central Florida

Mingquan Yang, Ph.D.
Beijing Normal University

Zeinab Azarmand, M.A.
Amirkabir University of Technology

Abstract

International students and scholars are highly trained and highly motivated yet face a number of problems in becoming integrated in the University. Part of this is due to a lack of training and knowledge about the American higher education system. This panel includes four sections, which will discuss the challenges of international scholars in American higher education system, from different viewpoints.
Scholar’s Life across the Borders: Procedures vs. Contextual knowledge

Addressing global challenges requires a collective and concerted effort involving all actors. Through partnerships and alliances, and by pooling comparative advantages, we increase our chances for success (Ki-Moon, 2010).

Section 1 – Rosa Cintron, Ph.D.

International students and scholars are highly trained and highly motivated yet face a number of problems in becoming integrated in the University. Part of this is due to a lack of training and knowledge about how the American higher education system prepares scholars to collaborate in their system. In response to this need, Dr. Cintron is leading an effort to train a group of scholars about the nature, history and governance of American Higher Education. Her works included the challenge of boredom vs. engagement in the classroom, visit to different educational establishment, attendance of the first HBCU’s presidential conference and overview of the educational system in various countries. The collaborative project was incredibly helpful for improving the scholar’s contextual knowledge as well as their skills and competencies. This big step opens scholar’s eye in gaining a better knowledge of the American Higher system and fit their background to the system and help them to create a proper bridge for future collaboration. Based on my observations, there is a huge hunger for such exposure and access to such knowledge. Therefore, it is important for the universities to develop new program on campus and seminars to educate visiting scholars in ways that will significantly increase and expand their contextual awareness, this understanding will lead to more effective collaboration.

Section 2 - Shiva Jahani, Ph.D.

As a post-doctoral fellow in higher education and policy studies– has come to UCF on a mission. “I came here to expand upon my PhD and get a deeper knowledge of research problems,
methods, and systematic strategies” because we need research that helps enhance educational opportunities in developing countries. I personally had little knowledge of the American Higher Educational system. It made difficult for me to collaborate within the system and then I faced with some issues, such as, Lack of training and knowledge about how the American higher education system to prepares scholars to collaborate in their system. Second issue: “The limits of our language” means the limits of our world (Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 149). There is a lack of communication related to the language barriers for the majority of visiting scholars. Language issues for scholars have become one of the major problems in exploring and strengthening the relationships between them and their supervisors and other scholars. According the research of Imberti (2007), Language plays an important role in person’s self-identity. Language enables the person to express emotions, to share feelings, to tell stories, and to convey complex messages and knowledge. Language is the greatest mediator that allows relating and understanding. In my view, enhancing English language abilities of the visiting scholars so that they can teach effectively in English will provide the greatest possible benefit for both them and university in terms of research exchange as well as experience sharing.

Section 3 – Mingquan Yang, Ph.D.

From the Perspective of Globalization Visiting scholar is a note of the symphony of Globalization, in which communication and cooperation is the main theme. Although the visiting scholars enjoy so many convenient research conditions, such as no work burden, flexible schedule, free-use of library, et al, many visiting scholars just relax and enjoy the life in foreign country. It is a kind of waste in some degree. From the perspective of Globalization, visiting scholars should play certain roles during the period of the project. Generally speak, there are three roles: (1) learner; (2) co-researcher; (3) culture experience sharer. To the universities the scholar visited,
besides providing necessary conditions, they should ask the visiting scholars to share their research experience and academic resources.

Section 4 – Zeinab Azarmand, M.A.

Nearly ninety thousand international students, who choose to study in United States, spend their schooling time with their dependents, including spouse and children (Institute of International Education, 2014). Living in a foreign country is potent to be a beneficial experience for the dependents. However, legal and economic limitations negatively affect this experience, and in some cases result to severe mental, or family issues, such as depression, physical abuse, or divorce.

In this section, typical plans which can be followed by the spouse of the international students, are explored. Further, the challenges and limitations to each plan are investigated, in the existing legal, economic, and social context of the United States.

Being the spouse of an international student, one may decide to choose among four options, to plan his or her time. They may decide to enroll an academic program, enter the job market, work as a volunteer, or just avoid joining any official system (e.g. stay at home). One would also have the option to choose the latter plan in meantime, in order to prepare for one of the former options in future.

Choosing to enroll an academic program is an option for many spouses, as they are usually in a similar intellectual level. However, their options should be limited to the academic programs available in the same geographical region. In particular, for spouses seeking graduate degrees, the procedure can be more complicated, as a close match between the applicant’s interests and the program area is an essential requirement.

The option to enter the job market is also impossible for the dependents of the international students, in United States. Holding an F-2 visa, any form of paid employment is forbidden (U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs, 2013). In addition, holders of an F-2 visa are not eligible for
Social Security Card. As a result, they would not have a security background. Thus, even if decided to work as a volunteer, many institutions would ignore their applications, due to lack of social security history.

Finally, because of the language barrier, they would not be able to expand their communications with the local citizens. Further, many families cannot afford the costs of attending language institutions. Thus, many dependents would inevitably choose to stay at home. The imbalance between the possible occupations, and the capabilities of the dependents may be the cause for many mental, or family issues.
References


Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Title I Middle School Program

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Maggie173@gmail.com

Abstract

This work focused on the contribution of student engagement and ethical care relative to student success in 8th grade students enrolled in a Title I school based tutoring program. The quantitative and qualitative analyses indicated that students were engaged in school-based activities and made academic gains on the Science FCAT. In parallel with the teacher, the students also engaged in the process of ethical care.
Description

The session focuses on the contribution of student engagement and ethical care on student success among minority students living in high poverty.

Proposal

Context of the Study

In this study I sought to examine the impact of student engagement and ethical care on student success in middle school students. I applied concepts of student engagement, as well as the tenets of ethical care as described by Noddings (2002): modeling, dialogue, confirmation and encouragement. The study was conducted to determine the degree to which the conceptual frameworks were present in a tutoring program (Future Problem Solvers), and to uncover positive practices that not only influence student gains, but also relationships that promote healthy students and promising members of society.

Aim/Objectives

My aim and objectives were to examine factors that lead to student success, which are separate from standards and global assessment.

My study focused on four research questions:

1. When analyzing the FCAT Science Test scores for 8th grade students at Westridge Middle School, will the 8th grade science students participating in the 2013 – 2014 Future Problem Solvers program score significantly higher on the FCAT in comparison to 8th grade science students at Westridge that did not participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program?
2. Did the teacher promote student engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship, as evidenced by the teacher’s responses to the teacher interview questions?

3. Did the responses on the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement indicate that the students were actively engaged in positive school related activities and relationships?

4. Did the student responses on the student interview questions give evidence that they experienced a caring and trusting relationship with the teacher?

Methods

This study employed a mixed methods design. Creswell (2009) suggests the employment of a mixed study design is appropriate when a research problem cannot be sufficiently studied by using quantitative and qualitative methods independent from one another. Using both methods can be seen as one complementing the other, while increasing the richness and improving the interpretation (Ebrahim, 2014). Therefore, this study included both quantitative and qualitative procedures.

The study was conducted at a middle school where the participants were either students or staff at the school. The participants included twenty-eight, 8th grade students enrolled in a school based tutoring program, the program teacher and school principal. The student participants ranged in age from 12 to 15 years (82% females, 18% males). Over 80% of the student participants identified as Black, African American, Caribbean, Latino, Hispanic and/or Spanish Origin. All of them received free lunch evidencing their status as living in poverty. The principal identified as Hispanic and the teacher as Caucasian; both were males.
Data sources included The Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement (MGSSE), open-ended student and teacher questionnaires, as well as demographic and FCAT scores reported by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE, 2013). The student participants completed the MGSSE and the student questionnaires on the computer via SurveyMonkey™. The MGSSE provided pre and post quantitative data, while the questionnaires provided qualitative data. The questionnaires were administered to the program teacher and the principal through face-to-face interviews. These were conducted in tandem to assure higher levels of trustworthiness.

The data analysis included the Mann Whitney U Test, and the data met the assumptions for this statistical strategy. In addition, univariate analysis was employed to obtain frequency distributions and mode analyses. The purpose of these was to demonstrate higher rates of engagement among program participants, as well as to compare student responses on the pre and post questionnaires. Furthermore, qualitative methodology was used to analyze data gathered from the open-ended questionnaires. The general procedure for the qualitative analysis was accomplished by following the steps outlined by Creswell (Creswell, 2009). The data from the questionnaires was transcribed and were coded in order to identify the following themes: Emotional Engagement, Behavioral Engagement, Trust, Engagement in the Learning, Modeling, Dialogue, Practice, Confirmation, and Relationship (R). The themes were analyzed to determine if the research questions were answered.

**Outcomes**

The findings from this study support the research questions. According to the results derived from the Mann Whitney U test, the students that participated in the FSP program had overall higher scores on the FCAT science test in comparison to the students that did not participate in the program. The univariate analysis revealed that the students participating in the program were engaged in school related activities and had developed appropriate relationships with teachers and staff at the school. Furthermore, qualitative analyses indicated that the teacher had
developed a caring relationship with his students through the process of modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. In return, the students developed a relationship with the teacher giving evidence that they trusted him.

This study provided evidence that the students that participated in the program were engaged in school. The engagement included participating in school related activities, as well as emotional engagement through positive relationships with teachers and staff. They also developed a reciprocating, positive relationship with their program teacher. They felt he cared about them and in turn trusted him.

In conclusion, the study supports the idea that there is more to student success than simply preparing for test. In an age of high stakes testing, it is important that we not forget that there is also a need to show students that teachers care about them. This is true even when it includes a student population, which is poor and wants for more than their means can provide them.
References


From colonization to globalization, the darker ‘Other’ has been raped, exploited, and most recently, ‘developed’. As someone who continues to benefit from the color stratification of our society, I aim to recognize and problematize the ways in which “hierarches of value” (Thomas, 2004) are indexed in the intersection of the racialized and globalized policies that structure schooling in America.
Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is a great equalizer of the conditions of men, - the balance wheel of the social machinery… and, if this education should be universal and complete, it would do more than all things else to obliterate factitious distinctions in society.

Horace Mann, 1848

Globalization as colonization

Schools, like most other social, political, or economic institutions do not exist in a vacuum. In fact, they are products of their environments, embedded not only in their community, but rather situated and governed by the larger dynamics of their particular society. “Schools do not exist as an independent social institution… instead our schools and students are steeped within the folds of formidable economic, political, cultural, and social contexts” (Carter and Welner, 2013: 218). To that end, it should come as no surprise that they continue to produce and re-produce the dominant norms and structures that exist within their communities and societies. Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bordieu (1977) have long argued that rather than serving as the ‘great equalizer,’ schools in fact operate in such ways that allow for the maintenance of capitalism and the widening of inequality.

Capitalism, at its core, is a hierarchal system that allows some to thrive on the backs of many others. Complicating the inter and intra-group inequalities that capitalism has long propelled is the most recent instantiation of neoliberal globalization- the economic notion that an open world market and the global exchange of goods, services, and information is the ticket to a level global playing field. The less disclosed reality is that a level playing field is not part of the capitalism paradigm; and open, global exchange is not really an exchange at all, rather a one-sided channel of exploitation. Once the capitalist ladder is kicked away (Chang, 2003) after just enough people have
had the chance to climb it, millions of people are left in the wake, unable to take advantage of the incredible fruits that both capitalism and globalization bring to bear.

Globalization and capitalism reify hierarchies of value, based in our society on a continuum of color (Thomas, 2004). These hierarchies of value, most recently repackaged within the discourse of globalization, are in fact not new at all. This framework of development and exploitation of the darker Other has grounded and continues to ground how the discourse of ‘development’ manifests, both internationally and domestically. Lighter bodies occupy more privileged spaces along the color continuum, and it is the darker bodies that have had to endure the most pronounced experiences of Otherness (See Butler, 2004 for more discussion on Otherness).

From colonization to globalization, the darker Other has been raped, exploited, and most recently, ‘developed’. As someone who has personally and professionally benefited and continues to benefit from the color stratification of our society, I aim to recognize and problematize the ways in which I understand my positionality within these hierarchies of value. Accordingly, I try to reflect throughout this paper on how the intersection of racialized and globalized policies in education overlay onto my own intersectionality as a White person working in communities of color. Specifically, I let my emergent understandings of what it means to be Black in America drive my questioning of how ‘glocal’ hierarchies of value play out in formal and informal institutions in America.

**Education as the new development discourse?**

Today as I struggle with how to continue in education with the recognition that we so easily tend to reify *developed* versus *developing* deficit frameworks, I think often of my training in development economics. Complicating this tension is the fact that in PhD research work, there tends very little interaction with the population we grow so accustomed to studying and talking about. Ultimately, I feel as if I may be further separating myself from the community in which I want to be embedded. But I ask myself- is that really my community? Or am I home right where I
am, in these ivory towers, yet again? As my colleague in the cohort of education reminded me, am I further becoming an agent of oppression due to my increased access to nondominant communities because of my ability to check the Brazilian box despite being a middle class White woman? And is education so different than top down development? If my answer at the end of Cambridge was ‘no’ to development, what am I doing now in my steadfast pursuit to work for people less fortunate than me?

As educational researchers oriented towards social justice, we continue to push against the resurgence of notions stemming from the ‘Culture of Poverty’ argument. But I wonder how it is that our field has studied interventions around inequities for decades, and still seem to have made no progress. This class has served to shed increased light on the insidious nature of racism in relation to educational reform. As mentioned previously, when equity reforms are implemented on the ground level, despite potentially good top down intentions, they are nonetheless conceptualized, understood, and enacted on the ground level. Ground level norms intersect with equity reforms in ways that often render them mute (Welner, 2001). It seems then that looking at what Blackness means in America may help to complicate the disconnect between the tremendous amount of time spent on designing for equity and the reality of increasing educational and economic disparity between White students and their peers of color.

As conflated as issues of class and race can be, recent media events reveal that race ‘trumps’ class, still. Story after story of an African American straight A college goer or Ivy league professor getting stopped by the police or even shot from the back gravely remind us that race and racism are alive as ever. And worse, many of us won’t even admit to the nature of these events because we were all raised not to “see color” with the belief that equal opportunity pervades in this post-race society where a Black man is President. Numerous authors, namely Laymon (2013) and Hill-Collins (2004), remind us that racialized ideologies and norms are not only alive and kicking, but continue to dominate our society in ways that make people conscious of differential treatment
based on race seem neurotic. From the Black man who is followed in a grocery store to my Mexican friend who continues to get served after me in Boulder bars, racialized discrimination is real and it hurts.

In considering the positionality of Black, low-income students and the continued persistence of inequities, I think about parallels within the larger neoliberal globalization discourse. Education, as mentioned briefly, is a system governed by the larger societal dynamic of neoliberal capitalism, with its emphasis on individualism and perseverance as key tenets for success. We see this in current discourse around the grit and character building pedagogy so prevalent in inner city schools (see Paul Tufts’s work for more on ‘grit’). For example, “no excuses” type schools such as Strive Preps and KIPP Academies saturate classrooms with college paraphernalia under the guiding assumption that the homes of these children don’t promote college enough. Likewise, schools are based on open market exchange (invoking ‘accountability’ as it is discussed in education) and quick fast returns (reflected in the prevalence of high stakes testing). These schools, if they are structured similar to how our global economy runs, will then produce uneven outcomes with some coming out on top and others on bottom.

**Blackness in a globalized, post-Blackness society**

Globalization minded policies are uneven, and instantiated in ways that propel inequity because they hit the ground unevenly. Schools are no different; reform policies hit an uneven playing field of public schools and communities and thus continue to propel inequity. Worse yet, notions of American Blackness pervade the norms and practice of schools, in such ways that feed into the already uneven neoliberal minded reforms that are enacted in schools. Adding insult to injury, all of these unequally instantiated reforms are occurring with our ‘post-racial era’, and we can’t even acknowledge color before being deemed racist ourselves.

Because global capitalist expansion has been uneven, as Thomas reminds us, “it has generated numerous contradictions that people have attempted to exploit in order to advance their
own economic ambitions” (2004: 231), reflecting yet again the omnipresent discourse of development that pervades both local and global contexts. As the dominant powers move forward in whatever agenda they espouse, human lives are impacted on various levels, and varying times and in varying spaces. Precisely because globalization is ever present and ever changing, it is insidious in its ability to reify the hierarchies of values that have existed for centuries.

The arms of globalization processes are far and wide reaching, and driven primarily by a discourse that reflect the Reagan-style-trickle-down notion that progress and development at the top will positively impact the bottom. Often invoking a one-size-fits-all type attitude to social and economic reforms such as a health care, education, and country infrastructure, the IMF and the World Bank implement reforms that ultimately cement and extend the pre-existing power relations of the society. In Jamaica, for example, Thomas illustrates how the process of “creolization has taken place within historical and contemporary relations of domination and subordination at local, regional, national, and global levels” (2004: 233). Nothing happens in a vacuum, and both social and economic processes of transformation are driven and shaped the “glocal” context in which they sit.

Even in international societies who espouse to have fewer problems around racism (as in many societies in Central and South America), color did and does matter. As Roland (2011) exemplified in her own positionality as a Black American researcher in non US racialized society, she had to show her American passport or talk in a certain way to come across as a ‘yuma’ (foreigner), allowing her access to supposedly exclusive things such as using a bathroom in a restaurant. Worse yet, her superficial appearance in Cuba garnered her immediate reaction from others in thinking that she was a ‘prostituta.’ Race trumps class, still.

As someone who considers myself lucky to be able to check both the ‘Brazilian’ and ‘American’ box, it is difficult for me to imagine what it must have felt like for Roland to have had to physically and socio-emotionally display certain aspects of ‘Whiteness’, such as passports,
certain accents, etc. in order to be considered not just an American, but a person ‘worthy of certain access to society. This work was important for me in a troubling way. Abroad, I often identify first as Brazilian such as to not garner the negative connotation that comes with being a touristic American. What privilege, I now see, must I have in that I can almost seamlessly check and uncheck my American-ness, all the while maintaining an upper class status with all of its affordances because of my fair skin color. Though both Roland and I have to negotiate our multiple identities here and abroad, it seems that I face circumstances of less constraint and less restricted access as a result of my skin color, truly independent of actual class.

Roland attempts to unpack the ambiguous role that ‘jinetieros’ play in using some level of agency and awareness of market value to manipulate the market in ways that reflect what she sees as the ability to transform into business-level capitalist sensibilities. Yet in their speech, they are only ‘luchando’ as they have been accustomed to knowing and doing. The government sees them as subversive, yet they ultimately feel as embedded in the matrix of the Cuban ‘lucha’ as others, mirroring the sentiments that American Blacks experience in in what Jay Z described as ‘hustling’ in *DeCoded* (2010). Ultimately, ‘jinetieros’ and ‘hustlers’ are aware of the affordances and constraints of their own positionality as well as the larger matrix of racialized means of productions and relations that govern the societies in which they are embedded.

**School knowledge and educational power: For whom and by whom?**

It is also interesting to consider juxtaposing what we value in schools with what we value in our society. Knowledge is biased and constructed, and canonical school knowledge is far from neutral, as is commonly thought. Rather, the knowledge we pass down through the social institution of schooling has a historicity of its own that reflects the dominant ideologies of past and present generations. It is then remediated by the teachers and the institutions in which it is embedded, accordingly becoming saturated with context-specific ideas on what and whom is to be valued. Asking ourselves questions around for whom and by whom brought about this ‘neutral’
canonical knowledge helps us to understand how prevailing yet unequal outcomes are produced and reproduced through the institution of schooling. Asking ourselves these questions through a lens that privileges the awareness of how institutions and bodies have been and continue to be racialized by and through these very institutions is even a more fruitful pursuit.

As teachers, many of us believe we instill “values” and “character” in our children so that they can have a stronger voice, when really we want them to have our voice. I remember as a young teacher/administrator who was fortunate enough to have very close relationships with both African American and Latino youth, I felt quite comfortable in saying what I felt was best for my kids. Though I was interested in hearing and having them write about narratives they brought to the fore, I continually re-mediated their speech into “acceptable academic prose.” Why? When they spoke in African American Vernacular English, or used “ain’t” instead of “isn’t”, I constantly corrected them. My feelings remain very mixed about this aspect of my relationship with the adolescents, because though they expressed gratitude for helping them to learn the “language of currency,” I can’t help but now think how much harm I must have done in making their mode of speaking (and thus being) fit my own mode of speaking, mirroring also my attempt to get them to fit the dominant discourse of language and power.

Ta-Kenda, a girl I was especially close to, developed a relationship with me that went beyond academic tuition, into her own community and family. Ta-Kenda had a formative impact in life in many ways that I believe ultimately guided me into the position I am in now, but primarily in the sense that she was the first African American woman with whom I had a real relationship. This is a problem. For a 26-year-old woman who supposedly is interested in social justice issues, why did I have to wait until I was 26 to experience a biracial friendship? I did not have to wait. In fact I should not have let the encapsulation of my upbringing and subsequent schooling and professional circles to have clouded my ability to seek out meaningful relationships
with African Americans. My pattern of engagement, however, is one that highlights a larger pattern of teacher-student relationships in America.

White, middle class women are the predominant demographic of teachers in the United States. When they enter their first classroom, it is often the case that this is the first time that they will be in a position to have the potential for meaningful relationships with people of color- in this case, students that don’t look anything like them (Matias, 2013). This disconnect between the typical teaching and learning populations is complicated by the massive impact of demographical stereotypes that the media propels. Undoubtedly, assumptions about the Other are quickly taken up and mediate student-teacher interactions. These factors combine to be highly problematic if we consider meaningful relationships to be integral to the creation of inclusive classroom settings, and moreover to have the potential dismantling of racist ideologies that prevail in social spaces laden with that same hierarchies of value that drive our economic and political worlds.

In my own current research on pre-service teacher education and learning in informal spaces, I see potential for new practices of teaching and learning to produce alternative forms of relationships that look different than the traditional teacher-as-knower, student-as-receiver dichotomy that is most common to classrooms. However, as it currently stands, it seems that classrooms are organized in such ways that produce and reproduce traditional notions of development that promote some groups while marginalizing others. My argument is that this traditional organization of teaching, learning, and development is best understood again through a lens that sees supposedly neutral knowledge and norms of schools as deeply laden with hierarches of value, based on a continuum of color.

**Conclusion: Where to go from here**

As I get further into my own thinking and learning about the intersections of race, education, and globalization, I am troubled by questions of positionality and authenticity in this pursuit. Who am I to ask these questions, as someone who has undoubtedly benefited from the
suffering of others? From the son of a poor Italian immigrant in New Jersey to an upper middle
class businessman in Southern California, my self-made-father made his wealth not through
education but as a stockbroker. Perhaps seemingly innocuous, stockbrokers such as my Dad make
their living on the trading and manipulation of foreign markets and equities. I was reminded during
my Master’s program that a .01 dip in a stock on Wall Street often causes catastrophic depressions
in foreign stock markets, such as that of Ghana.

Yet because of my father’s work despite his lack of education, I am able to pursue a
doctorate in education with an emphasis in inequality. Furthermore, his early army career allowed
him to meet my Brazilian mother, to whom I owe my multicultural sensitivities and multi-language
abilities. Because of the intersection of my parents’ identities and their success maneuvering
towards the ‘American Dream’, I find myself in an extraordinarily fortunate position where I can
pursue a career of service with the knowledge that a safety net exists should I ever falter. How
might this be different if I was the daughter of a poor Mexican immigrant father or an Afro-
Brazilian mother, considering the raced-based constraints of pursuing the ‘American Dream’?

My ‘white guilt’, though not always productive, pushes me to consider the degrees to which
my ‘lucky’ opportunities have been a product of my light skin color. Yet as oft discussed, this
sense of guilt only goes so far in regard to unpacking the ways in which hierarchies of value and
color govern the social organization of practices in our world. It seems the real charge in this work
might be to consider how our own identities and our assumptions and engagements with others are
implicated in a long history of racialized ideologies.
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Title: Testimonios de Campesinas: Poetic Narratives of Immigrant Women

Submitted by: Dr. Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto
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Abstract:

Testimonios de Campesinas are recountings of life-stories in which intersections of power and privilege are marked in every step. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2009, about 12 million people were un-authorized, un-documented immigrants. Testimonios de Campesinas tell stories that illustrates how legal immigration status not only defines social space and opportunities, but more importantly, how it restricts basic human rights and creates an under-class, an un-authorized, un-documented population with no legal rights or legal protection. Within this population, gender occupies a central space as it is the reason for continuous abuse and discrimination. Violence against women is prevalent.
**Rationale:**

*Testimonios de Campesinas* are recountings of life-stories in which intersections of power and privilege are marked in every step. These stories illustrate how legal immigration status defines social space and opportunities, but more importantly, how it restricts basic human rights and creates an under-class, an un-authorized, un-documented population with no legal rights or legal protection. Within this population, gender occupies a central space as it is the reason for continuous abuse and discrimination. Violence against women is prevalent.

The use of Poetic Narrative allows to trace the risky expeditions, literal and metaphoric, undertaken by *campesinas* which bring to life a complicated cartography composed of the multiple death-defying journeys women--immigrant or not--take in their ordinary lives (Ellis 2012). Using life story interviews as “data”, the poems are testimonios emerging out of a larger research project centered on the lives of campesinas working in the fields of the Southeast in the USA. These testimonios weave the familiar and extraordinary embodied in women’s lives. However, “[testimonios are] disarticulate, they undo the original, they reveal that the original was always already disarticulated” (Felman & Laub 1991:159). Of relevant “findings” these stories depicts the dreams, hopes, violence, and danger associated with their journeys while crossing the Mexican/USA border as well as the trauma of living restricted lives with full awareness (Anzaldúa 2012; Behar 2003; Espinosa-Dulanto 2012; Latina-Feminist-Group 2001; and Spener 2009) of having no legal rights or legal protection. Poems give face to the numeric data which increases awareness about power and privilege.
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Teacher leaders and the pursuit of justice in urban schools

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Abstract

In the Western tradition the pursuit of justice has long been recognized as a virtue. What does this mean in our urban world, and how does it relate to teacher leadership? We address this using a framework derived from modern rabbinical scholarship on urban justice, eco-political studies, and existentialism. We found that although the teachers recognized injustice, their actions, formulations of solutions, and conceptions of justice were influenced and constrained by the dominant political regime.
Objectives

In the Western tradition the pursuit of justice has been recognized as a virtue since biblical times: “Justice, justice shall you pursue” (Deuteronomy, 16:20). But what does this mean in the 21st century urban world, and how does it relate to teacher leadership? To delve into the beliefs of teacher leaders about the pursuit of justice in schools we devised an analytical lens that draws from modern rabbinical scholarship, eco-political studies, and existentialism. It was at this intersection that we discovered that although the teacher leaders recognized injustice, and at times protested against it, their ability to act, formulate solutions, conduct action research, and even their very concept of justice was heavily influenced and constrained by the dominant political regime of the US Educational System. An explanatory framework emerged that sheds light on the dynamic interplay among justice, politics and beliefs, while also revealing the constraints to pursuing justice from within a leadership structure.

Theoretical framework

We began with Patti Lather’s question of what it means to do research in an unjust world (1986) and reframed it by asking what ought teacher leadership look like if it were to make the world more just; that is, one in which people act to eliminate institutionalized domination and oppression (Young, 2011). To begin to answer this we developed a theoretical framework that draws on three perspectives: justice in the city (Cohen, 2013), urban political regimes (Dreier, Mollenkopf & Swanstrom, 2004), and existential responsibility (First Author, 2007).

In Justice in the City Cohen argues that there are three fundamental principles of justice in the city. As philosopher, he derives these principles from the type of rabbinic argument found in the Talmud, rather than the more traditions Greek or Roman sources. The first is “the obligation to create our urban spaces so that we are able to hear the cry of the poor”. He argues that it is not enough to hear the cry; one must also respond to them. The second principle is “the obligation to protest against injustice at any place” in the web of relationships among strangers that make up our
urban spaces. According to the rabbinic argument, one must do more than respond to the individuals in the need. Just behavior requires us to protest against the wrongs. Finally, there is the obligation “to make the ramifications of [our] actions occasions of justice” (p. 20). If we live in a way that acknowledges the city as a community of obligation, then the demand to right what is wrong is based on the individual’s responsibility to pursue justice in the world, rather than on an ethic of intimacy; e.g., to treat one’s neighbor as oneself. But because we are not alone in the world, we need to reconstruct our urban spaces so we can hear the cry of the oppressed, treat all as members of our community, and acknowledge the deep web of relationships among us all.

To Cohen the city extends beyond its political boundaries to include much, if not the entire post-modern urbanized world. We extend Cohen’s analysis to schools by recognizing that they are communities of obligation, which is how he defines cities. To hear the cry of the poor in schools is to hear and acknowledge those who are marginalized in schools because of poverty, race, ethnicity, gender and/or sexual orientation. We also include teachers among those whose cry ought to be heard because while not poor, the political forces tied to the accountability movement are systematically de-professionalizing teachers in the US, resulting in their marginalization. Therefore, in our study we refer to all those in schools for whom we seek justice as the marginalized.

We develop our framework further with Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom’s (2004) analysis of urban political regimes. They posit three types of urban political regimes: liberal, progressive, and conservative. Liberal regimes are based on the assumption that an expansion of government services and jobs will improve the quality of life of poor residents, and will help to ease the transition out of poverty or from working class to the middle class. Progressive regimes have similar goals, but seek to expand the coalition to include previously disenfranchised groups. They seek to limit the influence of business interests on cities and on public schooling. Urban US conservative regimes assume that the ills of the city are a result of city government actions, such as
succumbing to the demands of unions and neighborhood and minority groups, which leads to
mismanagement and corruption. Their solution in general is that cities and public schools ought to
be run like businesses, with careful attention paid to costs and outcomes, and all employees held
accountable for the “bottom-line”.

We use Dreier et al. (2004) as a way to think about teachers’ possible stances toward
education and their work in schools. We characterize teachers’ stances as internalized, tacit ways of
understanding that result from their immersion in the dominant regimes in their schools, districts,
and states. We refer to these stances as “tacit regimes”. These tacit regimes might exist as
ideological residue for different individuals, making it difficult to assess the degree of influence
from any one regime.

The final part of our framework is based on Feldman’s (2007) essay on action research,
extentialism, and responsibility. He based his analysis on the work of Maxine Greene (1973;
1988) and three features of existentialism: 1) The person is always situated. Everyone exists in a
web of relationships that spreads through time and space. 2) The self emerges through experience.
And, 3) People are free to choose, but freedom is finite. He argues that responsibility is a
consequence of the existentialist tenet that the self emerges through experience. Therefore, to a
large degree, we are responsible for who we are. In addition, the possibility of freedom and its
constraints requires the responsible person to attempt to uncover which constraints are real, and
which are constructed by our beliefs and the historical, biographical, social, political and moral
milieu in which we are immersed (Britzman, 1986).

Methods

Our study was set in an externally funded teacher leadership development project that is a
collaboration between one of the largest school districts in the US and an urban research university
located within the district. It began in 2013 with the recruitment of 20 math and science teacher
leaders who were either in District leadership positions or seeking to have one. All have at least
master’s degrees and two have doctorates. The focus of this study was one of the courses in the program – action research – that we co-taught.

To help ensure that our roles as instructors did not put undue pressure on the teacher leaders to agree to participate in the study we asked a third party to seek consent and collect the forms, and to hold the forms until we submitted the grades to the University. The IRB approved this process and all teacher leaders gave their consent. Throughout the course and afterwards we engaged in informal and discursive analysis strategies. We kept journals of class notes and reflected on them together in weekly meetings. Our conversations consistently came back to District inequities and if in any way the course helped the teachers to address them. Our discussions led us to develop the framework described above.

We analyzed the data from course assignments (see below) using a set of codes based on the three main ideas of our theoretical framework (Patton, 2002). We then used the analytical framework as a way to understand how the teacher leaders thought about their practice as teacher leaders in relation to justice and responsibility, and their beliefs about the type of regime in which their practice is located. We also engaged In addition, we used the coded data to construct cases of five teacher leaders (Yin, 2009).

Our data consisted primarily of class work from the action research course. We were also participant observers in the course, and used our observations informally as a way to triangulate our findings in addition to constructing the framework. We decided to focus on three sets of written work: 1) Photovoice, 2) Bellwork, and 3) the Final Report.

Photovoice is a process developed by Caroline Wang (1999) in her work in community health education. We used a modified form of Photovoice that was developed by Michael DiCicco (2014) in which teachers are asked to take photographs that metaphorically respond to a prompt, and to write a short explanation for each photograph on how it responds to the prompt. The teacher leaders had two Photovoice assignments: “What does it mean to be a teacher leader?” (Due first
class) and “How would you use action research as a teacher leader?” (Due penultimate class). The data from these assignments consisted of the photographs and explanations.

The bellwork were freewrites at the beginning of classes. We used the first and last bellwork assignments as data. The prompts for the bellwork were “What does it mean to you to be a teacher leader now that you have been in the program since the spring and taken one [previous] course?” and “What does it mean to you to be a teacher leader now that you have been in the program since the spring and taken two courses?”

The teacher leaders were required to engage in an action research project and to prepare a final report to describe what they did, why they did it, show any data and analysis, and provide a set of implications for their practice and for themselves as teacher leaders. We provided them with a description of what was expected in the report, a rubric, and examples of action research reports from previous classes.

**Results**

We analyzed the data seeking to understand if and how the teacher leaders expressed 1) aspects of justice in the ways conceived by Cohen (2011); 2) the political regime of the school district as internalized, tacit beliefs about schooling (what we refer to as their “tacit regimes”); and 3) the notions of existential responsibility toward themselves and others. We provide brief summaries below. The full paper and the presentation will include additional details as well as profiles of individual teacher leaders.

**Overall results**

We found that most of the teacher leaders expressed in their final reports a concern for hearing the cry of marginalized students and for making their actions occasions for justice. There was little evidence for this in the other assignments. Only two teacher leaders had a focus on justice infused throughout the five assignments.
All the teacher leaders in some way wrote about invoking change, either in other teachers, students, and/or themselves. Therefore, the idea of change itself was not an indicator of a particular regime. Instead we looked to see whether the changes described worked within the current policies or challenged them, and in what ways. We also looked at the methods proposed for making those changes -- whether they were technical, mechanistic, collaborative, or empowering. For the most part the changes described were technical and focused on better ways to achieve the District’s goals of increased test scores for the students. There was also much written and spoken about the District’s teacher assessment program, which was developed with a grant from a large private foundation. Therefore, we classified almost all the teacher leaders’ tacit regimes as conservative.

All the teacher leaders expressed in some way responsibility toward students, other teachers, or themselves. However, for the most part the way that the teachers expressed that responsibility was instrumental, related to either the achievement of higher scores on the state high-stakes examinations, encouraging and helping their colleagues to enact District initiatives, or acknowledging the ways that they, as teacher leaders, ought to be helping to make all this happen. Missing from most of the data was the acknowledgment that who people are emerges from their experiences, and any attempts to distinguish myths from real constraints on their practice (Britzman, 1986). Results from case studies

We profiled the teacher leaders who most consistently expressed aspects of Cohen’s conception of justice. We found in them a tension between their progressive or liberal tacit regimes and the political conservative regime of the District. For example Linda’s Photovoice and bellwork assignments were filled with deep compassion and responsibility for students and other teachers, as can be seen in the text from her first Photovoice assignment:

The culture of learning is ill in my new school. Some terrible disease has crept in. I am doing everything I can not to catch it. To keep smiling, to keep challenging, to keep humbly asking
every science teacher to try a new strategy, a fresh approach, to remember the day when we were all sure that what was best for students had little to do with paper and everything to do with engagement.

She provided the most evidence in her assignments and in the class discussions that she heard the cry of the marginalized, was willing to protest and take action for justice; and that she was concerned about the lives of teachers and students, and felt a responsibility to help them. However, her action research report was one of the more technical ones, firmly situated within the conservative policies and rhetoric of the District. Linda’s case exemplifies how teacher leaders with laudable objectives based on their desires to promote social justice have their existential freedom stifled by the very system in which they are a part. Linda has a progressive intellectual and emotional connection with her conception of being a teacher leader, yet the District prizes technical approaches -- she is expected to perform calculated, generalized practices that are focused on improving test scores.

**Conclusion**

The story that we would like to tell is of a dedicated group of teacher leaders who pursue social justice and make their work as teacher leaders opportunities for justice. What we found instead was a story about the power of the conservative regime that permeates US schooling. Much has been written about our age of accountability in the US and elsewhere in the world (e.g., Black, 1998; Blanchard, Southerland, & Granger, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2005). For the teacher leaders in our action research class, accountability now includes a focus on teacher performance as measured by classroom observations (evaluations) conducted by administrators, teacher leaders, and peers; and by value added measures (Kane & Staiger, 2008; McCaffrey et al., 2003). This has come about through the dual effects of the actions of conservative state governments and the influence of private organizations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Barkan, 2011). The significance of our study is exemplified by the window it provides into how the accountability
systems employed within conservative regimes affect the beliefs of teacher leaders, leading to the perversion of their desires for justice in their schools into mechanistic and prescribed actions that are focused on upholding and strengthening district and state policies; unfortunately, exacerbating existing injustices.
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Comparison of Psychological Adjustment among Mexican Children Who Are Victims of Violence and Children Living In Family

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The social skills play a very important role in the social and cultural integration of the minor. Through the behaviors showed by the children, they act in their social environment, obtaining, suppressing or avoiding consequences in the social sphere (Caballo, 2000). In the other hand, the absent of social skills carry to the develop of problems behavior, prohibiting with that the proper social interchanging of the children with their peers and adults, altering negatively the expectations and perceptions of the educative agents and giving importance to the poor school performance.

Among the causes that generate deficit in the interpersonal abilities, giving trouble behaviors in the children are familiar factors as the low economic level, the alcoholism, and the frequent changing of the father or mother figure, and the violence familiar (Ison & Rodriguez, 1997).

In different socio-cultural contexts are presented factors like poverty, marginality, and lack of resources, interactions on dysfunctional families and the availability of drugs between others that facilitate the develop of abuse behaviors towards the children and teenagers, as result of these the children becomes children of protection and social assistance. When the children lives different situations of homelessness, maltreatment or abandonment they have to be object of different ways of protection between these the familiar separation and admission to an social assistance with the aim to preserve the security and integrity of the child.

Among the environmental and socioeconomics problems that may act as risk factors to produce a situation of treatment are founded aspects related with the labor situation, as low economic income which increases in single-parent families (Berger & Lawrence, 2005); poverty (Eamon & Keegan, 2001); belonging to an ethnic minority group, raising of children by a single parent, low educational levels and unemployment (Whipple, 2006); poor social and emotional resources (Moss & Moss, 1984); families with mother and stepfather, low education, low socioeconomic status, overcrowding and family violence, conflict solving family problems, lack of
parental involvement, evasive and inconsistent discipline education are important elements that facilitate or are associated with the presence of abuse (Survey of Child Maltreatment and Associated Factors, 2006). On the other hand, negative interactions or lack of them among family members, poor parenting skills, little or absent social networks, unemployment, sickness, and imprisonment (Berkowitz, 2003) as well as social isolation and poor support system. The isolation coupled with poor parental support can be a risk factor for child abuse or neglect (Zebell & Strachan, 2003).

The abuse has many causes, where are mixed features of the children, their family and the individual who abuse of the child, with biological, social, cultural and economic factors as well as the interrelationships which are established between these (Bronfenbrenner, 1987).

It has been found consistently in the literature a number of risk factors associated with child abuse ranging from individual characteristics of the child to disciplinary culture practices that promote abuse. All forms of abuse have a potentially traumatic impact on children and adolescents, the effects vary depending on the type of abuse (abuse, sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect), age and results in multiple forms of abuse when the child or adolescent lives in an atmosphere or climate of violence (Bentovim, 2006). The following risk factors associated with risk of child abuse are exposed here:

Child factors: there are certain features and behaviors of the children that in interaction with parent’s behavior can provoke or enhance the episodes of child abuse. The age of the child, the most young children are the victims with mayor risk of abuse (Whipple, 2006), this is due to their vulnerability and physical and psychological dependence that leads them to spend the most time with their parents or cares, and the mayor tendency to use with them the physical force instead of use the reasoning this because of their limitations (Farnos y Sanmartin, 2005); in addition to that the young age, the time spent at home and poor relationships with parents carries a risk (Lau, Kim, Tsui, Cheung, Lau, M., Yu, 2005)
Family factors: Risk factors in the family refer to the same structural elements and processes of family interaction, these are generated from conflicts in the family coexistence, depending of the resolution capability of the individual, the risk that one of the parents comet infantile abuse. The combination of limited economic power, high birth rates and extreme levels of chronic malnutrition are all risk factors that lead to the rising of intra-family violence, disintegration of the family, early school leaving and abandonment and negligence of the child (McCreery, Groza & Lauer, 2009).

The maternal characteristics associated with increment of the risk to inflict injuries are: teenage maternity, not being married at the moment when the child was born and begin the prenatal cares after the first trimester (Keenan, Runyan, Marshall, Nocera, Merten & Sinal, 2003). It has been found relation between the mothers who has been abused and the mothers who abuse physically from their children, these mothers at the same time had more probability of: had suffered aggression attacks of their own mothers when they are children, as well as poor relationships with them, received less support from their mothers, and also had been met less time to their couples (Coohey, 2004). The relation among the paternal stress, familiar stressors and the high number of members in the family (Whippe, 2006); the depression and consumption of alcohol on the part of the mother, as well as the violence patterns in the family (Kaplan, Dickinson, 2003) marital conflicts and age of the parents when they have a child (Eamo & Keegan, 2001) influence on the abuse risk.

The mayor part of abuses against the children are committed by the own family, especially by men (Gavin Smith, 2000). The presence of violence family or abuse experiences within the family members is a risk factor, since children are more exposed to suffer a physical attack after the occurrence of a violent event (Kim, Kwang-Iel, Park Zhang, Lu & Li, 2000). In a sample studied in children under 15 years was found an increased risk of paternal abusive behavior after a violent event (Lindell & Svedin, 2004). On the other hand, the prevalence of physical abuse shows
associations with mono-parental families (Lau, Kim, Tsui, Cheung, Lau & Yu, 2005). Furthermore, studies have shown that dysfunctional family models favor the emergence and maintenance of a certain socio-cognitive skills deficit, involved in the self-regulation of children's behavior, which conducts to the child to manifest aggressive behavior with his parents and sets an aggressive bond with them (Ison, 2004).

Social Factors: between the environmental and economic troubles that can act as risk factors to produce a situation of maltreatment are founded aspects related to the labored situation, as low income -which increases in single-parent families (Berger & Lawrence, 2005); poverty (Eamon & Keegan, 2001); to be part of an ethnic minority group, upbringing by a single parent, low educational levels and unemployment (Whipple, 2006); poor social and emotional resources (Moss & Moss, 1984); Families with mother and stepfather, low educative levels, low socioeconomic status, overcrowding and domestic violence, conflict solving family problems, lack of parental involvement, evasive and inconsistent discipline education are important elements that facilitate or are associated with the presence of abuse (Survey of Child Maltreatment and Associated Factors, 2006). On the other hand, negative interactions or lack of them among family members, poor parenting skills, little or any social networks, unemployment, sickness, and imprisonment (Berkowitz, 2003) as well as social isolation and poor support system. The isolation with poor parental support can be a risk factor for child abuse or neglect (Zebell and Strachan, 2003).

When the children are victims of abuse, violence or maltreatment, they go to live in a temporal shelter, but it has consequences. In different countries have been done various studies (Hwa-Froelich & Matsuoh, 2008), that reports children that have been risen in social assistance institutions, as a result of abuse or maltreatment situations, shows meaning delays in different areas of develop, including healthy mental problems, when they are compared with children that are risen in their own family. These investigations coincide with the life conditions in the
orphanage that are characterized by a poor health care and an inadequate feeding, as well as limited opportunities for their language development and low cognitive stimulation.

In addition to that, these children and teenagers use to have limited exposition to stimulant materials, social interactions, and few opportunities to act reciprocally with their caregivers and peers, which, taken as a whole, can caused failures in the normal development. Between the main troubles of the psychological adjustment on this population are reported depression, anxiety and low self-esteem in close relation with difficulties to socializing and patterns of insecure attachment (Le Mare, Audet & Kurytnik, 2007).

In the Mexican context, there are little researchers that show this problematic in the children and teenagers under these conditions. Ulloa and Ampudia (2007) produce an study with the aim to identify familiar variables and emotional indicators (through the observation and application of instruments) on children that was founded in a temporal shelter. In most cases, the children had been physically and emotionally maltreated as well as exposed to the negligence; being members of large, disintegrated and low household income families, where the mother was placed as the principal generator of violence, following by the father and stepfather. The research showed that boys and girls are maltreated in the same grade, that the most vulnerable and maltreated are the children on scholar and preschooler age.

Despite to dispose of the dates of the mentioned investigations, is necessary to carry out researchers more systematic, which provide information about the characteristics that are presented by the Mexican children that lives on institutionalized situations, such as those that have been victims of violence to obtain a profile more extended about the develop and psychological adjustment. Is of particular interest to observe variables like social skills, self-steem, depression and anxiety, due to the results that are reported in other countries. This is very important due to the lack of social competence is a feature in aggressive and delinquents children and teenagers, Beelman and Lösel (2006) founded as important components in the develop of a criminal history:
the social inappropriate information process, the poor problem-solving skills and the conflictive relationships with their peers.

Cook et. al (2008) adds that deficits in the social skills are associated closely with emotional, depressive and problems of social isolation, these as a whole is turned on a risk factor to suffer.

To count with more information about the develop and psychological adjustment of the Mexican children that live on institutionalized situation or these that have been victims of the violence, the present exploratory study establishes as an objective to evaluate and compare the social skills, self-esteem, anxiety and depression levels in two groups of children that are founded in different life conditions: those that live in a temporal shelter due to they are victims of maltreatment and those which live with their families.

METHOD

Participants

Participate 60 children (32 boys and 28 girls) with ages between 8 years old and 12 years old, with an average of 9,4 years old. The total sample was composed by two groups: 30 maltreat children that was founded in a temporal shelter (while their legal situation was defined) separated from their parents because of abuse situations, and 30 girls who lives with their families. The sampling of the subjects was through a non- probabilistic sample.

Stage

A room of general use in the case of a temporal shelter, and classrooms of the educative institution.

Instruments

1. Social skills were assessed through the application of the Scale of Assertive Behavior for Children (CABS), originally developed by Michelson and Wood in 1982, which consists of 27 reagents with five response options, evaluating: 1) social skills such as
empathy, giving and receiving compliments or complaints, and 2) expression of feelings, start conversations and make requests.

II. Self-Esteem Inventory for Children with 58 reagents related to their school, social and personal performance.

III. Manifest Anxiety Scale for Children, Revised (CMAS-R) designed by Reynolds and Richmond in 1997, with 37 reagents that explore physiological anxiety, restlessness / hypersensitivity and social concerns.

IV. Child Depression Scale (CDS) developed by Lang and Tisher in 2003, with 68 Likert reagents. It is qualified with a range of 0-200 points and has two subscales: Total depressive, which explores depressive symptoms, affective, social problems and feelings of guilt (a higher score represent higher depressive symptoms) and total positive, which explores what aspects of their life pleasing to the child (inverse scale, lower scores indicate absence of elements of pleasure and fun).

Procedure:

It was explained to the authorities the purpose of the study and confidentiality of the data to obtain, were also asked their informed consent. After obtaining the consent of authorities, parents and caregivers of children, were asked to the children of each group their participation, to the children was explained that they were not obliged to do it, the way would carry out the application of the instruments and that at any moment they could suspend their participation. In each group of children was started the application with the instructions to answer throughout the self-reporting.

Data Analysis

Instruments were scored and the results are captured in a database created with SPSS (version 15), incorporating the values obtained in each instrument applied. Individual scores and group averages of participants in the four instruments were obtained. To perform descriptive
statistical analyses of data were obtained the average scores, and to the comparison of statistical average was applied a T of Student.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows the average scores obtained on the test to characterize patterns of social skills (Assertive Behavior Scale for Children) in the two groups of participating children: abused, and living with their family. In this instrument each answer is qualified with a value of 0-5 points. Total scores that are located between 27 and 42 points can be characterized as assertive behavior, and those between 43 and 50 correspond to a pattern of passive behavior; any group was localized in one of these categories. The two groups had a higher mean score at 80, being located in an aggressive pattern (between 51 and 135), with few skills to interact positively with others. However, it is observed that children who lives with their family are closer to a style of assertive behavior (with an average score of 83.10), while those who were abused children had the highest rates of aggression (mean score 89.23). The difference of 6.13 points between the average scores of abused children and children living in families were statistically significant (p = .03).

Fig. 1 Social skills Scale
Related to the variable self-esteem, the results are showed in the figure 2. The group of abused children obtain a mean of 59.92, which means a normal range, while the children who lives in family obtain the highest score in the self-esteem variable (63.03). It wasn’t found statistically significant differences between groups.

Figure 2. Self-esteem Scale

The figure 3 presents the mean scores of each group respect to the anxiety variable. It was founded that maltreat children had the mayor average score in anxiety (19), that means that this group has high levels of anxiety (from 13 to 28 points). The mean score of the children living in family (13) locates them in the mean anxiety score yet. The difference were statistically significant when was compared the group living with family from the group of abused children (6 points; p=.001).
Figure 4 shows the results of the two groups of children towards Depression Scale. The Total depressive subscale was found that maltreated children had an average score of 153.15 while children who live with their family had the lowest average (127). The difference between both groups when those were compared was statistically significant (26.15 points, p = .01). Related to the Total positive subscale, the children who live with their family present more joy elements or capacity to experiment it (average of 65, 80); the abused children obtain an average score of 62, 23. No statistically significant differences between abused children and those living in families were found.
CONCLUSIONS

In the case of abused children who are in a temporary shelter, psychological adjustment levels can be considered deficient. With respect to social skills, showed a pattern of assertiveness away; his style was characterized by relative responses of aggression, difficulty initiating and maintaining social contacts and few skills to interact with others in a positive way. In relation to self-esteem variable, their levels were low but fell within the normal range. Also they showed high levels of anxiety, which in this case can be considered as a problem. With respect to the levels of depression, they obtained a high level, including negative feelings and a low perception of satisfaction aspects that provide them joy.

With respect to the group of children that lives with their family, the social skills also manifest as limited, indicating an aggressive pattern; however, they are more close to a style of behavior more assertive than the other group. The scales of self-esteem, anxiety and depression indicate normal levels in the adjustment psychological variable.

The findings in the present study, which provide data about these groups of the Mexican children, coincide with those reported in studies conducted in other countries in relation to the problems of developing social skills that present the children which has grown up in institutions, and emotional and behavioral problems have been seen in children and adolescents whose upbringing conditions carry them to develop insecure attachment patterns.

It’s very important to point that those children who are in this situation living under environmental and socioeconomic conditions that increase the risk of an abusive situation occur. These children are developing in difficult conditions such as low economic, social and emotional resources, poverty, marginalization, low education levels and unemployment. This situation comes from a reality much more complex and deep such as the lack of opportunities, academic and labor, which comes from a developing country like Mexico, and due to the frustration that generates the impossibility to achieve a minimum level of life.
Therefore, many of these child victims of violence, are within a circle which is difficult to escape, not only do not have opportunities but also develop resources or skills or have the framework to allow them an adequate development, quite the contrary continue replicating not only the same pattern of abuse, at the same time their own children grow up within the same circumstances where they live them. Is priority in countries like México create programs that allows not only the economic and social develop but also to promote the development of opportunities to break the violence cycle which these children are victims.
References


Abstract

The Building Resilient Communities research and service project brings comprehensive University resources to a disadvantaged school district. Participatory action strategies are used in community engagement to conduct a multi-phase study on community needs. Benefits include providing key community leaders and members with an occasion to discuss their involvement with community programs and provide an opportunity to participate in the development of interdisciplinary programs to address a broad range of community problems.
Context of the Study

The Building Resilient Communities (BRC) research and service project brings comprehensive University resources to a disadvantaged school, which serves three small communities. These communities struggle with poverty, health disparities, food insecurity, and racial tensions. This community partnership allows university experts to guide and support community members’ initiatives. BRC will serve as a pilot project that can be duplicated in other disadvantaged communities in Oklahoma and beyond. Our interdisciplinary team includes agricultural education, educational leadership, counseling psychology, health promotion, and sociology. Our process allows balance between responsiveness to community and school needs and data collection initiatives. Thus far we have accomplished this by creating counseling practicum placements and applying for funding for a school garden. Meanwhile, a community needs assessment is being conducted to evaluate perceived needs for future programs.

Aim/Objectives

As of 2012, 15.9 percent of Americans (or 48.8 million) were living in poverty (U.S. Census, 2013). Poverty and lack of resources in communities greatly affect poor and middle class individuals in both rural and urban environments and in Southern US, poverty is concentrated in rural areas (USDA, 2014). Some effects of poverty include: substandard conditions in housing, nutrition, childcare, access to health care, safety, and access to quality education. Poorer children and teens are also at greater risk for many negative outcomes such as: poor academic achievement, school dropout, abuse and neglect, behavioral and socio-emotional problems, physical health problems, and developmental delays (American Psychological Association, 2014). This partnership serves the three communities within a rural school district, which have an average poverty rate of 24.9% for a population of 2,087; which is nearly double the poverty rate for the county (13.1%) (U.S. Census, 2013). The district is located in a county with a number of other health-related concerns with rates higher than the national and state average including infant mortality rate and
obesity rate (Community Commons, 2014). In this county 88.3% of residents consume fewer vegetables than recommended, compared to 75.9% nationally, which is a significant indicator for future health (Community Commons, 2014). This may be partially due to the lack of grocery stores. This county has fewer than 10 grocery stores per 100,000 residents, less than half of the national average (Community Commons, 2014).

In partnership with the school district, OSU’s Building Resilient Communities (BRC) team has found that many school staff members report these and other issues are present in their community with few resources available to combat them. In line with prior research, the current research team is working in collaboration with Coyle Public Schools to conduct a community needs and capacity assessment to assist in the planning and implementation of initiatives to bring resources to Coyle and surrounding communities.

The leadership of the BRC team is composed of faculty members from Educational Administration, Health Promotion, and Counseling Psychology faculty in the College of Education. The team was created in a context of university initiatives emphasizing multi-disciplinary collaborative work to tackle complex problems facing our society. As educators, psychologists, and health professionals, we realized that given the vital role that schools play in rural community life that we had vibrant relationships with the schools within our disciplines working together we could have a broader impact. From this core group within our college of education, we have grown our team to include faculty and students from agriculture, sociology, business, and early childhood to address economic, sociological, nutrition, and developmental issues.

We have also worked to incorporate service-learning opportunities into our team efforts. We have developed clinical training opportunities for our university counseling students, and have used this project as a resource for undergraduate agricultural marketing students. We are also building in research opportunities for our students, and have begun projects with sociology masters students, and educational administration doctoral students. We are also creating service
opportunities for students in the school district, and have begun to establish student organizations in the school to facilitate student participation in the project.

Our team communicates regularly through a variety of methods. We value face to face meetings with members from the community and university alternating hosting events and meetings to build our partnership. However, we use various forms of electronic communication to keep our stakeholders informed, including email, text messaging, and tweeting. We also utilize document sharing software to allow group collaboration on grant submissions, manuscripts, and meeting agendas. We also have taken advantage of university web services to develop a website for ease of communication and for student and community volunteer recruitment.

A good example of the interdisciplinary impact of the project is found in our work on a greenhouse project. We have secured funding for an expansion of the School’s raised bed gardens, addressing several of our goals. This expansion will allow for opportunities for the agricultural education and science teachers to work on STEM projects with the students in the school, and allow for research opportunities for our faculty. The produce from the gardens will be utilized by the school and community, providing an entrepreneurial laboratory for the students, and increasing the supply of fresh vegetables for the students in the cafeteria.

Method

Participatory action strategies were used in encouraging community engagement to conduct a multi-phase study. This model is based off the work of several university-community partnerships and their successes (Cantor & Englot, 2013; Harkavy, Hartley, Hodges & Weeks, 2013). For this qualitative research project, semi-structured one-on-one in person interview, semi-structured focus groups, and town hall style meetings will be conducted. Semi-structured interviews are a standard technique in qualitative research, which provides a basic interview outline, but allows the respondent to elaborate as he or she sees fit. Interviews will occur in a mutually agreed upon, semi-private space (Glesne, 2011).
Following established protocol in social science research, the research team used key informants followed by snowball sampling techniques for data collection (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006; McIntyre, 2005; Rubin & Babbie, 2007). The research began with a few key informants identified through organizational and personal contacts. The research team has used snowball sampling to identify other pertinent respondents. Focus group respondent solicitation occurred through phone calls and emails. Town hall meeting respondent solicitation will occur through flyers. Both methods will follow established methodological and IRB protocols. Only adults 18 years of age and older will be included in this study.

Outcomes

Results from the focus groups revealed several needs in the community. These needs included: parental involvement, food access, extracurricular activities or electives for children in school, a place for parental or community member socialization, teacher professional development, and, increased communication between school and community members. When community leaders were asked to prioritize the needs from the list they created, the need for more parental involvement was named and discussed at length in both groups. Another prioritized theme was space for socialization. Both groups thought it was important to have a casual space for community members to interact and engage in activities together. Burnout was named as one of the major barriers to helpful programs and their sustainability. Both groups stated they knew of many helping efforts, past and present, in the community, but they conveyed these efforts were run by a few individuals and once those individuals grew tired of the responsibility, the effort disappeared.

Two focus groups were sufficient in this phase of the project as there was a significant amount redundancy of the information presented as well as the information gathered in preliminary meetings with school administration and staff. This redundancy may be due to the small number of individuals heavily involved in this community. As one participant stated, “Twenty percent of the people are doing 80% of the work”. A future projection of this work is the recruitment of
participants who access community resources for additional interviews. These interviews will provide a more in-depth view of resources in the community from the stance of the consumer. The ideas named in these focus groups will be used to prioritize future initiatives.

These focus groups were integral to our project. They gave more than a wider perspective on the needs of the community. Community leaders who attended these meetings wanted to hear more information about the Building Resilient Communities Project including: opportunities to support their leadership efforts; new and fresh ideas; and data to support the investment of time, and resources in their community. The Building Resilient Communities project allowed leaders to re-experience their enthusiasm for their community and to celebrate the rapid progress we have made. Because the project was able to offer some quick solutions, the leadership is invested in future plans for their community. These frontrunners of the community have social capital within their community, which connects the project to other individuals. These connections give the project ground with others as we launch into action. In a small town, word of mouth is the fastest and most comprehensive way to spread ideas.

This research has provided and will continue to provide several benefits to the subjects, their community, university students, faculty, and to society. First, it has provided key community leaders and community members with a support structure to discuss their involvement with community programs and give them an opportunity to participate in the development of programs intended to address concerns about community resources. Second, the research has allowed respondents to address community dynamics and potential programs for future change. Finally, findings are aiding future community organizing efforts. It is hoped that these community interactions will be positive and promote tolerance and understanding in the community. This project should be replicated in other underserved and under-resourced communities around the world, particularly in developing communities or those with high levels of economic disparity.
References


Transformative Preparation: Affecting Teacher Candidates’ Perspectives on Schools and Communities

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**Context of the Study**

The researchers are faculty members in the College of Education at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. They are cohort coordinators, field supervisors, course instructors, and research advisors for teacher candidates. Their work in preparing teacher candidates align with Resiliency Theory’s premise that there is a “.. refusal to associate poverty with deficiency rather than focusing on the strengths that allow poor communities to persevere through challenges related to poverty (Gorski, 2013, p.19). The structure of the National Association for Professional Development Schools’ (NAPDS) nine essentials, also guide their teacher preparation work. One of NAPDS’ essential beliefs is “a school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community” (NAPDS, 2008).

As cohort coordinators, Lenchanko and Furuta place candidates in field placements within partner schools mostly located on the Leeward Coast of Oahu.

**Objective of Study**

Teacher candidates fulfill their classroom field experiences in Leeward Coast and other partner schools that are typically challenged with low student achievement, high teacher turnover and families in poverty. The statistics from the School Status and Improvement Report (2013) indicate that on average, 80% of the students in the Leeward community received free or reduced-cost lunch and that less than 47% of students in grades 3-12 are proficient in math and language arts.

Unfortunately, most teachers with an opportunity to leave high-poverty schools for a job in a low-poverty school choose to do just that. This often leaves schools in the most economically repressed communities struggling to hire and retain fully certified, experienced teachers. [This] can be quite disruptive to student learning (Guin, 2004) and to families’ relationships with their children’s schools (Sepe & Roza, 2010).

(Gorski, 2013, p. 100)
The researchers’ personal belief is that their teacher candidates should be prepared for the challenges of working in schools with high poverty and low academic achievement, as new graduates are often hired by these schools. Within their preparation program, candidates experience both the challenges and rewards of teaching in these schools. The teacher candidates are prepared at the university in collaboration with strong relationships and partnerships with Leeward Department of Education (DOE) schools. Candidates are immersed in these school settings throughout their two-year teacher education program where they gain exposure to and experience working in schools with the particular challenges of poverty, low academic achievement and high teacher turnover.

From 2010 to 2014, two Masters of Education in Teaching cohorts, Kukui (2012-2014) and Malama (2010-2012), conducted their field experiences on the Leeward coast. Cohort Kukui consisted of 17 elementary candidates with a variety of interest and expertise, such as environmental science, music and visual arts. Cohort Malama consisted of 15 elementary and secondary teacher candidates who had Bachelor’s degrees ranging from math to Hawaiian language.

55% of the graduates from cohorts Kukui and Malama are still working at schools on the Leeward Coast or in high poverty communities. The objective of this study was to find out what impacted teacher candidates’ decisions to continue teaching on the Leeward Coast after graduation from their teacher preparation program. Oftentimes, candidates seek employment in schools that are closer to their homes, or in “better” communities. A significant portion of their graduates chose employment on the Leeward Coast after graduation and the researchers investigated the factors that contributed to their candidates’ decisions to work in this community.

**Method**

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After reviewing the data of the field placements during the candidates’ internship semester from cohort *Kukui* (2012-2014) and the graduates who had been teaching for a year from cohort *Malama* (2010-2012), a follow up was conducted with willing graduate participants to discuss the factors that affected their employment decisions. Six individual interviews were conducted to collect insight on the participants’ experiences in the program and to explore the possible factors that contributed to their employment decisions to work on the Leeward Coast. The interviews also focused on exploring the graduates’ teaching philosophies and goals, and their attitudes and perceptions about their students and the community they worked in.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used as the lens for this study is Price’s 2001 Causal Model of Turnover. Price’s model argues that there are 12 factors (opportunity, kinship responsibility, general training, job involvement, positive/negative affectivity, autonomy, distributive justice, job stress, pay, promotional chances, routinization, social support) that typically affect a person’s decision to remain or leave a place of employment. These factors were used as a way to understand the graduates’ decisions to remain teaching in the Leeward community.
Data

Teaching Philosophies and Purpose

All participants shared to some extent that their teaching philosophies and purpose were based on: the importance of exposing their students to opportunities, building relationships with their students and the school community, bridging cultures, the belief that all students can learn, and being an advocate for their students.

Motivating Factors

Participants stated that the following were motivating factors in their decisions to teach in Leeward Coast schools: appreciation shown by students, essence of ohana—the feeling of being a part of a family—in the close knit Leeward community, physical beauty of the place, being role models, social support from colleagues and being able to expose students to opportunities.
Attitudes and Perceptions About the Students and the Community

Four of the six participants had no prior experience working in Leeward Coast schools or in high poverty communities. At the beginning of their teacher preparation program, these four participants indicated that they preferred not to work in communities with these demographics.

The fifth participant wanted to work on the Leeward Coast and had a previously established relationship to the school she was placed at. The last participant had no prior relationship to Leeward Coast schools. However, she had a desire to work with a similar student population.

Discussion

Teaching Philosophies and Purpose

During the interview, participants were asked to share about their teaching philosophies when working with students on the Leeward Coast. What were their beliefs on engaging students? What did they see as their purpose or reason for teaching this particular population?

There were two themes that arose. Firstly, all participants highlighted the belief that all students can learn no matter what their economic background may be. They felt that believing in the students is key and it helped guide their instruction and interaction with the students. One participant talked about her belief in her students by stating, “These students have so much potential and I want to embrace them and their challenges and expose them to a variety of opportunities.” The participants felt it was essential for them to not only believe in their students’ capabilities but to make their students aware of their own self-worth and efficacy.

Secondly, all participants felt successful teaching encompassed: 1) establishing relationships with the students, the school staff, the community and, 2) implementing relevant curriculum.

One participant realized that “teaching does take a village.” This teacher highlighted the importance of enlisting help from all corners of her students’ lives. It was critical to have open communication with parents, support from grade level teachers and administration, and collaboration with community members to guide the students’ academic and social journeys. One
teacher who is also a mother shared that when she works with her students, she asks herself, “If these were my own kids, what would I want for them? I would want to be a teacher that I would want for my own children.”

The participants believed that curriculum also needed to be relevant to students’ lives. They made connections to content through student interest and developed life skills that would serve the welfare of their community. John Dewey (1907) states,

From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in school comes from his inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning in school. (p.89)

These examples highlight the emphasis on student-centered teaching. All participants felt that it was their calling to teach on the Coast to provide stability for their students, become an advocate for them, and encourage them to be successful. All teachers expressed a deep responsibility to the well-being of their students.

Motivating Factors

Participants were asked what their motivation was to teach on the Leeward Coast. What encouraged them to teach there? What success did they find working with the students at their schools?

Overall, there were three main factors that contributed to their motivation to teach in their schools. Firstly, all shared that they want to be positive role models for their students and hoped to expose them to opportunities their students might not have known existed. One male teacher shared that he wanted to be a positive male role model, as there are minimal numbers of male teachers in elementary schools. He also felt that committing himself to teach on the Leeward Coast would help to provide stability within his school’s setting. Another teacher felt that her role was even more than just as a model for her students, but as an advocate. She felt it was her responsibility to be a “voice for her students when they might not have one.”
A second factor that contributed to the participants’ motivation to teach in their schools was the community itself. The Leeward Coast communities are tight-knit and exude a sense of *ohana*. All participants felt they were welcomed into their schools and communities and enjoyed being a part of this “family”. One teacher said that she had a “positive system of support [at her school], and I know the families care about their children.” This made her job easier and more enjoyable.

Not only did the essence of the communities affect the participants’ desire to teach there, but it was also the natural, physical beauty of the place. One participant said that the “physical beauty of the Coast also contributed to my motivation to teach there.” She had had preconceived notions about the physical environment of the Leeward Coast and was under the impression that it was an area run down, and not cared for. Although she did see some of this, she was overall surprisingly mistaken and found the beauty of the mountains and beaches. She enjoyed her scenic drive every morning as she headed to work.

The last factor that motivated the teachers was the students themselves. The participants mentioned having warm, caring students who were always appreciative of their teachers and the learning opportunities they provided. One teacher stated, “They are always appreciative of anything that is given to them, even something as simple as listening to them talk about their weekend. The students are excited to come to school and learn no matter what. Seeing their passion and constant gratitude motivates me to be a better teacher and make them as successful as possible.” They all spoke about the potential they see in their students and that they wanted to be catalysts to propel their students in positive directions. It was well put by one teacher, “All of our students CAN learn!”

*Attitudes and Perceptions About the Students and the Community*

This study’s focus was specifically targeting the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and how they affected their desire to work in high poverty schools. One third of the teacher participants in the study already had a desire to work in the Leeward Coast community.
The other four teachers, as mentioned, did not have any previous experience with the Leeward Coast community and did not intend to teach there upon graduation from their teacher preparation program. Over the course of their masters program, they all had a major shift in their perspectives on working in this community.

The four teachers mentioned believing the negative stereotypes about the Leeward Coast prior to being placed in classrooms there. Once being in classrooms on the Coast, the teachers realized that there were discrepancies in what they thought they knew about the communities and what the reality was. Had they not experienced a classroom and school environment in this community, none of them would have contemplated teaching on the Leeward Coast upon graduation. They said that it was in their field placements that they saw and understood the positive structures in place at the schools they were working in and felt that they belonged and were welcomed into this community. It was in these placements that the teachers also were mentored by experienced teachers and observed the positive impact that they and their mentors had on their students and their families. Knowing they could also be a positive influence on students’ lives helped to shift the teachers’ attitudes about working in high poverty communities.

Not only did the teachers see that they were impacting student learning, but the teachers themselves were impacted by the students’ dispositions and motivation to learn. The teachers saw that the students did not always let negative stereotypes define them and that they were engaged and motivated learners. No longer were the students statistics, stereotypes, or test scores seen in the newspaper, but they became “real” people with the motivation to learn and grow. These realizations were factors in supporting the teachers’ shifts in perceptions about the Leeward students and schools.

**Implications**

We too often hear that teaching in areas that are affected by high poverty and low student achievement is so much more difficult than in typical school settings, thus having higher rates of teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2001; Useem & Neild, 2002). How can institutions encourage and
support educators to teach in these schools? And once they are there, how can schools help to retain their teachers?

Two of the strongest factors for their employment decisions to remain on the Leeward Coast include social support and positive affectivity.

Social support, as identified by Price (2001), is “assistance with job-related problems” (Price, 2001, p. 607). One type of social support is peer support, or the support received from peers in the workplace. According to the teacher participants, they were encouraged and supported by their peers throughout their employment and found that without these relationships, they may have quit their jobs. They found that this support system was a large factor in their decision to remain teaching in their schools. Knowing this, it is important that administrators and university faculty encourage positive and supportive relationships for their teacher candidates and beginning teachers within the school context.

The social support provided by the students’ families and the sense of *ohana* that was fostered within the larger community and the schools themselves also contributed to the positive social support felt by the teachers, which was a motivating factor in continuing their employment on the Leeward Coast. Teachers need to be encouraged to extend themselves to the families and open themselves to establishing positive relationships with them.

The second factor that made a significant difference in affecting teachers’ desires to teach on the Leeward Coast was positive affectivity. Positive affectivity is a “dispositional tendency to experience a pleasant emotional state that directly affects job satisfaction” (Price, 2001, p.605). If a person tends to have positive affectivity, s/he may be biased toward the positive and “selectively perceive the favorable aspects of the job, thereby increasing his/her job satisfaction” (Price, 2001, p.605). All six of the teacher participants found the positive in their experiences—whether in their work with their students, or their perceptions about the community they worked in. As such, once they began working in the community, their positive experiences influenced their views of the
Leeward community and its students. And now, more permanently, they have a positive view of
the students, schools, and community.

As teacher educators, it is important that we find support systems and strategies to help our
candidates successfully work in challenging schools. More often than not, they may be placed there
in their first teaching positions without being adequately prepared for the challenges that they may
encounter. Gorski asserts,

One of the reasons teachers leave is they simply are not adequately prepared for the
circumstances in which they are working. Research clearly shows that quality teacher preparation
programs produce more effective teachers, lead to better student outcomes, and result in lower
teacher attrition rates (Cochran-Smith et al., 2011; Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2011) … when teachers
are provided with training that is tailored specifically to the contexts in which they plan to teach,
they are more likely to stay in the teaching profession. (Burstein et al., 2009)

Teacher preparation programs also need to actively recruit community members who have a
desire to teach in their neighborhood schools, and also those that are motivated to work in high
need communities. These teachers already have the motivation to work in these settings and have a
sense of responsibility to them.

Having teacher candidates experience teaching in communities like the Leeward
District is imperative when we want effective educators teaching our students. From our
experience, when teacher candidates work in these communities, schools, and classrooms, they see
a different side of and better understand the communities. Their preconceived notions about these
places and people are challenged once they are there and they may change their perspectives about
them. Without providing these experiences to our candidates, we keep them from having a “real”
understanding of what the community is and who the people are - the people and places remain
figures of stereotypes and misinformation. Also, incorporation of coursework where the deficit
view of poverty is challenged and candidates become knowledgeable about working with students
and families in poverty is also a necessity. Otherwise, deficit views will perpetuate. Placements in
these locations and infusing discussions about poverty and the deficit view challenge stereotypes and encourage candidates to want to teach and to continue to teach within these school settings.
References


Fostering Youth Empowerment through Digital Storytelling:

Preliminary Results from Albania

By:

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Context of the Study

Albania is a small country of approximately 2.8 million people in Southeastern Europe. Until 1991, Albania was one of the most isolated and economically disadvantaged countries of Europe. Albanians were subject to a brutal totalitarian regime for more than four decades, with the vast majority living in poor rural and mountainous communities isolated from the rest of the world. Since the fall of the communist dictatorship over two decades ago, Albania has pursued democratic elections, a market-based society, and gradual integration with the wider international community. In June 2014, the Albanian government was granted European Union candidate status. This significant development will lead to further efforts to harmonize policies between Albania and the European Community in the months and years to come, and although the primary target for reforms will be legal, economic, and judicial, this new status nonetheless has important educational implications as well.

The research addressed in this paper explores the role of youth in contributing to the ongoing construction of Albanian democratic institutions and to Albania’s role in wider regional and international communities. This project builds on my experience as a qualitative researcher in Albania throughout the last decade. My doctoral dissertation, completed in 2012, was a vertical case study that examined how key actors interpreted and enacted policies for democratic citizenship education and the global knowledge economy in Albania. I looked at the complex roles of international experts, local education professionals (Gardinier, 2014), and Albanian teachers (Gardinier, 2012) in mediating global and local forces for educational change. While my early research focused on educational reform and practice, this new project is focused on the role and perspective of Albanian youth vis-à-vis the building of a democratic society in the context of globalization.

Albania is now considered an “upper middle income” country with a per capita GDP of approximately 4650 USD in 2013, according to the World Bank. Though many indicators show
that the Albanian economy is improving, the national unemployment rate hovers around 17%, and up to 32% for youth between ages 15-29 (Republic of Albania Institute of Statistics, http://www.instat.gov.al/al/home.aspx). With economic and political change, there has been cause for optimism, but the lack of concrete employment opportunities for educated young adults has led many of them to seek educational and professional opportunities abroad. This interest in study abroad was very apparent during the summer of 2014 when I conducted the project.

In this brief paper, I will provide an overview of our initial project, some preliminary results, and a discussion of possible implications for future research and programming with Albanian youth. I hope that these reflections will contribute to the wider conference goals of addressing global and local economic and social inequality through reflective and transformative teaching, learning, and research.

Overview of the Project

In July 2014, with financial support from the Biosophical Institute, Dr. Elton Skendaj and I conducted the Albanian Youth Voices for Peace (YVP) Project with 20 youth from his hometown of Vlora in Southern Albania. Vlora is one of the three largest cities in Albania with a population of approximately 125,000 people. We partnered with a local non-governmental organization, the Vlora Youth Center to conduct the workshop. The Youth Center has been working with a cohort from the Vlora Youth Parliament, a network of young people, 14-18 years old, who seek to improve youth participation in public debates and democratic processes. In particular, the goals of the Vlora Youth Parliament are to empower and enable youth to become active citizens by participating in democratic elections, exercising their right to speak out and be heard, mobilizing for community development, and taking action for social change.

Dr. Skendaj and I conducted a one-day workshop with this valuable group of political engaged young people to provide training in critical thinking, dialogue, and community engagement while learning more about their perceptions of societal change. We used the modalities
of theatre of the oppressed role plays (Boal, 1993) and digital storytelling (Lambert, 2013) to engage the youth leaders in skill development and interactive critical thinking activities that they can then use in their community to support their efforts for greater social justice and public accountability.

Aims and Objectives

The overarching purpose of our project was to learn about youth perspectives on their role in Albania’s democratic development and to aid them in visualizing the further economic and social development of their community in Vlora. Some of the questions the project addressed included:

- What are the prevalent hopes and aspirations of youth in terms of their education, employment, and role as democratic citizens?
- What changes have young people experienced in their communities?
- What changes do young people desire to improve society and feel more represented by political leaders?
- What steps can young people take to resolve social conflicts without violence and improve the conditions of wellbeing for themselves, their families, and their communities as a whole?
- How do young people utilize technology and social media?
- How can education and technology better serve their hopes, goals, and aspirations?

Because our workshop in summer 2014 was an initial step in the project, we aim to continue our engagement with these youth during subsequent months.

Methods

We explored our broad research questions through a number of activities. First, in the morning session, Dr. Skendaj led an activity in which students brainstormed what they felt to be a
critical conflict in their school and/or community. Groups had about 20 minutes to develop a collective role play that would symbolically represent and dramatize the conflict. They were then asked to develop a role play to represent an effective resolution to the conflict. As each group enacted their role play, Dr. Skendaj asked the group members to “freeze” so that the larger group could analyze the situation and offer potential solutions. Then the role play resumed, and the original group members acted out their own resolution. After all the role plays were finished, we discussed the themes and issues that arose and made note of actions steps that could be taken by various actors – such as individuals, social groups, institutional leaders, or governmental leaders.

Then, after a brief coffee break, we moved into the digital storytelling activity. I led a short presentation and discussion on the goals and steps involved in digital storytelling and showed a few brief examples to the group. I explained how sharing powerful stories can lead to positive social change. According to The Center for Digital Storytelling, “Personal narratives can touch viewers deeply, moving them to reflect on their own experiences, modify their behavior, treat others with greater compassion, speak out about injustice, and become involved in civic and political life. Whether online, in social media or local communities, or at the institutional/policy level, the sharing of stories has the power to make a real difference” (http://storycenter.org/about-us/).

To kick-off the digital storytelling activity, we broke the group into 3 teams, and asked each team to think about these questions:

- **How have you experienced change in your community?**
- **What are specific changes that have helped to improve your community, and in what ways?**
- **What changes have harmed your community, and in what ways?**

Each team was given a digital camera, and they had one hour to walk around the nearby community to gather physical and photographic “evidence” to build their stories. We emphasized the use of evidence as a way to both document the changes they observed and to specify the
important details about the things that directly improved or detracted from the quality of life in their community. After one hour, the group members returned to HQ and worked quickly to compile and present their stories.

Results

The results of these activities were impressive. The youth told stories about their communities, their families, and their identities; they eloquently expressed feelings of loss, longing, sadness, humor, frustration, and hope. For example, Group One’s story was titled: “Vlora: A Grey Story to Tell.” The playful young man who spoke English with a bit of a British and Albanian accent began his narrative clicking through images behind him: “Back in time, when my parents were young, Vlora represented the real energy of the sea shore, the life, and sunny city that everyone wanted to visit.” He poetically described the clear blue sea and sunny city, stating wistfully, “If only I could have seen that.” Meanwhile, as he is talking, the images behind him provide a poignant juxtaposition; they show the garbage on Vlora’s streets and parks, tangled electrical wires hanging off buildings, concrete structures that are half built or half destroyed, and the vestiges of industrial waste. There is an image of the narrator in one photo, looking down disdainfully at a heap of rubble. He continues, playfully, as the audience murmurs and giggles, “We don’t know that city any more… maybe our children will. Let’s hope that the changes we have started to see will continue…we wish that Lungo mare is finished by that time…. We wish it is no longer that cold, grey story to tell.” Then the presentation closed with credits to group members.

Group Two was directed by Xhoni, who presented his own story in a somewhat dramatized way. With the ballad “Everything burns” by Anastacia playing in the background, the video began with the image of empty benches and the words, “An empty place at everybody’s soul. Sometimes catching a great opportunity means losing something from ourselves.” The next images were of a map of Albania draped in the national flag and an image of the Ferry Port at Vlora. The text
continued, “This is my personal story. But it is a story that belongs to every Albanian seeking a better life. I was 17 when I had to trade my beloved people with the dreamland, USA!” Though the words were serious, the images showed two teenage hands slowly breaking their clasp, a footstep towards the Ferry port, a hand reaching out towards the dock, and then five of the young women in the group waving tearfully good bye, as Xhoni steps further toward the dock to embark. The text read, “It was a difficult decision and we all felt the separation. It was me alone, prepared to face the music! I followed my dream and I was ready, despite everything. It was my time to make it!” As the music faded out dramatically, “Everything burns, everything burns, everything burns... watching it all fade away... till everything burns while everyone screams... burning their lies, burning my dreams,” the video ended with credits.

Group Three’s presentation returned to a similar theme as Group One. The title posed the question, “Vlora, the pearl of Albanian beauty?!” The young woman narrating showed tourist images of Vlora’s coastline and mountains. Then she quickly turned to a slide that read, “The sad reality,” followed by images of destroyed buildings and the rubbish near the sea. The next slide placed side by side a monument of the heroes of Vlora’s national independence and a decaying plaster sculpture with graffiti on it. The title read, “Which one represents us?” Then the next slide showed the undeveloped land by the sea and asked, “Where is Lungo mare?” which was the second reference to the seaside promenade that Edi Rama’s government promised before they bulldozed many of the haphazard structures that had come to inhabit the banks of Vlora’s port and coastline. Showing an image of an overflowing garbage canister, the next slide begged the question, “Is this the future of our city?” But then, striking a more optimistic note, the narrator concluded by saying no, “The future of this city is in our hands. It is our duty to preserve the natural beauty of Vlora.” She concluded, pointing to an image of a beautiful beach, “This is the future of Vlora; Vlora must be exactly the pearl of Albanian tourism and Albanian beauty.”
By the end of these three presentations, we did not have as much time as we had hoped to
debrief and discuss the results with the participants. Yet I was amazed at the work they had
accomplished, together, in such a short time. The maturity and sophistication of this group was
evident not only in their strong teamwork, but also in the way they integrated humor and irony
alongside a gentle hopefulness into each of these brief narratives.

Groups One and Three focused on the stark contrast between Vlora’s past and present and
between its reputation as a seaside “pearl” and the glaring reality of its debris and disrepair. The
subtle longing for accountability also came through in these narratives. Questions about “Lungo
Mare” encapsulated the participants’ skepticism about the willingness of the government to follow
through on promises of urban renewal and revitalization, as well as economic and social
development. The youth spoke often of their desire to see these changes and to feel confident that
their leaders would uphold their promises. Earlier in the workshop, during the role plays, much of
our discussion had centered on the problem of corruption and the lack of judicial procedures to
hold offenders accountable. Many of the images they selected as evidence bore witness to a similar
sense that the authorities were not accountable for maintaining the public space within their
community.

Group Two’s message also conveyed a common theme of the bittersweet experience of
migration. Xhoni had lived in the U.S. and in Albania, and he was about to return to the U.S. The
video gave voice to his mixed loyalties and the tradeoff he felt he had to make for better
opportunities abroad. Indeed many of the youth were eager to hear about how they too could
pursue their university studies abroad. And yet the tone of the music that Xhoni selected and the
lyrics of the song “Everything burns” seemed to convey a message as well. “Walking through life
unnoticed, Knowing that no one cares; Too consumed in their masquerade; No one sees her there
and still she sings”… The lyrics and persistent strength of the melody seemed to parallel his
experience of having to overcome the hard stuff and remain focused on the next steps ahead.
Finally, each of these narratives relied on playful, and at times ironic, humor to send a message. To me this was a hallmark of the digital storytelling experience in Albania. These young people have learned to laugh and make fun of the faults they see around them. There are times that they can poke fun at the absurdity of false government promises or political doublespeak. Through humor, the question that Group Three asked: “which one represents us?” – the nationalistic monument of the past or the tragic graffitied statue of the present – tells a lot about their search for identity. They are growing up in a time when Albania is reaching out to Europe and the West seeking greater integration and belonging. Their questions seemed to ask, “Do we belong to the past or to the future?” And in the end, they answered this by saying that we must take responsibility for the future, make it our own, and take pride in what we represent.

Conclusion and Implications

As noted earlier, this workshop was a preliminary step in what we hope will evolve into a longer term engagement with the Vlora Youth Parliamentarians. Yet despite the brevity of this initial engagement, I believe that we can draw some interesting insights and conclusions from these results. The first is that digital storytelling seems to be an accessible, effective, and provocative way for these young people to express their ideas and perspectives about community development, identity, belonging, and future aspirations. Some of the youth had experience working with digital media and even video production. The task to gather “evidence” to convey a story with a distinct point of view did not seem overly challenging to this group. I believe this is one of the hidden powers of storytelling – it draws on the experiential knowledge of participants, places value on what they know, and highlights their own creative voice. This resonates with my philosophy of reflective teaching and learning. I believe our lived experience is an important tool for analyzing and making sense of the world and our position in it. I would argue that as Albanian youth (and youth around the world) are becoming increasingly wed to technology, and tied together through
global social media, digital storytelling provides a powerful modality through which youth can creatively express their ideas, critiques, and new visions for social change.

I also believe that storytelling is well suited to both academic and social justice ends. As a researcher, I hope to continue working with Albanian youth to explore in more depth their stories of change, hope, resilience, and resistance. I would also like to explore their narratives of schooling and change in order to have a better understanding of student perspectives on post-socialist educational reform and democratization. As an educator who is concerned with social justice, my sympathies with these youth extend beyond my role as researcher. I believe that telling these stories helps give voice to concerns that often do not find an audience and thus lay dormant. Humor should not be the only tool available to young people who are frustrated by unfulfilled political and economic promises and unjust social practices. Digital storytelling, particularly in combination with social media, is increasingly serving as a powerful tool for youth collaboration and mobilization. I hope to have the opportunity to continue working with such eloquent young people in helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations that are at once personal and political.
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Website Analysis of a School District in Eastern Massachusetts

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Abstract:

Parent-involvement is on the agenda of recent Obama legislation, but it continues to ignore issues pertaining to English Language Learners and their parents. This paper uses an ecological frame to analyze how a website of a school district in Eastern Massachusetts constructs language ideologies, an ELL parent, and notions of a “good” parent. The findings show dominant ideologies about language that create obstacles that go beyond the language and cultural barriers for meaningful parental participation.
Introduction:

In 2020, the number of culturally and linguistically diverse students in the United States public schools is predicted to reach 50% (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). Parent-involvement increases the chances for academic success, well-being, and supports the students’ diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in a monolingual and monocultural school context (Nieto, 2010, pp. 148; Panferov, 2010, pp. 106), where maintaining the minority language becomes increasingly difficult with the superiority of English (Gibbons & Ramirez, 2004). English Language Learners appropriate and transform knowledge through three global phases: cognitive adjustments, tools or artifacts are transformed, and transforming surroundings, involving their communities and families (Mantero, 2008). Parents’ own ideologies about language interact with the learners’ experiences through the global phases. Shin (2010), Ma (2010), and Jeon (2007) provide examples of parents’ language ideologies and the relationships between parents and heritage language learners. Yutong raises the question, “Are distinct traditional cultural perspectives being replaced by new hybrid perspectives? If so, where can the adolescent and the family find social and cultural support for the unique result?” (Ma, 2010, pp. 120). One community organization, called the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC), responds to this issue by addressing the complexity of cultures of Asian-American parents and their children engaging with each other: “BCNC’s children and youth programs are designed to support home culture while exploring American culture and ultimately integrating both”(Ng, 2013, pp. 42). The content analysis of the website of a school district in Eastern Massachusetts uses an ecological theoretical frame, borrowing from Montero’s critical pedagogy of place, which raises questions about inequalities of power, and internalization of beliefs about language, social groups, and culture (Mantero, 2008). A focus group protocol through individual and group interviews with the web designer, parent center coordinator, and parents will be carried out in April 2016. The purpose of the analysis and focal group protocol is to determine the ideologies about language, the construction of what it means to be a “good” parent, and to
determine how parents are being constructed through the content of the website. Jeon (2010) defines language ideologies as, “language ideologies tend to be conceived as broader systems, of often naturalised, beliefs, ideas or values concerning language” (Jeon, 2010, pp. 115). I use this definition to identify issues that extend systems of beliefs about language to systems of beliefs about other issues affecting parental involvement. My findings provide evidence of how dominant ideologies about language are related to dominant ideologies about race, ethnicity, culture, and immigration. These beliefs construct ELL parents and create obstacles that go beyond the language and cultural barriers for meaningful parental participation.

The website chosen for content analysis represents a school district consisting of one preschool, five elementary schools, one intermediate school (elementary/middle), one charter school, and one high school. Last year, the district had a student population of 4,900 students, 77.7% of whom are white and 320 are English Language Learners (MDESE, 2014). The largest group of the ELL student population of the school district is Latino(a) (MDESE, 2014). Out of the student ELL population, the most common language spoken is Portuguese (51.6%) and the second most common language is Spanish (24.4%) (MDESE, 2014). The instruction for ELLs is through Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), except for 1% who are classified as “opted-out” (MDESE, 2014). 63% of the ELL student population is on a free lunch program, and 80% are from low-income families (MDESE, 2014). The town’s population is estimated to reach 44,641 as of year 2013, the median household income is $61,173, and 11.7% live below the poverty line (The U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The content analysis of the website contains an analysis of primary documents, media texts (images, video, audio, etc.), and build-up of content in the home page, ELL parent center page, English language learners page, and student services page. I view the content through the use of language, such as when and what language is used, what is left out, and for what purposes. I also examine the content through the location of images: in the front and the background of the website.
The findings of the analysis address the following questions: How does the organization and build-up of content construct the parent and what it means to be a “good” parent?, what are the ideologies about language being constructed through the website?, and what can educators, the school community, and parents do with this information on a policy planning level and on a level for advocacy and professionalism?

Primary Documents:

All primary documents that were chosen for the analysis intended to meet the needs of parents of English Language Learners in the school district. This is noted through the website’s use of labels addressing ELL parents: “English Language Learners”, “Resources for Parents in English, Spanish, and Portuguese”, and “ELL Parent Center”. However, labels, such as “Student Services”, did not specifically address ELL parents, and served as a more general representation. None of the labels or titles of pages were in Portuguese or in Spanish, the two most common languages spoken by ELL parents in the district. The inaccessible content can be a rejection of the languages of ELL parents, their social identities and cultures that they bring with them: “when one group prohibits another from using its native language, the speakers view it as a rejection not of their language, but of their social group and their culture” (Henze & Arriaza, 2006, pp. 163). While languages besides English are not explicitly banned from being spoken, there is a disproportionate distribution of power and access of resources on the website benefiting native English speaking parents, who can access the information, over parents who speak languages other than English and cannot access the information. The dominant group’s beliefs about how information should be accessed on the website is through English and assimilation.

Student Services Calendar
If the intent is to make the Student Services calendar accessible to ELL parents, there is no information in any languages other than English for instruction on how to access the Student Services calendar. The Student Services calendar contains all school related events for students, such as Parent-Teacher conferences, school committee meetings, and scheduled school days off. The “Student Services” calendar can be found under the drop-down menu, “Departments”, of the home page, by clicking on “Student Services” and clicking on “Student Services Calendar” on the left menu. The “Student Services” section is the only page in the website that has documents in Portuguese, the primary language spoken by parents of English Language Learners in the district. However, there are several steps to be taken to find the documents, including logging in as a guest into the school district’s moodle school log-in system (all in English), a system that contains other information pertaining to students’ success in school. The documents in the “Student Services” section are examples of verbatim translations, meaning a lot of information is missing, because of word to word translations: “attempts to provide verbatim translations can be especially problematic, given both the cultural nuances of utterances and their ideological framings and the lack of equivalence of syntactic and semantic fields across languages” (Orellana, 2004, pp. 92).

*Student Services Files in Portuguese*
Topic 3

PORTUGUES

- Como Ajudar com a Lição de Casa
- Conferências de Pais e Professores
- Ajude Seu Filho a se Preparar para o MCAS
- Trabalhando com a Escola para Ajudar Seu Filho a Aprender
- Boletim Escolar
- Translation Glossary
- Classes de Inglês GRATIS
- Relatório de Objetivos Avaliáveis de Desempenho Anual
- PROVOCADORES E VÍTIMAS
- REPROVAÇÃO E APROVAÇÃO DE UM ALUNO
- MORTE E SOFRIMENTO NA FAMÍLIA
- 20 Maneiras Que Vocês Podem Ajudar Seus Filhos a Serem Bem Sucedidos na Escola
- Dicas ao Pais: Como Monitorar Televisão e Video Games
- Freqüência na Escola: A Chave para o Sucesso
- ANSIEDADE E DISORDENS DE ANSIEDADE EM CRIANÇAS: INFORMAÇÕES AOS PAIS
Although Portuguese is the most common language among this population of ELL parents (spoken by %51.6 of the ELL students), the files in Portuguese were third on the list. One document is an article on “Anxiety Disorders”. It has been translated in Spanish in very small font and the file in Portuguese is inaccessible. With the addition of this document, the assumption is that ELL Parents have children with anxiety disorders. This tendency ignores the challenges culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families face in an English-only environment. Through this article, the notion of a “good” parent is one who accepts the information provided by the school on student’s issues in the classroom and does everything to follow what the articles have to say about the students. Parents are constructed to view their children as having deficits rather than assets. In fact, most of the documents in English, Spanish, and Portuguese in this section of the website come from Parent’s Place, under the umbrella of the Massachusetts Statewide Parent Information & Resource Center (PIRC) and it is “a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs”, whose mission is to serve families with disabilities. If the purpose is to address the needs of Latino parents, the information is not coming from an organization that focuses on immigration, linguistic, or cultural issues and resources pertaining to Latinos, rather it is coming from an organization that provides resources on disabilities.

Anxiety Disorders File
**Media Texts:**

The analysis of media texts includes the build-up of images in the home page slideshow and images in the front and back of the four pages pertaining to parents of English Language Learners: the home page, the ELL parent center page, and the English Language Learners page. The homepage contains a slideshow of twenty images in the front. The background of all pages is a sandy beach shore. An ELL Parent, whether newly arrived or has been in the district for a while, may not have a car, may not have access to the beaches, may not be familiar with going to the beaches, may not know where the town hall is or know about the process of getting a beach sticker. The parent also may not have the needed requirements for getting a beach sticker, which includes a valid driver’s license and up to date vehicle registration. The processes for getting a driver’s license or vehicle registration alone is a difficult process for any parent, who is not familiar with English. The background image may be a constant reminder of an ELL parent’s challenges. The images on the home page are from picture files, mostly belonging to the school district. The first picture is of an American Flag. The next image is titled “courtyard” in html code. It is a picture of a playground of an elementary school. Following the school is a picture of a non-named school, and a picture of a big fish. Perhaps the picture of the big fish is supposed to represent “school of fish”, however this is a cultural reference, and without the meaning behind the context of the image, an ELL parent would not understand such a reference. The assumptions through the buildup of images from the volleyball to school building images is that parents have the resources (time, money, access to information about sports in languages parents understand, including sign-up sheets) to sign their child up for sports, find sports to be an important element of their children’s education, and understand sports as important cultural component to school: “to be effective advocates, parents require information about how the school culture works” (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004, pp. 66). It is important for parents of ELLs to see their role as equal to other parents in the school: “equity happens when Latino parents are participating in the schools on a par with their white Euro-
American counterparts” (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004, pp. ix). Without the resources and knowledge of the school’s expectations of a parent’s role in their student’s academic success, there cannot be meaningful parental participation.

*Home-page slideshow*

1.

3.

5.

7.

9.
There are no authentic images of Latino students or families in any of the images in the front or the back of the home page or other pages addressed to ELL parents. Instead, on the pages meant for ELL parents, there are two photo shopped pictures from an online clipart gallery,
including a picture of a Black or African-American family and two elementary-aged Asian girls sitting on grass, reading a book. The lack of inclusion of Latino students and families through authentic images, such as the white Euro-American volleyball team and picture of faculty, demands the question: where are Latinos in the schools, how are they participating, and how are they included?

**Conclusion:**

The government of the United States has addressed the issues of parent-involvement as an issue in the U.S. public schools: president Obama’s Race to the Top and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has provided $13 billion dollars of funding for No Child Left Behind’s Title I programs, including $3 billion for Title I school improvement programs and $5 billion to Early Childhood programs (The U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Title III of NCLB requires schools to involve parents specifically of limited English proficient children. Massachusetts also contains legislature addressing parent-involvement through Chapter 71A Section 5: Parental Waivers, Section 8: Standardized testing for monitoring education programs, and Section 8: Community-based English tutoring. Both NCLB and Chapter 71A put an emphasis on parents needing to learn English to connect with the school, and do not mention systematic changes of the school to address the issues of parent-involvement, such as addressing the issues of social hierarchies, internalized ideologies, and monocultural and monolingual bias that dismiss the cultural and linguistic differences of language minority parents. Several initiatives and programs reflect the characteristics of effective involvement of bilingual parents. The BCNC’s Family Services program uses an asset-based approach, addressing the needs of parents, such as cultural differences in parenting and lack of information about the American educational system: “the program addresses parenting concerns and family issues within the context of supporting children’s outcomes” (Ng, 2013, pp. 41). Examples of successful parent-involvement of Latino parents in schools has been written about by several authors (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004;
Valenzuela, 1999). Although there are examples of meaningful parental participation, the issues continue to be ignored in policies and professionalism, including the TESOL standards for teachers of P-12. These TESOL standards mention “dialogue journals with students, parent-teacher interviews, and home-visits” (TESOL, 2010, pp. 15), but information about how to involve parents in schools is limited to these examples, ignoring the issues of immigration, the dominant culture and language, and attitudes by staff about parents of language minority backgrounds. The TESOL standards address families as a whole, rather than mentioning “parents”. Parents’ ideologies about language and culture has an effect on the English Language Learner’s well-being and student academic achievement: “Immigrant students who maintain a positive ethnic identity as they acculturate and who become fluent bilinguals are more likely to have better mental health, do well academically and graduate from high school than those who completely assimilate” (Nieto, 2010, pp. 271). If the goal of TESOL is to emphasize student achievement, parents must be included in the participation of their children’s experiences in school. To do this there needs to be clear characteristics of effective parent-involvement models, an inclusion of the histories and contexts of different immigrant groups and immigration policies through a critical race perspective in professional development or TESOL certification training, TESOL standards that include talking about and challenging attitudes about immigrant parents, and a commitment to understanding issues of cultural differences in parenting, school, and work environments. In addition, funding for parental-involvement should include hiring of bilingual staff that understands the cultural and linguistically differences often lost in verbatim translations.

Focus Group Protocol Plan January – May 2016:

To provide further evidence of ideologies of language and issues of parent-involvement affecting meaningful parental participation of ELL parents, I will conduct interviews with the web designer and the parent center coordinator. I will then carry out a familiarization workshop with ELL parents in the school district.
Questions for Focal Participants: IT Personal & Parent Center Coordinator

ITPersonal/Web-designer Questions:

1. What do you think of the use of languages?
2. What is in the front and what is in the background of the website?
3. Was the Mayflower or the beach scene important? If so how?
4. Was there a committee? How was the content collected and by whom?
5. What if any, are the Parent Liaison Services?

Parent Center Coordinator:

1. What kinds of information do ELL parents receive from the school?
2. What are the ways ELL parents get informed?
3. What if any, are the resource for ELL parents on the school district website?
4. What do you think of the use of languages on the website?

Familiarization Workshop for ELL parents:

With the school’s permission and support, I will organize a familiarization workshop in Portuguese and Spanish to inform parents about the district’s website, and to do a walk-through of the site. The workshop will take place during a Back to School night or Parent-Teacher Conference. The purpose is to find evidence on how parents are being constructed through the website content build-up and organization, and to identify the ideologies about language that are being constructed. The findings will be used to provide steps for moving forward on issues of parent-involvement of culturally and linguistically diverse parents.

Questions for ELL parents through Familiarization Workshop:

1. What information on the website exists that is new to you?
2. What are the challenges to accessing the information on the website?
3. Do you look at the website for school information?
4. How fast or slow is the internet connection you use?
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Not Available
Not Available
H.O.P.E.
“Helping Other People Excel”

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Abstract

Hope is a positive psychological construct. The definition of hope utilized in this paper is derived from the work of the late Dr. C. R. Snyder. His definition and theory of hope is that hope consists of goals and/or problems to solve, pathway thinking and agency thinking. Hope can be measured. There are advantages that high hope people enjoy that their low hope peers do not. Hope can be increased and taught. Hope is the force that moves a person from one point in life to another point in life. Without hope, a person is paralyzed and left with unmet goals and unrealized dreams. A person can help someone else increase their hope levels. This paper will explain hope, the hope theory, and some ways a person can help other people excel by helping them to increase their hope.
Life is full of tasks, problems, goals, and choices. Every day people make decisions that either keep them moving toward a good and hopefully a better life. Alternatively, some people make decisions that keep them from moving forward at all. In other words, the choices people make result in hope or stagnation (Lopez, 2013). So what is hope? The definition and theory of hope that is relied upon in this article is detailed below. Further, there are ways in which a person can help another person increase their hope. These are detailed below.

**Snyder’s Hope Theory**

The hope theory which underpins this current paper was developed by C. R. Snyder (1991). To date, it has been the most researched and validated theory pertaining to the measurement of hope (Creamer, 2009). Snyder established that the very core of hope was a cognitive component which is the perception that goals can be met (Snyder, 1994). Therefore, Snyder’s Hope Theory rests on the definition of hope which is that hope is a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals) (Snyder, 1991).

There are two types of hope described by Snyder. First, trait hope, which is established in children by age 3 and is stable thereafter (McDermott & Snyder [2000], Snyder [1994; 2000], and Snyder, McDermott, Cook, & Rapoff [2002]). Second, there is state hope, which can be influenced by situational factors that are reflected at an ongoing or “state” level. The fostering of hopeful thinking begins with a child needing a secure attachment with one or more caregivers, who in turn are taught and modeled effective goal-related activities (Snyder, 1994). If parents reinforce cognitive processes consistent with goal achievement, children become increasingly hopeful. Likewise, if children are discouraged from goal setting or distrust major attachment figures, due to abuse or neglect, they will display limited ability to formulate and pursue goals (Snyder, 2000). Of utmost importance is that these cognitive constructs are founded in an individual’s ability to
develop and achieve desired goals utilizing multiple strategies to reach desired goals (Snyder, 1994).

Goals

Goals, the essential ingredient of Snyder’s Hope theory, are discussed herein in detail. Snyder’s major assumption when developing the hope theory was that human actions are goal directed (Snyder, 2002). Goals are the anchoring point for the development and measurement of hope (Snyder et al., 1991). Snyder reported that in order for goals to be motivating, they should be deemed as having a high personal value (Snyder, 2000). Goals do not require hope if they are easily achieved or seemingly impossible to achieve, or are not motivating or valued (Snyder, 2000). To reach goals, people must perceive that they are capable of imagining one or more routes, or pathways, to their goals.

Pathway Thinking

Hope also consists of pathway thinking. Pathway thinking is a person’s perceived ability to develop reasonable routes to achieving desired goals (Snyder, 1991). In other words, pathways symbolize a person’s belief that he/she can produce feasible routes and possible alternative routes for completing planned goals (Snyder, 2000). Pathways are related to problem solving and strategy based performance by an individual (Chang, 1998). Every goal can have several plausible pathways, although some pathways may be more effective or reasonable than others. If a perceived pathway is not effective in accomplishing a goal, then the individual will attempt an alternate pathway. A person who is considered high on trait-like pathways thinking will perceive him- or herself as being successful at generating routes to goals or, regenerating routes if a strategy is blocked (Snyder, 2000). This individual confidence in the ability to produce strategies to meet goals is at the heart of pathways thinking.

Agency Thinking
The motivational component of hope is agency thinking. Agency thought is the perceived capability to use one’s pathways to reach desired goals (Rand, 2009). Agency is essential for movement toward a goal (Lopez, Snyder, & Teramoto Pedrotti, 2003). If a goal is blocked, agency thinking and motivational self-talk assists with the required inspiration to discover the best alternate pathway to reach the goal (Snyder, 1994). The capacity to maintain a mindfulness of agency thinking escalates the likelihood that chosen pathways will result in success. When success is achieved, the goal pursuit process is validated by positive emotions and the cycle of setting and attaining goals continues (Snyder, 2002).

Measuring Hope

To measure hope, Snyder and colleagues developed the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (ADHS) (Snyder et al., 1991) designed to assess the two sub-factors of hope: pathways thinking and agency thinking. The Hope Scale has consistently demonstrated acceptable internal consistency estimates (overall alphas from .74 to .88, agency alphas of .70 to .84, and pathways alphas of .63 to .86); test–retest reliabilities (ranging from .85 for 3 weeks to .82, p < 0.001, for 10 weeks); and, concurrent and discriminant validities (Snyder et al., 1991).

Levels of Hope

People can experience high hope or low hope, contingent on their level of hopeful thinking. A discussion of the characteristics of high and low hopeful thinkers follows.

A characteristic of a high-hope person is they will experience cyclical pathway and agency thought that is effortless throughout the goal cycle; on the other hand, low-hope people will have recurring pathway and agency thought that is cautious and slow (if at all functioning) in the goal sequence (Snyder, 1991). People with high hope seem to have no fear as well as tenacity in the face of adversity (Snyder, 1991). Snyder (1995) wrote," high hope people see roadblocks to their goals as being a normal part of life" (p.357). People with high hope are more decisive than people with
low hope (Snyder, 1995). High hope individuals set clear goals and establish multiple strategies for achieving their goals while individuals identified as having low hope are more likely to set ambiguous and unclear goals (or no goals at all) (Snyder, 1994). Low hope people lack effective plans and strategies for achieving their desired results (Snyder, 1994). High hope individuals are also more likely to stay focused on their goals, developing processes to evaluate their progress, and continuing in spite of anticipated and unanticipated obstacles (Snyder, Feldman et al., 2002).

In a study conducted employing listening preferences, memory and self-report tests regarding typical self-talk, it was found that high-hope people incorporate self-talk agency phrases as, “I can do this,” and “I am not going to be stopped” (Snyder, Lapointe, Crowson, & Early, 1998). High-hope people quickly tailor their routes effectively so as to reach their goals. The low-hope person, on the other hand, might be unlikely to produce alternate routes (Snyder, 1994). A summary of the characteristics of high-hope and low-hope people is found below:

Table 2
Characteristics of High-Hope and Low-Hope Individuals (Snyder, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Hope</th>
<th>Low Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many goals</td>
<td>Few goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific goals</td>
<td>Vague goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic goals</td>
<td>Unrealistic goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals that require effort</td>
<td>Goals that are easy to attain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on relevant information</td>
<td>Ponder on negative information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach goals</td>
<td>Avoid goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer positive self-referential input</td>
<td>Prefer negative self-referential input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create multiple pathways to goals</td>
<td>Create few pathways to goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High motivation</td>
<td>Low motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled at creating alternative pathways</td>
<td>Unskilled at or lack energy in creating alternate pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in successful goal pursuit</td>
<td>Lack of belief in successful goal pursuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View obstacles as a challenge</td>
<td>Are discouraged by obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use strategies to strengthen agency thinking</td>
<td>Use interfering and ineffective strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from previous successful and unsuccessful goal pursuits</td>
<td>Ponder on previous failures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steadily focus on goal pursuit</td>
<td>Are easily distracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in own skill</td>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hope is not significantly related to native intelligence (Snyder, McDermott, Cook, and Rapoff 2002). Hope is not significantly related to income (Lopez, 2009). Dr. Shane Lopez (2013) asserted that hope can be learned and shared with others (pp. 222-220). He characterized hope as being like oxygen and that we cannot live without it (Lopez, p. 181-185). Additionally, he distinguished hope as something that can lift our spirits, buoy our energy, and make life seem worth living (Lopez, 2013). Being a hopeful adult has many benefits. High-hope people perform better at work (Peterson & Byron 2008), have higher well-being (Gallagher & Lopez 2009), and live longer (Stern, Dhanda, & Hazuda 2001).

At this point in the discussion of hope, in order to ascertain a complete picture of hope, it is important to look at what hope is not. Therefore, a glimpse of hopelessness will shed more light on what hope is.
What Hope Is Not

Hopelessness

Hopelessness has been associated as the belief of impossibility (Miceli and Castlefranchi, 2010). Hope as seen by Snyder contains pathways to meeting goals and is encouraged to try to work through a goal or problem. Hopelessness is a person's inability to see a positive future (Hollis et al., 2005). Hope, on the other hand, looks for a positive future and a way to obtain a positive future. Hopelessness leads to increased risk of depression and suicidal thoughts (Magelleta & Oliver, 1999). A hopeless person is “deficient in a basic spiritual power which results in the risk of lapsing into lethargy and indifference” (Warnock, 1986). They stop moving. They are paralyzed.

False Hope

A criticism of the hope theory is the possibility of setting unrealistic goals that result in failure or are unreachable (Snyder, 2002). False hope can be found when a person has a desired goal and the motivation (i.e., agency) to reach that goal, but, they do not have the strategies to attain the goal (Kwon, 2000). Critics of hope might claim that hope is more like wishful thinking or daydreaming. Snyder (2002) offers a rebuttal to the issue of false hope stating that individuals with high hope often approach obstacles that are perceived as unrealistic with strong pathway and agency thinking. Likewise, when a particular goal is perceived as blocked, high-hope individuals are flexible in changing their goals to ones that are more obtainable (Irving & Snyder, 1998).

The following section will view the hope theory as compared to other related theories/constructs. Hope theory has exhibited some similarities to these other constructs thereby supporting its convergent validity; however, it also has displayed sufficient differences as to support its discriminant validity.
Hope and Related Constructs

Snyder’s Hope Theory (1991) resembles constructs of self-efficacy, optimism, problem solving, goal theory and motivation; however, they are not the identical. The current study is founded on the basis of hope consisting of goals, pathway thinking and agency thinking. Because this study will examine elements of first language literacy that are similar to the components of hope, it is imperative to highlight other constructs that relate to hope. This clarification will assist in narrowing down the possible places of convergence of hope and first language literacy.

Problem Solving

Turning attention to potential similarities and/or differences in hope and problem solving, they differ in at least two fundamental ways. First, the identification of an anticipated goal, or a solution to a problem, is observed as being at the core of problem-solving (Heppner & Hillerbrand, 1991). Similar to hope theory, discovering the most effective pathway is the foundation for problem-solving (D’Zurilla, 1986). Agency thinking within the hope theory provides the motivation to activate pathway thinking (problem solving) (Snyder, 1991). Hope and problem solving have correlated positively (rs of .40–.50; Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991).

Optimism

Optimism is often interchanged with hope. It is important to understand that hope is not just the idea of being optimistic. It is similar to hope in that it is a goal-based cognitive process that operates whenever an outcome is perceived as having substantial value (Snyder, 2002). Optimism differs from hope in that it encompasses a single cognitive state expecting positive outcomes across life domains (Carver & Scheier, 2002). Optimism has been thought of as when a person has as a general expectancy that good things will happen (Schier & Carver, 1985). The optimist often has the belief that circumstances will work out as he or she desires, but, does not possess the pathways
necessary to go after and achieve the desired goals (Snyder, 1995). Frankly speaking, the optimist has the agency thinking, or motivation, but lacks the pathway thinking, or established plan, that is present in the hope theory.

**Self-Efficacy**

Hope (Snyder, 1991) has also been associated with the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Both constructs share two components; the willpower (agency) element of the hope theory is similar to the efficacy expectancies of the self-efficacy theory. Also the waypower component (pathways) of the hope theory is similar to the outcome expectancies of the self-efficacy theory. One major difference between the two theories is that Bandura contends that the efficacy expectancies are most important, whereas Snyder argues that willpower (agency) and waypower (pathways) are equally important (Peterson & Luthans, 2003). Self-efficacy is the belief that a goal *can* be achieved whereas hope is the belief that a goal *will* be achieved (Peterson & Luthans, 2003). Self-efficacy does not include pathways thinking (Peterson & Byron, 2008).

**Motivation**

When examining the relationship between hope and motivation, it is critical to clarify that hope is not the same as motivation. Wlodkowski (1990) defines motivation as a "hypothetical construct that cannot be directly measured or validated through the physical or natural sciences" (p. 97). The agency sub-factor of hope contains the motivational factor because it is the part of hope that provides the encouragement to move from Point A to Point B (Snyder, 1991). However, motivation does not contain the pathways factor of hope. Hope is not motivation, but it can motivate.

**Emotions**

Hope is mistaken for positive or negative emotions by some people. Some often dismiss hope as a non-viable construct thinking it is a whimsical emotional reaction. Perceptions regarding
goal attainment can produce positive or negative emotions. For instance, positive emotions might result with a positive attainment of a goal and negative emotions from an unsuccessful attempt at reaching a goal (Snyder, 2002). High-hope people typically possess positive emotions and low hope people tend to personify negative emotions, with a sense of lethargy about the pursuit of goals (Snyder, 2002). Therefore, it is the goal-directed thinking, rather than emotions that determine successive goal-related performances (Snyder, Cheavens, & Michael, 1999). It is important to note that when situations are at their most difficult, when goals seem the most unattainable, hope is not automatically diminished (Snyder, 2002).

**Helping Other People Excel**

Sometimes in life a person is blinded from their ability to progress from one point to another in their life’s goals. Often, people need help making a plan for their life. Also, they need the help of hopeful people to help them determine how to reach their goals. They also need assistance in making alternate plans in case their initial plans to not work. Hope literature suggests that hope can be taught (Lopez, 2013). The following will explain how a person can increase hope for others.

**Choose Feasible Goals**

Whether you are a friend, teacher, co-worker, or family member, you can help other people choose feasible goals. Making clear goals provides a firm foundation for hopeful development (Snyder, Lehman, Kluck & Monsson, 2006). Goals should be chosen that are valuable to the person needing more hope (Lopez, 2013). The goals should be clarified so they can be clearly assessed.

**Generate Several Paths**

People who are high in hope entertain several pathways to their goals (Snyder, 1991). Having multiple pathways increases the chance that the person will find one or more effective
routes to their goal (Lopez, 2013). Multiple pathways also enhance the motivation for reaching goals by minimizing the possibility of absolute goal blockages (Lopez, 2013).

**Specify Sub-Goals**

Some goals are too cumbersome to achieve in one step. Therefore, if you are helping a person increase their hope, it is wise to assist the goal setter to break a larger goal into smaller, attainable goals (Snyder et al., 2006). This exercise minimizes the possibility of the low hope person from becoming overwhelmed and falling into failure mode. A series of small successes will increase hope as the person moves along towards fulfillment of the large goal (Lopez, 2013).

**Visualize the Path**

Another technique for assisting a person with increasing hope is to help them visualize their desired outcome. If a person mentally experiences a complex goal, it possibly will provoke thoughts regarding means to obtain desired goals (Snyder, 2006). Educating the person about such visualization and encouraging its use will enhance the ability to generate pathways (Snyder, 2006).

**Connections with Hopeful People**

A person in need of hope is more successful in increasing hope if they connect with a hopeful person. If a person is overwhelmed and having trouble mustering up hope, they should connect with someone that makes them feel like they matter in this world; someone who makes them feel understood and encouraged (Lopez, 2013). Whenever a person makes a connection with someone who reminds them that they matter, they have the chance of reconnecting with their sense of identity and purpose, which can spark them back into hopeful action (Lopez, 2013).

**Increase Positive Self-Talk**

A person’s messages to themselves can make or break their goal mastering actions. In other words, it is most helpful to correct any messages being spoken by a person that will sabotage
their hopeful thoughts and actions. If you are mentoring someone in need of increased hope, it might help to rehearse positive self-talk with that person (Snyder, 2006). Positive messages increase the motivation factor of the hope process, helping a person continue moving toward the achievement of a goal (Lopez, 2013).

Create and Sustain Excitement about the Future

A person needing more hope to fuel their movement toward a goal need a cheerleader to keep them encouraged in their quest. Followers look to hopeful leaders to dream big, and to motivate them toward a meaningful future (Lopez, 2013). With the support of a hopeful leader, one of the fastest hope building strategies is to overturn obstacles, giving followers their best shot at doing what they do best (Lopez, 2013). Further, a hope filled leader should help people create more options for attaining their goals (Lopez, 2013).

Conclusion

In conclusion, hope begets hope. The more hope you can help a person build in their life, the more advancement they can make in their lives. The more hope you share with someone else, the more dreams you can help make happen for the hopeless person. When a person helps another person obtain more hope in their life, they can in turn give some of their hope away to help someone else. Hope can be given away anywhere and everywhere. It’s the gift that keeps on giving.
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Hungry, Homeless, and Hurting: Helping Novice Teachers Develop a Curriculum of Hope for Today’s Children of Poverty

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Abstract

The assignments and critical conversations present in our teacher education courses disrupted the discourse of our mostly White middle-class female student population and permit new viewpoints and perspectives to be discovered and explored. This journey of assisting our pre-service students to questioning their assumptions and beliefs (in general, and specifically) about families of poverty was the impetus to defining and recognizing the importance of a Curriculum of Hope during a time period that seems hopeless to many children around the country.
Description

This presentation outlines a Curriculum of Hope for teachers working with students of poverty. Participants will engage in critical and culturally relevant activities that support the needs of students facing hardship.

Proposal

These are difficult times for children, families, and the schools that serve them. Poverty levels across the United States are steadily rising, with 45% of all American children now living in low-income households (National Center for Children of Poverty, 2012). Increased poverty means more children facing homelessness, hunger, child abuse, and a host of other hardships. As teacher educators working in Florida, which for years has ranked second in the nation for the number of foreclosed homes (NCCP, 2012), we see the impact of the recent economic crisis affecting schools on a daily basis. Food insecurity (even on a temporary basis) and severe hunger can have a profoundly negative impact on children’s cognitive development, their health, and their school performance (NCCP, 2012). It can affect student behavior, and is associated with greater aggression, destruction, and dysfunctional social skills (Coles, 2008/2009; Jenson, 2009).

It is a difficult time for teachers as well; many teachers are themselves dealing with personal economic hardships, while also facing professional challenges. School districts are cutting budgets by eliminating teaching positions, foregoing raises, cutting pensions, abolishing tenure, and reducing funds for school supplies. Creating a safe and nurturing environment for children and accommodating their individual needs is harder than ever in an era when pressure to prepare children for high stakes tests virtually dominates school life.

We introduce our novice teachers to culturally relevant strategies that work well in an inquiry-oriented approach. Drawing on the work on Lewison, Leland, and Harste (2008), we require our students to engage in critical literacy as a way to discuss sociopolitical issues that are relevant to the lives of their students.
The challenge of teaching an ever-growing number of children who are hurting in such significant ways can seem daunting, especially to novices. As teacher educators of multicultural and literacy methods courses, we struggle with the challenge of how best to prepare our teacher candidates to work with vulnerable children and their families. We ask ourselves: How can we build novice teachers' awareness and understanding of the impact that poverty has on young children, without letting them use poverty as an excuse for lowering expectations for children's school success? How can we help them find the right balance in terms of having high standards for children but also creating an atmosphere of empathy and compassion? How do we help novice teachers uncover and confront their own beliefs (and sometimes misconceptions) about poor families? How can we teach our students to design curriculum and provide instruction that is meaningful and engaging in a time when government mandates seeking increased accountability often restrict classroom practices to scripted lessons and rote adherence to packaged programs? And, realistically, how do we do these things within the existing structure of our current teacher education program?

Because of our students’ racial and economic backgrounds, they are often unaware of the plight of children of color and children of poverty. In subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) ways, they may hold stereotypical views of low-income families. Since many of our teacher education students do their field experiences in high poverty schools, and many will find their first jobs in these schools, we feel tremendous pressure to prepare them to navigate within a system that punishes vulnerable children and their teachers through exclusive use of pre-packaged, scripted curriculum and a climate of high stakes testing. In our teacher education classes, we have found that helping novices learn to create a Curriculum of Hope requires that we first build novice teachers' awareness of the challenges that they and their future students will face. We deliberately introduce conversations about current realities--not so they will feel sorry for children or see this as an excuse for them not to learn--but to build consciousness, compassion, and a commitment to advocate for children (Neito, 1994). One of the foundations for creating an anti-bias, caring
classroom community is for teachers to call attention to the ways in which people are different and the ways in which people are the same, honoring individual and group identity. They intentionally introduce issues of fairness and unfairness, and coach children to think critically and to take action. Teachers learn about children’s family and cultural identities and integrate those identities into the daily life of the classroom, at the same time as they acknowledge the ways in which their own cultural identities shape their teaching (Pelo, 2008). We encourage novices to reflect on, discuss, and re-frame situations that they observe in their field placements.

Creating opportunities for novice teachers to surface and confront their beliefs about families in poverty is one step, and giving them concrete strategies for establishing productive relationships with parents/caregivers is another that we feel is vital. Schools need to ensure that classrooms are environments of care, where children feel safe and nurtured (Gay, 2010). Since the classroom may be the only stable place in some children’s lives, it needs to have a consistent, predictable structure, yet be comfortable and feel like a home.

We conclude with a description of several strategies, activities, and resources that we have found to be practical for our students. The assignments and critical conversations present in our courses disrupted the discourse of our mostly White middle-class female student population and permitted new viewpoints and perspectives to be discovered and explored. This journey of assisting our pre-service students to questioning their assumptions and beliefs (in general, and specifically about families of poverty) was the impetus to defining and recognizing the importance of a Curriculum of Hope during a time period that seems hopeless to many children around the country.


LGBTQ Youth Engagement with Social Spaces:
Opening the Classrooms for Equitable Learning

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Abstract

For years, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth have been using the Internet to create meaning in their lives, seek out others, “come out,” and express or question their sexual identities. On Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, blogspot, Wordpress, Instagram, and social spaces designed specifically for LGBTQ populations (i.e. Trevorspace.org, Justleftthecloset.com), LGBTQ youth are asking questions, seeking support, while thinking critically, writing critically, publishing their work, and expressing their thoughts among a diverse population across the globe. Yet, in their classrooms, many LGBTQ youth still feel unsafe, unmotivated, and because of such environments, many are at-risk academically. As educators, we must address the reality that incorporating social media in the classroom, could not only work to improve the academic success of LGBTQ students, but also open the classrooms up for equitable learning for all students.
Educational research continues to assess digital literacy in terms of its benefits and detriments to the function of education. Likewise, much research exists on marginalized populations, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, and the successes and failures of these groups in academic settings. While some research exists showing how LGBTQ youth use digital literacy and social media to socialize and develop as individuals, the question remains what are the effects of digital literacy on marginalized populations, particularly LGBTQ youth, in terms of academic successes? In order to answer this question, we must look at the research on digital literacy and education, marginalized populations such as LGBTQ youth and education, and how these populations are using digital literacies outside of the classroom.

**Digital Literacies**

Randy Bomer (2012) defines literacy as “a practice that takes its shapes and meanings from the ways it is situated within the other things people are doing with one another...literate texts don’t mean completely independently; they don’t act in isolation.” Street (2003) asserts that literacy does not mean that we are acquiring new skills, but rather that literacy is “a social practice” (p. 77). He further notes that this means we must, to become literate, recognize that there are multiple literacies, existing and “varying according to time and space” (p. 77). This definition lends itself to the digital world we now live in. It is not enough any longer to define literacy as the ability to read and write, but now it means to read and write in many forms, with many technologies. We do not write to share it on the Internet, rather to write to and for the Internet, thus meaning occurs when we understand the media as well as the message (McLuhan, 2011).

Digital writing, regardless of the type of writing or the space for that writing, is the direction literacy has taken today. In a world full of technologies, social media sites, bloggers, hackers, and Web-based storyboards, people can truly only be considered literate if they can navigate through a river of new medias to express themselves critically. Vie (2007) states that it is not only access to the technologies, but is more so the digital literacies that need attention. Selfe, Hawisher, and Selfe (2004) argue that educators and
educational institutions must increase how they use online spaces. Vie (2007) agrees saying that, “compositionists should focus on incorporating into their pedagogy technologies that students are familiar with but do not think critically about: online social networking sites, podcasts, audio mash-ups, blogs, and wikis” (p. 10).

Selfe, Hawisher, and Selfe (2004) go on to state that educators can no longer ignore the environments where communication occurs for their students. Doing so carries the “risk of their curricula no longer holding relevance for those students” (p. 233). Selber (2004) adds to the argument by pointing out that:

Not only are teachers obligated to prepare students responsibly for a digital age in which the most rewarding jobs require multiple literacies, but students will be citizens and parents as well as employees, and in these roles they will also need to think in expanded ways about computer use. (p.5)

Social media such as Facebook, Tumblr, and Twitter hold the attention of today’s students; it’s here that they do much of their writing, and as Selber (2004) adds “…where much education happens” (p. 3). While Vie (2007) notes that bringing these media sites into classrooms, and creating a pedagogy that uses them, will help students to learn to think critically about “larger societal issues regarding intellectual property, attribution, and marketing” (p. 16), she also presents the rationale, or fear, that often keeps these sites out of the classroom. Using these sites can challenge the hierarchy of the educational arena. Students and teachers, using social media in the classroom, can challenge the powers that be, sometimes creating positive growth and sometimes creating negative consequences, such as expulsion and job loss for educators (p. 20). Despite this possibility, Vie still argues for the necessity of the incorporation of social media in the classroom, pointing out that “such sites have much to offer compositionists interested in engaging students in the act of composition” (p. 20).
LGBTQ Youth, Social Media, and the Web

The victimization of LGBTQ students has lead to much research on the affects it has on youth, both academically and socially, and has even led to the creation of two national public schools (Alliance High School in Milwaukee and Harvey Milk High School in New York) designed specifically to provide safer, more inclusive environments for LGBTQ youth (Ronga, 2011, p. 10). Two schools, however, do not solve the classroom issues for all LGBTQ students in the United States, as this demographic makes up anywhere from 1% to 15% of the overall US high school population, and another 6% of the general high school population are unsure (questioning) of their sexual orientation (Darwich, Hymel & Waterhouse, 2012, p. 382). This latter group, the questioning youth, “reported the highest levels of peer victimization relative to other youth” (Darwich, Hymel & Waterhouse, 2012, p. 382).

When students feel unsafe and are not included in the classroom, either through curriculum or by not fitting in, academic success is difficult. And, while some LGBTQ students do find success, even among the struggles, many suffer both academically and socially.

For the past two decades, LGBTQ youth and adults have been turning to the Internet to create meaning in their lives, seek out others, “come out,” and express or question their sexual identities. Alexander (2006) states, ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth are using Web literacies in ways that gesture toward a political vision and narration of the queer self that might differ from older notions of gayness and queer politics” (p. 25). “The Internet has become an indispensable social tool. While it has, since its inception, been important in helping marginalized and closeted lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people to connect with others, recent developments in so-called “social media” have demonstrated the power of the ubiquitous computer network to have an impact on LGBT mental health and development” (McIntosh, 2011, p. 318). Today, LGBTQ youth are creating digital spaces for themselves, both for socializing and for activism. Alexander goes on to discuss “home-grown” queer sites that differ from the consumer-marketing sites, such as Gay.com, and presents the argument that today’s LGBTQ youth are creating virtual space for real support and real activism, versus the “coming out” sites and chat rooms of
the past (Alexander, 2006, p.231). Vivienne and Burgess (2012) further the discussion of how today’s LGBTQ youth are emerged in digital spaces, through the use of digital storytelling. Burgess defines digital storytelling as the “production of short (2-5 minute) autobiographical videos (digital stories), mostly created from photos and artwork and voiced by the storyteller, in some kind of facilitated workshop environment” (as quoted in Vivienne & Burgess, 2012, p. 362). “As [queer youth] activists these storytellers wish to catalyze and change by challenging popular stereotypes, rather than simply consolidate their values and affirm their identities among likeminded people, thereby amplifying an already complex set of risks around self-disclosure” (Vivienne & Burgess, 2012, p. 363). These youth are learning to negotiate and cross between social worlds- their own and those of potential opposition to their beliefs, values, and even identities (Vivienne & Burgess, 2012, p 366-367).

On Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, blogspot, Instagram, and a host of other social spaces, as well as on the “home-grown” websites, LGBTQ youth are thriving, thinking critically, writing critically, and publishing their work, their thoughts, and their identities among a diverse population across the globe. Yet, in their classrooms, many LGBTQ youth still feel unsafe, unmotivated, and because of such environments, many are at-risk academically.

**The Need for Queer Space in the Classroom**

Bryson, Butler, and Fortier all assert that “queer folk are significantly mobilized by a desire to belong to a community that feels familiar and to construct an identification that can circulate as recognizable, and valuable social currency, rather than the always-already ‘spoiled identity’ that is unwanted offspring of homophobia and heterosexism” (as quoted in Bryson, 2006, p.116). This is true both outside of the classroom and within it. In President Obama’s address to the students of the nation, he said all students should be made to feel safe and to “fit in” (Ronga, 2011, p.1). If LGBTQ youth do not find a way to fit in, to find safe spaces, and to be seen as viable members of society, academic success seems unlikely.
Alexander and Banks (2004) note that while many studies exist concerning sexuality and composition; these discussions fail to look at the role of technology (p. 273). “Both sexuality and technology studies are concerned with the intertwined issues of space and identity” (Alexander & Banks, 2004, p. 274). Thus, it only makes sense that we look at the intersection of these areas in terms of how social media and digital literacy might improve the classroom experience for LGBTQ students by creating those “queer spaces,” places where all students feel safe, and can both gain and share knowledge and experience.

Because of this invisibility of LGBTQ students and because of fear that many educators have of “rocking the boat,” no safe space exists for LGBTQ students in many schools. The argument to be made then is that the safe spaces of the Web and social media must be incorporated into the curricula, and must be used in classrooms to open up areas for discourse and learning. Familiar spaces such as social media sites, the Web, and digital media, in general, where LGBTQ youth are already engaged, can create a the same type of familiarity and comfort in the classroom. And, while some, like Banks and Alexander, are beginning to look at the connectedness of social media and pedagogy, research into specific pedagogies that incorporate and merge the social and academic worlds of LGBTQ youth is essential, as is the necessity to close the digital divide between educators and students. Potentially, these pedagogies and the incorporation of digital media in the classroom, could not only work to improve the academic success of LGBTQ students, but might also create a more informed, accepting society, where race, religion, gender, and orientation no longer have a profound effect on how we respond to one another, thus opening the classrooms up for equitable learning for all students.
References


Globalization, Poverty Eradication in Nigeria, and the Schooling Response:

The Need for Literacy

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Abstract

Globalization defined as the interlinking of nations on Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political fronts, is shown to be inevitable and ubiquitous. On this premise, country-specific analyses become necessary, given the polemics trailing its benefits or impacts on economies. Using the Vector Autoregressive econometric tool, it was established that globalization, for Nigeria, could potentially engender poverty. To benefit from globalization in a way that impacts positively on her economy and consequently eradicate poverty, a multidimensional approach to economic growth is proffered, given the high level of illiteracy in Nigeria. The outcome of the Questionnaires, randomly administered, based on the Likert-type scale, informs the specific recommendations made. Generally, however, the paper recommends a review of the Nigeria National Policy on Education, establishment of adult education centers, and intensive teaching of English Language in Elementary and High Schools.

Keywords: Globalization, Poverty, Literacy.
Globalization, Poverty Eradication in Nigeria, and the Schooling Response:
The Need for Literacy

Globalization can be said to be the contemporary interlinking of nations with an outcome that impacts the socio-cultural, economic, and political aspects of lives and societies across the continents. Reputed for its contribution to the astronomical increase in the volume of world trade, globalization, however, has not been evenly or proportionately beneficial to the wellbeing of all of the globalizing nations.

The polemics around its benefits, notwithstanding, the imperativeness of globalization, makes it incumbent on Africa, in general, and Nigeria in particular, to take up the gauntlet and explore and exploit all available options for the good of her citizenry. This is particularly so, given her burgeoning population that seems to be helplessly and endlessly gravitating towards poverty, a pervasive feature in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In any consideration of its economic implications, globalization is an open invitation to competition for Africa, and indeed, Nigeria’s infant industries. This is because globalization approximates unrestricted international trade. Development Economists like Todaro (1977), Meier (1976) and others, posit that economic growth, courtesy of international trade does not necessarily approximate development (economic and Social), in that an export-orientation strategy of growth, particularly when a large portion of the export earnings accrue to foreigners, may not only bias the structure of the economy in the wrong directions (by not catering to the basic needs of the people) but may reinforce the internal and external dualistic and inegaliterian character of that growth. The nature of the export sector, the distribution of its benefits and its linkages with the rest of the economy they say, determine the desirability or otherwise of such strategy for social and economic development. Trade openness (a.k.a trade liberalization), which in this study is a proxy for globalization, have been shown in empirical studies to have negative impact on economic growth. According to Grossman and Helpman (1991) and Srinivasan (2001), endogenous growth models
suggest that trade may be growth-stunting. They argue that trade openness exposes a country to volatility of output and terms of trade. If the magnitude of shock is beyond the absorptive capacity of the country, the forces of dynamic comparative advantage, they say, would push the economy away from the direction of activities that stimulates long-run economic growth. Rodriguez and Rodrik (1999) corroborated this view, arguing that the measures of trade openness used in most of the papers showing positive links between trade liberalization and exports are flawed. Studies, though, also abound to show that openness of the trade regime has positive relation with Gross Domestic product (GDP) growth (Ahmed, Yusuf and Anoruo Emmanuel, S., (1992), Harrison.A, (1996), Iscan, Talan (1998), Santos Pualino (2002), wasziarg R., (2001) Yanikkaya Halit (2003). This informed a country-specific study such as this.

Whichever way we may choose to look at economic reforms, trade openness and its underlying philosophy presents an anti-thesis to the import-substitution and trade protectionist policies adopted widely in the 1980s and early 90s by many a Third World Country. Unarguably, the twin policies of import-substitution and trade protectionism adopted in the LDCs were informed by the perennial balance of payment problems and persistent unfavorable terms of trade. Nigeria, which is the major focus of the study, going by the UNCTAD classification, does not have a substantial industrial base, neither does it have any appreciable capabilities in the export of manufacturing goods. But she, nonetheless, embraced the policy of free trade as an integral part of her structural adjustment programme (SAP) way back in 1986. And barely a year after this, according to Usman (2006), she was already experiencing a decline in the contribution of her manufacturing sector to the GDP.

The foregoing analysis provokes thoughts on a couple of issues related to trade openness and economic growth. In the circumstance, one cannot but wonder if trade openness is a better alternative for economic growth in Nigeria. Second, one may wish to ask how selective rather than
holistic should the adoption of trade openness be within the economy? These questions beg for urgent answers in the face of ubiquitous poverty in Nigeria.

Poverty in the economic sense of the word is the state of not having enough money to take care of basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing. Robertson (1980) defined subsistence poverty as lack of basic requirements to sustain a physically healthy existence, that is, sufficient food and shelter to make possible the physically efficient functioning of the body. Poverty leaves in its wake, decrepit and deteriorating infrastructural and social amenities which go further to reinforce or exacerbate the malady. For most Nigerians, poverty is endemic (Aluko, 2003). By 1998, estimates of the Nigerian Human Development Report (NHDR) put the number of Nigerians living in poverty at 48.5%. Between the 1980s and the 1990s, Nigeria’s experience worsened as the incidence of poverty rose from 46.3% of the population in 1985 to 65.6% in 1996. The NHDR for 2000 ranked Nigeria, 151 out of 174 countries and among the poorest in the world. In short, the vast majority of the people have little or no access to the social amenities that are taken for granted in the rich countries.

**METHODOLOGY**

Data for this study are taken from primary and secondary sources, viz; the statistical bulletin of the Central Bank of Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, World Bank, UNESCO, etc. A few others were culled from the internet, precisely from the World Bank and United Nations’ websites, in addition to randomly administered questionnaire.

**Methods**

Two different methods were employed in this study: A) Regression Analysis using the VAR econometric tool and B) Chi-Square statistical tool for data obtained via Primary source.

A) In this study it is argued that since time series data used in trade analysis are often non-stationary, unit root processes, econometric modeling of commodity demand should be based on
methods, which explicitly take this feature of the data into account, namely Vector Autoregression (VAR). There are several advantages in using a VAR, which is an advanced and more efficient technique than the error correction modeling (ECM). First, it is possible to clearly distinguish between short-run and long-run effects since both first differences and levels of variables enter the VAR. Second, the speed of adjustment toward the long-run relationship can be directly estimated (Adrangi & Allender, 1998; Zellner (1979) & Palm, (1983). They all explained that any linear structural model can be written as a VAR. In view of this, the VAR model serves as a flexible approximation of the reduced form of any wide variety of simultaneous structural models. Finally, the VAR has a sound statistical foundation in the theory of co-integration developed by Engle & Granger (1987).

The Model for this study appeals to Mankiw, et al (1992) that uses Cobb-Douglas Production function, thus endogenizing the growth model. The Model is usually presented as follows:

\[ Y = AK^\alpha L^\beta \]                      \hspace{1cm} (1)
\[
\text{where}
\]
\[ K = \text{Capital input} \]
\[ L = \text{Labour input} \]
\[ Y = \text{Output} \]
\[ \alpha \text{ and } \beta = \text{Parameters, i.e., Coefficient of } \ K \text{ and } L \text{ respectively assumed to lie between } 0 \text{ and } 1 \]
\[ A = \text{Index of production efficiency (Technical efficiency)} \]

This study adapts Mankiw, et al (1992) by extending the formulation. It equally draws insight from Alege and Ogun (2005) and Adjasi, (2006) models but with significant modification to incorporate explanatory variables of interest.

The functional form of the economic relationship between the dependent and explanatory variables is given as:

\[ GGDP = f(GFK, RRI, XPM, MPM, EXR) \] \hspace{1cm} (2)
Where:

GGDP = Gross Domestic Product growth rate

GFK = Investment

XPM = Export Openness

MPM = Import Openness

RRI = Real rate of Interest

EXR = Exchange Rate

Based on the Cobb-Douglas production function of equation (1), we could express equation (2) as below:

\[ GGDP = A(GFK)\alpha (RRI)\beta (XPM)\eta (MPM)\delta (EXR)\theta \] ..........................................................(3)

Loglinearizing equation (3) would give:

\[ \ln GGDP = a + \alpha \ln(GFK) + \beta \ln(RRI) + \eta \ln(XPM) + \delta \ln(MPM) + \theta \ln(EXR) + \mu \] .................(4)

\(a, \alpha, \beta, \eta, \delta, \theta\) are parameters

\(\ln GGDP\) = Log of output (GDP)

\(\ln GFK\) = Log of Gross fixed capital formation

\(\ln RRI\) = Log of Real Interest rate

\(\ln XPM\) = Log of Export Openness

\(\ln MPM\) = Log of Import Openness

\(\ln EXR\) = Log of Exchange rate

\(t = End of period\)

The a priori expectation of the coefficients of the parameters (also known as elasticity), based on economic theories is given as below:

\[ \alpha > 0, \eta > 0, \beta < 0, \delta < 0, \theta > 0 or \theta < 0 \]

The a priori expectations expressed above, agree with established economic theories. The following variables in equation (4), namely; Investment and export have a direct relationship with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate (Proxy for economic growth). Whereas, import and
real interest rate, have an inverse or negative relationship with GDP growth rate. Exchange rate could have direct or an inverse relationship with economic growth, depending on the elasticity of demand for the export commodity.

Using the estimation technique of the Variance Autogression approach (VAR), this study presents equation (4) in the VAR form generally as:

\[ Y_t = A_y + \sum_{i=1}^{p} A_i Y_{t-i} + E_t \]   \hspace{1cm} (5)

Where:
- \( Y_t \) is an \( n \times 1 \) vector of variable in time \( t \)
- \( A \) is an \( n \times 1 \) vector of constant terms
- \( A_i \) is an \( n \times n \) matrix of the coefficients associated with lag \( i \) of the variables in \( Y \).
- \( P \) = Maximum lag in included in the VAR model
- \( E_t \) = is an \( n \times 1 \) vector of white noise disturbance
- \( n \) = Number of variables in vector \( Y \).

Specifically, equation (4) in a VAR form would yield the following:

\begin{align*}
GGDP_t &= a_1 \pi_1 (GGDP)_{t-1} + \alpha_1 (GFK)_{t-1} + \beta_1 (RRI)_{t-1} + \eta_1 (XPM)_{t-1} + \delta_1 (MPM)_{t-1} + \theta_1 (EXR)_{t-1} + \mu_{1t} \quad \text{........(6)} \\
GFK_t &= a_2 + \alpha_2 (GFK)_{t-1} + \pi_2 (GGDP)_{t-1} + \beta_2 (RRI)_{t-1} + \eta_2 (XPM)_{t-1} + \delta_2 (MPM)_{t-1} + \theta_2 (EXR)_{t-1} + \mu_{2t} \quad \text{........(7)} \\
RRI_t &= a_3 + \beta_3 (RRI)_{t-1} + \pi_3 (GGDP)_{t-1} + \alpha_3 (GFK)_{t-1} + \eta_3 (XPM)_{t-1} + \delta_3 (MPM)_{t-1} + \theta_3 (EXR)_{t-1} + \mu_{3t} \quad \text{........(8)} \\
XPM_t &= a_4 + \alpha_4 (XPM)_{t-1} + \pi_4 (GGDP)_{t-1} + \alpha_4 (GFK)_{t-1} + \beta_4 (RRI)_{t-1} + \eta_4 (XPM)_{t-1} + \delta_4 (MPM)_{t-1} + \theta_4 (EXR)_{t-1} + \mu_{4t} \quad \text{........(9)} \\
MPM_t &= a_5 + \alpha_5 (MPM)_{t-1} + \pi_5 (GGDP)_{t-1} + \alpha_5 (GFK)_{t-1} + \beta_5 (RRI)_{t-1} + \eta_5 (XPM)_{t-1} + \delta_5 (MPM)_{t-1} + \theta_5 (EXR)_{t-1} + \mu_{5t} \quad \text{........(10)} \\
EXR_t &= a_6 + \theta_6 (EXR)_{t-1} + \pi_6 (GGDP)_{t-1} + \alpha_6 (GFK)_{t-1} + \beta_6 (RRI)_{t-1} + \eta_6 (XPM)_{t-1} + \delta_6 (MPM)_{t-1} + \mu_{6t} \quad \text{........(11)}
\end{align*}

Putting equations (6)-(11) in matrix form, we have:

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
GGDP_t \\
GFK_t \\
RRI_t \\
XPM_t \\
MPM_t \\
EXR_t
\end{bmatrix} =
\begin{bmatrix}
a_1 & \pi_1 & \alpha_1 & \beta_1 & \eta_1 & \delta_1 & \theta_1 \\
a_2 & \pi_2 & \alpha_2 & \beta_2 & \eta_2 & \delta_2 & \theta_2 \\
a_3 & \pi_3 & \alpha_3 & \beta_3 & \eta_3 & \delta_3 & \theta_3 \\
a_4 & \pi_4 & \alpha_4 & \beta_4 & \eta_4 & \delta_4 & \theta_4 \\
a_5 & \pi_5 & \alpha_5 & \beta_5 & \eta_5 & \delta_5 & \theta_5 \\
a_6 & \pi_6 & \alpha_6 & \beta_6 & \eta_6 & \delta_6 & \theta_6
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
(GGDP)_{t-1} \\
(GFK)_{t-1} \\
(RRI)_{t-1} \\
(XPM)_{t-1} \\
(MPM)_{t-1} \\
(EXR)_{t-1}
\end{bmatrix} +
\begin{bmatrix}
\mu_{1t} \\
\mu_{2t} \\
\mu_{3t} \\
\mu_{4t} \\
\mu_{5t} \\
\mu_{6t}
\end{bmatrix} \quad \text{........(12)}
\]
The variance auto-regression equations to be estimated are given as:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{In}(\text{GGDP})_t &= \alpha_1 + \pi_1 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GGDP})_{t-i} + \alpha_2 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GFK})_{t-i} + \beta_1 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{RRI})_{t-i} + \eta_1 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{XPM})_{t-i} + \delta_1 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{MPM})_{t-i} + \theta_1 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{EXR})_{t-i} + \mu_1, \quad \text{(13)} \\
\text{In}(\text{GFK})_t &= \alpha_2 + \alpha_3 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GFK})_{t-i} + \pi_2 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GGDP})_{t-i} + \beta_2 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{RRI})_{t-i} + \eta_2 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{XPM})_{t-i} + \delta_2 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{MPM})_{t-i} + \theta_2 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{EXR})_{t-i} + \mu_2, \quad \text{(14)} \\
\text{In}(\text{RRI})_t &= \alpha_3 + \beta_3 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{RRI})_{t-i} + \alpha_4 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GGDP})_{t-i} + \pi_3 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GFK})_{t-i} + \eta_3 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{XPM})_{t-i} + \delta_3 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{MPM})_{t-i} + \theta_3 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{EXR})_{t-i} + \mu_3, \quad \text{(15)} \\
\text{In}(\text{XPM})_t &= \alpha_4 + \gamma_4 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{XPM})_{t-i} + \pi_4 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GGDP})_{t-i} + \alpha_5 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GFK})_{t-i} + \beta_4 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{RRI})_{t-i} + \eta_4 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{XPM})_{t-i} + \delta_4 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{MPM})_{t-i} + \theta_4 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{EXR})_{t-i} + \mu_4, \quad \text{(16)} \\
\text{In}(\text{MPM})_t &= \alpha_5 + \delta_5 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{MPM})_{t-i} + \alpha_6 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GGDP})_{t-i} + \beta_5 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GFK})_{t-i} + \gamma_5 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{RRI})_{t-i} + \eta_5 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{XPM})_{t-i} + \theta_5 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{EXR})_{t-i} + \mu_5, \quad \text{(17)} \\
\text{In}(\text{EXR})_t &= \alpha_6 + \theta_6 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{EXR})_{t-i} + \alpha_7 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GGDP})_{t-i} + \beta_6 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{GFK})_{t-i} + \gamma_6 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{RRI})_{t-i} + \eta_6 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{XPM})_{t-i} + \delta_6 \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} \text{In}(\text{MPM})_{t-i} + \mu_6. \quad \text{(18)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Where

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{In (GGDP)} &= \text{Log of Economic Growth Rate} \\
\text{In (GFK)} &= \text{Log of Investment} \\
\text{In (RRI)} &= \text{Log of Real Interest rate} \\
\text{In (XPM)} &= \text{Log of Export Openness} \\
\text{In (MPM)} &= \text{Log of Import Openness} \\
\text{In (EXR)} &= \text{Log of Exchange rate}
\end{align*}
\]
B). The Chi-Square Test method was used, in the analysis of the Questionnaires, to measure the discrepancies between Observed and Expected Frequencies. The Chi-Square rule (expected frequency in each cell being at least 5), was met because of the sample size (300). This is so because dividing the sample size by the number of columns (5) gives 60.

The degree of freedom $V: K-1 = 4$

Where $K =$ Number of Columns

***Level of Significance = 5%***

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Where $F_o =$ Observed Frequency

$F_e =$ Expected Frequency

$X^2 =$ Chi-Square.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Unit Root Test

This study having relied on time series data, had to ascertain ‘the stationarity properties of the data sourced, granting the fact that most time series data are plagued with unit root problem.

The Augmented Dickey Fuller and Phillips Perron tests were done on the time series data.

VAR Results

In any consideration of the VAR analysis conventionally, all variables are considered to be endogenous (whether they be policy variables or target variables), necessitating both the variance decomposition analysis and the impulse-response examination. In this study therefore, using the specified data for each of the stated variables for the period (1974 – 2008), their parameter coefficients are given below.
Table 1.1

Estimation Results for the Output Equation.

Dependent variable = GGDP (Proxy for economic Growth)

No of observations = 35 (1974 – 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>T ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D[GGDP(-1)]</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GGDP(-2)]</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GFK(-1)]</td>
<td>45.02</td>
<td>67.59</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GFK(-2)]</td>
<td>97.97</td>
<td>63.03</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[XPM(-1)]</td>
<td>39.98</td>
<td>27.33</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[XPM(-2)]</td>
<td>-27.75</td>
<td>28.29</td>
<td>-0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[MPM(-1)]</td>
<td>-3.32</td>
<td>34.69</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[MPM(-2)]</td>
<td>-46.48</td>
<td>33.29</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[RRI(-1)]</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[RRI(-2)]</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[EXR(-1)]</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[EXR(-2)]</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = 0.65
Adj R² = 0.43
F- Statistics = 2.96
Table 1.2

Estimation Results for Export Openness Equation.

Dependent variables = XPM (Proxy for Export Openness).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>T ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D[GGDP(-1)]</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GGDP(-2)]</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GFK(-1)]</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GFK(-2)]</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>-2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[XPM(-1)]</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[XPM(-2)]</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[MPM(-1)]</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[MPM(-2)]</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[RRI(-1)]</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[RRI(-2)]</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[EXR(-1)]</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[EXR(-2)]</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-2.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = 0.54
Adj.R² = 0.25
F- Statistics = 1.86
Table 1.3

Estimation Results for Import Openness (MPM)

Dependent Variables = MPM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>T ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D[GGDP(-1)]</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GGDP(-2)]</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GFK(-1)]</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>-2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[GFK(-2)]</td>
<td>-2.06</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>-3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[XPM(-1)]</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[XPM(-2)]</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[MPM(-1)]</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[MPM(-2)]</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[RRI(-1)]</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[RRI(-2)]</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[EXR(-1)]</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D[EXR(-2)]</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R^2 = 0.69
Adj.R^2 = 0.50
F- Statistics = 3.64

Forecast Error Variance Decomposition

Variance Decomposition provides complementary information regarding the dynamic behavior of the variables in a model, i.e. it tells the specific contribution of each variable in a regression model. It is therefore possible to decompose the forecast variance into the contribution by each of the different shocks. An examination of the dynamic properties of Trade Openness is therefore further investigated by estimating Forecast Error Variance Decomposition and Impulse-Response analysis.
Table 1.4
Variance Decomposition of GDP growth rate (Proxy for Economic Growth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>GGDP</th>
<th>GFK</th>
<th>NPM</th>
<th>XPM</th>
<th>RRI</th>
<th>EXR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>7.164864</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>9.502212</td>
<td>69.64712</td>
<td>0.087005</td>
<td>17.41960</td>
<td>1.086970</td>
<td>9.529359</td>
<td>2.229950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>9.997890</td>
<td>66.44602</td>
<td>0.235507</td>
<td>15.73616</td>
<td>2.288096</td>
<td>13.03063</td>
<td>2.263586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>11.07837</td>
<td>61.27094</td>
<td>1.522536</td>
<td>20.74361</td>
<td>2.515802</td>
<td>10.73748</td>
<td>3.209627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>12.08274</td>
<td>62.28839</td>
<td>1.372398</td>
<td>22.02024</td>
<td>2.138249</td>
<td>9.183806</td>
<td>2.996916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>13.83332</td>
<td>58.23000</td>
<td>1.329934</td>
<td>24.91820</td>
<td>1.752176</td>
<td>8.550026</td>
<td>5.219665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>14.65917</td>
<td>56.39474</td>
<td>1.600699</td>
<td>27.15219</td>
<td>1.615245</td>
<td>7.706944</td>
<td>5.530181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>15.4138</td>
<td>56.11168</td>
<td>1.522244</td>
<td>27.97168</td>
<td>1.505228</td>
<td>7.056417</td>
<td>5.832750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>16.19250</td>
<td>54.84704</td>
<td>1.399722</td>
<td>29.24684</td>
<td>1.370223</td>
<td>6.668716</td>
<td>6.467457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impulse Response Analysis

The impulse response functions are devices to display the dynamics of the variables, tracing out the reaction of each variable to a particular shock at time “t”. It actually traces the effect of one standard deviation (SD) shock to one of the innovations on current and future values of the endogenous variables.

In this study, the impulse response analysis are focused on 3 key variables, mainly, GDP growth rate (Proxy for economic growth)and import & export openness (both of which are proxies for trade openness). Here, the effect of One S.D innovation shocks of import and export openness on each other and on economic growth, in the main, shall be discussed.
Table 1.5

Response of GGDP (Economic growth) to one SD innovation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>GGDP</th>
<th>GFK</th>
<th>XPM</th>
<th>MPM</th>
<th>RRI</th>
<th>EXR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>7.164864</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.398605</td>
<td>0.280282</td>
<td>1.666939</td>
<td>3.732462</td>
<td>-2.933300</td>
<td>1.418967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1.879412</td>
<td>0.396043</td>
<td>-1.119629</td>
<td>0.230487</td>
<td>-2.102589</td>
<td>0.499163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2.963118</td>
<td>-1.277969</td>
<td>-0.337211</td>
<td>3.227384</td>
<td>0.391172</td>
<td>1.294819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>3.967160</td>
<td>-0.367404</td>
<td>0.269261</td>
<td>2.578901</td>
<td>-0.479091</td>
<td>0.660369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>3.032512</td>
<td>-0.615381</td>
<td>0.026092</td>
<td>2.581012</td>
<td>-1.037713</td>
<td>1.265941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>3.032512</td>
<td>-0.615381</td>
<td>0.026092</td>
<td>2.581012</td>
<td>-1.037713</td>
<td>1.265941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>3.12783</td>
<td>-0.945934</td>
<td>0.231021</td>
<td>3.275471</td>
<td>-0.447392</td>
<td>1.376767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>3.482331</td>
<td>-0.420583</td>
<td>0.177092</td>
<td>2.860630</td>
<td>-0.451190</td>
<td>1.404982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>3.239342</td>
<td>-0.231036</td>
<td>0.431218</td>
<td>3.171407</td>
<td>-0.848562</td>
<td>1.760577</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Findings and Results.

i) Econometric Result

The results of the VAR analysis and the estimated regression results, further justify the need for a country-specific analysis with regard to reaching conclusions on the impact of trade openness on any economy. Trade liberalization, which is said to have increased the volume of world trade, was also said to have impacted differently on the economies of nations. Whereas, for some, trade openness engendered economic growth, for others, it was found to be growth stunting.

For Nigeria, the conclusion reached from the empirical analyses of this study, are:

a. Trade liberalization (import openness and export openness used as proxy) has not impacted significantly positively on the Nigerian economy, for the period under review (1974 – 2008).
b. Export openness in agreement with the a priori expectation, has a positive relationship with economic growth. Whereas, import openness has negative relationship with economic growth

ii) Statistical Analysis of Administered Questionnaire

A total of five hundred questionnaires (500) were administered for the purpose of this study, but only three hundred (300) of them were completed and returned. The Hypotheses for this research work, accordingly, were formulated to be captured via the content and structure of the questionnaire. In all, three different hypotheses were tested.

**Hypothesis One:**

This states that the ability to read and write would not help a people better understand and cooperate with government policies. This hypothesis is drawn from question three of the questionnaire. The responses, with the expected frequency are shown in table 2A below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Don’t Know (DKN)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed (F&lt;sub&gt;o&lt;/sub&gt;)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected (F&lt;sub&gt;e&lt;/sub&gt;)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2B : Statistical Analysis of Table 2A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F&lt;sub&gt;o&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>F&lt;sub&gt;e&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>F&lt;sub&gt;o&lt;/sub&gt; - F&lt;sub&gt;e&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>(F&lt;sub&gt;o&lt;/sub&gt; - F&lt;sub&gt;e&lt;/sub&gt;)&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>(F&lt;sub&gt;o&lt;/sub&gt; - F&lt;sub&gt;e&lt;/sub&gt;)&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;/F&lt;sub&gt;e&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3600</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
\[ X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e} = 96.68 \]

At 5% significance level and the degree of freedom \((V) = 4\), the tabulated value obtained from \(X^2\) table is 9.49. The calculated value of 96.68 is far greater than the tabulated value, and is therefore beyond the acceptance region. Thus we must reject the null hypothesis \((H_0)\) and accept the alternative hypothesis \((H_1)\), which states that the ability to read and write would help a people better understand and cooperate with government policies.

**Hypothesis Two:**

This states that women literacy does not help with better child upbringing and family life. This hypothesis is drawn from question five of the questionnaire. The responses, with the expected frequencies are shown in in table 3A.

**Table 3A : Hypothesis 2 Responses (Observed and Expected)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Observed &amp; Expected</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Don’t Know (DKN)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed ((F_o))</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected ((F_e))</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3B : Statistical Analysis of Table 3A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(F_o)</th>
<th>(F_e)</th>
<th>(F_o - F_e)</th>
<th>((F_o - F_e)^2)</th>
<th>((F_o - F_e)^2/F_e)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4900</td>
<td>81.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6.67</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>-20</td>
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<td>6.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-30</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e} = 136.68 \]
At 5% significance level and the degree of freedom \( (V) = 4 \), the tabulated value obtained from \( X^2 \) table is 9.49. The calculated value of 136.68 is far greater than the tabulated value, and is therefore beyond the acceptance region. Thus we must reject the null hypothesis \( (H_0) \) and accept the alternative hypothesis \( (H_1) \), which states that women literacy does help with better child upbringing and family life.

**Hypothesis Three:**

This states that high level of illiteracy does not impact negatively on economic growth and cost of governance. This hypothesis is drawn from question eight of the questionnaire. The responses, with the expected frequencies are shown in in table 4A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Observed &amp; Expected</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Don’t Know (DKN)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed ( (F_o) )</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected ( (F_e) )</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4B : Statistical Analysis of Table 4A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( F_o )</th>
<th>( F_e )</th>
<th>( F_o - F_e )</th>
<th>( (F_o - F_e)^2 )</th>
<th>( (F_o - F_e)^2/F_e )</th>
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<td>140</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-30</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e} = 143.34 \]

At 5% significance level and the degree of freedom \( (V) = 4 \), the tabulated value obtained from \( X^2 \) table is 9.49. The calculated value of 143.34 is far greater than the tabulated value, and is therefore beyond the acceptance region. Thus we must reject the null hypothesis \( (H_0) \) and accept
the alternative hypothesis (H₁), which states that high level of illiteracy impacts negatively on economic growth and cost of governance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, we, of course, embraced a holistic approach to tackling poverty in Nigeria, positing that enhanced literacy for a greater number of the population and a review of schooling methods and policies are fundamental, in any consideration of poverty elimination. This study, identified factors that have made the on-going globalization activities an antithesis or at best, sub-optimal with regard to economic development and growth in Africa, particularly Nigeria. The inverse linearity of the relationship between both makes it incumbent on Nigeria to pursue a multidimensional approach, given the inevitability of globalization, to bring her economy on the path of sustainable economic growth and development and the subsequent eradication of poverty.

It was posited, herein also, going by the Likert-Scale rating hypothesis testing, that the heightening of the literacy level (ability to read and write) amongst the population constitutes an adjunct to all other policy measures geared at poverty reduction via economic growth. Adekola and Abanum (2010) argue that development cannot take place without education, especially basic literacy.

We recommend a review of the Nigeria National Policy on Education with a view to aligning Schools’ Curricular with the needs of the Manufacturing and Real sectors of the economy to stem graduate unemployment and its attendant social vices. Second, we recommend Intensive Teaching of English in Elementary and High Schools. Third, we suggest that Government set up Adult Education Centers, with regular Literacy Tests being conditional to annual pay raises and job promotion for the targeted category of Public Servants. In keeping with UNESCO’s demand for a benchmark of 20% of Gross Domestic Product as well as 20% of the annual budget set aside for education, we recommend that well equipped Libraries be put in place by the three tiers of government to cover all State Capitals and Local Government Areas’ Headquarters, and fresh
College/university graduates engaged in the National Youth Service Scheme, be deployed to these libraries (which should also serve as Adult Education Centers) to function as Instructors at the Centers. This, we are persuaded, with time, will heighten Reading culture in Nigeria and boost literacy level in the country. Finally, it’s recommended that girl-child education and adult women literacy programs be given priority, even as school curricular must of a necessity be reviewed to allow for more intensive teaching of English Literature, Essay Writing, and Comprehension Passages, generally.
References:


United Nations Conference on Trade and Development - Discussion Papers (2005): Trade Liberalization and Economic Reform in Developing Countries: Structural Change or De-Industrialization No. 179


Abstract

A youth participatory action research project (YPAR) was implemented with middle-school youth situated within a historically marginalized community. Data was collected through audio and video footage of youth in YPAR sessions focusing on analysis of historical artifacts, creative engagement with historical data, reflective journaling, and an interview with a local historian and community member. Themes of students showing signs of individual tensions, making personal connections to history, and desiring for community action are explored.
Owning Our Story: Perceptions About Community

From a Youth Participatory Action Research Project

Founded in the early 1920’s, Middle Hills is a small isolated community surrounded by predominantly wealthy and relatively homogenous suburbs in a Midwest metropolitan area. The children of Middle Hills live in a residentially segregated all Black neighborhood and attend a school district that is almost entirely White. There exists a noticeable lack of integration between these racially polarized environments. Many individuals lack understanding of why their environments historically and presently exist the way they are.

Youth Community Relationship

Encouraging student voice through Participatory Action Research and/or youth organizing give paths for urban youth to be involved in the public arena in a redefined role (Kirshner, 2009; Rodriguez & Brown, 2009). Participatory Action Research is frequently implemented in partnerships with community organizations and youth. Guishard et al (2005) worked alongside a community-organization, Mothers on the Move to do an intergenerational youth oral-history PAR project. Through the project, youth researchers “developed a sense of individual and collective agency...came to see their parents and grandparents in different lights...[and] recognize[d] their responsibility to carry the torch for the next generation” (p. 45).

Connecting to the community’s history is an important part of maintaining and regenerating neighborhood pride and individual desire to contribute to the health of the community (Kirshner, 2009).
Critical Spaces

Authors assert the importance of spaces for underrepresented youth to have critical conversations about their lived experiences through lenses of inequality. Whether “creating spaces” for youth to tell their story and act (McIntyre, 2000, p. 148) or “having a place to go where there [are] familiar faces” (Fine, Weis, Centrie, & Roberts, 2000). These spaces provide a place for underrepresented youth to navigate their lives. This YPAR project was intentional about collaborating with MHCC to provide a space for youth to uncover their community’s history, explore their individual perceptions about the community, and to critically examine the racial polarization and isolation their community experiences from the surrounding areas.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to analyze a Youth Participatory Action Research project in which youth attending Middle Hills Community Center explore their community's history. The research aimed to identify perceptions of the youth about their community and their community's history. This project was guided by two research questions, (1) How do youth researchers describe their life in Middle Hills? and (2) What reactions do the youth researchers have to their discovery of the history of Middle Hills?

Research Paradigm

At the core of this project is the desire for “a project larger than self” (Fine et al, 2000). To achieve this, the project was steered using a transformative framework (Mertens, 2012). With a focus on oppressed communities, this framework encompasses research, lending itself to challenging inequalities. The history of Middle Hills is situated in a context of racial segregation and oppression. Positions of power and privilege too often determine an accepted truth, however, this research will be guided by telling the story of the youth of Middle Hills as they discover their history. Emphasis was placed on a collaborative relationship of trust between researcher and participant.
The Project

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was employed as the research approach. As defined by Rodriguez and Brown (2009), PAR is an empirical methodological approach. The participants in the project are the very people interacting with the problems being researched. The traditional researcher is redefined into a co-researcher role alongside participants. The participants possess “expert knowledge,” stemming from individual and collective everyday experiences. The researcher has limited understanding over these experiences, which is why the collaborative nature of PAR is essential. PAR argues against the notion of a single reality and seeks to reduce the marginalization of underrepresented groups.

Objectivity does not play an active role in PAR work and participants have the power to create, validate, and determine truth. PAR encourages systemic change and also has deep pedagogical and educational benefits. Some of these potential participant benefits include knowledge collection, skills growth, critical thinking, personal awareness, and identity development. PAR is typically paired with political action, as well as having an orientation towards freedom from oppression, which is why participants in a PAR project typically come from disenfranchised or marginalized groups.

Setting

The scope of this project took place at Middle Hills Community Center (MHCC). For decades, MHCC has served an integral role in the neighborhood, offering social services to families, as well as enriching opportunities for youth. Students from kindergarten through high school attend MHCC for daily after-school programs. This project occurred during the Wednesday afternoon middle-school Enrichment Session.

Participants

The opportunity to be involved in the YPAR project was introduced to middle school students at MHCC. Students were recruited through a presentation by the researcher and personal
follow-up by the researcher and MHCC Middle School Director. Nine middle-school students completed assent and returned parental consent forms to participate. Four additional students came to the Enrichment Session, but were not included in the data. For this project, participants are referred to as youth researchers.

Data Collection

Leading up to the sessions with youth researchers, the primary researcher collected historical artifacts, newspaper clippings, photos, books, and other historical documents accessed through the public library, regional historical society, MHCC, and online archives. During YPAR sessions, youth researchers reviewed these documents and interpreted them through the use of art, drama, and reflective journaling. Additionally, youth used these documents to generate protocol to interview community members and a local historian. Every YPAR session was audio recorded and transcribed by the primary researcher. These transcriptions serve as the main source of data for analysis. Secondary sources of data are the reflective journals written by the nine youth researchers, as well as any supplemental creative products completed during the YPAR sessions.

Data Analysis

Exploring the perceptions of the youth researchers on their community and their community's history, the primary researcher analyzed the transcriptions of YPAR sessions, participant reflective journals, and all creative products generated by the youth. Transcripts of the sessions were completed by the researcher and inputted into Nvivo software. Three coding methods were blended for First-Cycle coding of the transcripts. Initial Coding broke the data into smaller parts for coding, with the codes being derived through “In-Vivo” and “Values” coding methods (Saldana, 2013). Saldana notes In-Vivo strategies being "appropriate for studies that prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (p. 91) and Values strategies for data which seeks to “[reflect] participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives view" (p. 110). Codes were grouped into categories because of shared characteristics (Saldana, 2013). The
second cycle of coding continued to refine the categories into themes, which sought to best answer the research questions.

**Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of this research was obtained through extensive time at the community center (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, the researcher implemented a transparent research process (Creswell, 2013; Rodriguez & Brown, 2009). The entirety of the research was explained in a presentation to youth researchers, detailed in the assent and consent forms, and explained thoroughly to the community members who volunteered to participate in the student interviews. The research was closely implemented in partnership with staff at MHCC.

Triangulation of community history data was established through analysis of historical artifacts, books, two sessions with a local historian, and community member interviews (Creswell, 2013). Data about the YPAR experience was triangulated through the analysis of reflective journals, creative products, and audio recordings of the sessions. Themes are illustrated through the use of quotes (Morrow, 2005). Subjectivity was managed through the use of a reflexive journal (Galletta, 2013).

**Findings**

Emerging from the data are three themes. First, youth researchers demonstrated (1) Tensions between their life in the community and life outside the community, as well as tension in reflecting positively on the history of their community, but demonstrating a strong desire to move. Second, youth were frequently (2) Making Connections. Students regularly connected historical data with family stories, what they were learning in school, and personal experiences.

These small connections reveal a broader intrigue and suggest youth are gaining knowledge. Finally, central to YPAR, is a (3) Desire for Action. Throughout the project, students participated in mini-action pieces, such as creating a commercial to highlight why people should move to their
community. Students demonstrated a desire to share what they learned with the broader community.

**Tensions of Self**

The data suggests youth researchers positively perceiving the history of their community. The youth researchers frequently demonstrated evidence of learning history. When asked to inform a student of what he learned the prior week about residents of the community, Terrence recalls:

They used to get along a lot... where they had - uh -fire station and um a baseball team and um people who come out there, like the center ... like the community used to be like a place where people would come out here to have fun on weekends and watch baseball games.

Youth researchers also revealed positive perceptions about their life currently in the community. They articulated positive aspects of their life being friends, family, the community center (MHCC), the neighborhood store, and getting to play basketball on the community courts. Ariel responds in a reflective journal, “I have a good memory living [here] because my family lives close to me.”

Positive perceptions of MHCC are illustrated through one group’s creative commercial product script:

Sam: What’s so good about Middle Hills? Alright, they have [MHCC], you can do homework and study, and we play basketball in the gym. That’s nice.

Jamar: Ya and they donate some sweet school supplies in the beginning of the school year. And they have updated technology.

Melvin: Smart Tutors. We go on field trips.

Noted in the researcher journal through observation is a strong level of comfort within the walls of MHCC.
Amidst these positive reactions to studying history and positive perceptions of youth researchers’ lived experiences in the community, there was evidence of students feeling tensions and expressing negative views of their neighborhood. Students are very aware of the racial difference between their community and school. Terrence tells the primary researcher, “Did you know it’s under 3% Black people who go to [their school]?” Sam says, “We have a bad reputation,” presumably referring to the Black students who live in their community. Terrence and Sam go on to reflect about how students from the community are treated at school:

Terrence: We’re treated the same. Its just certain people be acting like we’re all bad and stuff and like there is gooder stuff. And they make fun of us because we talk a little different and we…

Sam: We act a little different.

Further, Sam shares an interaction he had with a friend, “one kid said - cuz I told him my mom gets paid a lot or whatever - your mom can’t get paid a lot because you live in [Middle Hills].

That doesn’t make sense because like... that doesn’t really make sense”

The tensions the youth researchers live with are further highlighted by the students’ desire to leave their community. When asked in a reflective journal prompt about their future, students respond very similarly. Jamar writes, “I want to be in the NFL and move somewhere new.” Raymond, “I want to be on TV and I would love to move somewhere new.” Terrence notes “I want to move to a big city so I can be recognized.” Ariel says, “I would like to move somewhere that is nice.” Melvin, “I want to be in the NBA... I want to move because I don’t want to live here all my life.” Sam, “I said I wanted to play basketball. I don’t want to live here because it’s very annoying. I want to move far away.” When asked how far by the researcher, Sam responds “Antarctica.”

Making Connections

Throughout the research by the youth on the history of the community there were several instances in which the youth researchers connect history with what they have learned in school. In the
interview with the local historian, the historian is speaking about the mound builder Indians that inhabited the land prior to development; one student interjects “Oh! We learned about this in 4th grade!” Students also made connections with current events. One students asks “Is the KKK still around?” to which another student responds that they are and there are also Nazis still around. This leads into a group discussion about hate groups.

Most notably, students regularly connect the history of the community with their personal family history. During one session, a local historian brought a map of the founding community plots. Each plot had a name associated with it of the original property owners. The historian one by one found where each student currently lived and used their last names to trace if their ancestors were part of the original residents. Students were intrigued with their personal genealogies in relationship to the community.

**Action**

The final theme is a critical part of PAR and is the desire for students to take action based on what they learn. Students played a vital and active role through many steps of this project. One example has a youth researcher collaborating with the primary researcher to type letters inviting senior community members to be interviewed by the group. All youth researchers signed these letters before being mailed by the community center staff.

In one activity, youth researchers were asked to create a campaign poster as if they were running for mayor of the community. Ariel’s poster said, “Vote for Ariel. Why? Because I can make [Middle Hills] happier by giving everyone that doesn’t have a car, a car. So they don’t have to walk.” Later during that session the researcher spoke with Ariel about how her poster recognized a problem in the community and then created a solution for that problem. While other students used the activity to promise “world peace” or “free chocolate,” Ariel expressed a desire for action solving a direct community problem. In discussions about the conclusion of the project, Terrence describes what he believes would be appropriate action:
I want to do a community project... Something that shows the community the history about [Middle Hills] and still benefits the community. Oh Oh Oh, I know like - so we could like create an area in the Center where we can have a lot of facts about the history, kind of like a museum of the history of [Middle Hills]. And put pictures and stuff and have us give people tours of the history of [Middle Hills]. And then have refreshments.

And I’ll make my homemade lemonade freshly squeezed.

Discussion

Specifically in regards to students from this community, it seems important for the community center and school continue to maintain an open line of communication in collaboratively educating students and managing some of the tensions between environments. This research stresses the importance of educators and community center staff, creating environments, which promote connections. Projects that are interdisciplinary and interenvironment or collaborative with the school and community center could provide academic opportunities for students to build on personal knowledge. This connection making approach validates the students as holders of “expert knowledge,” an idea critical to the PAR approach (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007; Rodriguez & Brown, 2009).

This research supports the notion that students were intrigued with learning about the history of their community. From an educational policy perspective, this may show some support for local and state history being incorporated into social studies curriculums. Also it may suggest benefits for curriculum standards to be written not solely from a majority standpoint, but for the stories of historically marginalized groups in America to be shared through history and literature courses. Also stemming from this research is the role of experiential learning. In the interview session with the local historian, students wrote questions, probed for more details, and took notes. Throughout the whole process youth researchers were interacting with knowledge and history and in a sense becoming “knowledge creators” as they uncovered “knowledge with a real person in a
This process allowed the group to move at a comfortable pace with data. It also allowed the students to probe for relevant information and dig deeper into specific interests. Additionally, youth researchers in the project creatively engaged with the data through various action pieces and even showed desire to take further action in sharing the information with the broader community. Whether this action orientated approach increased academic outcomes or not, is not revealed through this research, but the research does support the student’s showing evidence of gaining historical knowledge and showing intrigue with finding out new material.

Lastly, this research adds to existing research about the role community can play in creating educational opportunities outside the boundaries of school (Fine et al., 2000). Government funding should continue to support education in this capacity and partnership between school, non-profit, and community. Healthy organizational partnerships may play a critical role in helping students academically, but also in managing their identity between shifting environments.

**Conclusion**

Through studying the historical separation and discrimination of Middle Hills, this YPAR project allowed youth researchers to have a space to narrate their experiences transitioning between school and community. Youth researchers describe their school as “under 3% Black” and note their “bad reputation.” In contrast, the youth researchers are a part of the majority in Middle Hills. The community center, geographically located within Middle Hills, but working in collaboration with the school district, serves as a space to navigate these two environments and as a part of this project, create a space for identity development and discussions about justice through the exploration of history. The scope of this project answers the call for collaborative knowledge creation focusing on principles of justice within the community and school: an area of research and teaching ideas with implications across global contexts.
References


Not Available
Multicultural Literature in ELA Classrooms

by

Laura Kieselbach
This paper offers an overview at the concept of multicultural literature and its implementation in the standard American classroom. Several frameworks are considered, most poignantly culturally responsive teaching. This ideology emphasizes inclusion of cultural heritage and identity in order to best identify a student's needs and academic development. Several proponents for an increased study of multicultural literature argue that it will present a more informed and better equipped society in terms of understanding people of various cultures and backgrounds. This literature review reports on several writers who have championed as a voice for marginalized populations and have experiences great success with creating real and identifiable characters that allow students of privilege and whiteness to empathize with the plight of ethnically and racially diverse populations. In addition, this review addresses the benefits to students both of white privilege and marginalized populations in learning, reading about, and studying various cultures. Interpreting the six stages of identifying with one’s whiteness offered by Gregory Jay, it is essential to allow students time to process a new and intricate literary approach to learning. This study concludes with several suggestions on how to accomplish the colossal task of creating a new and dynamic learning environment that allows for the instruction of various and complex cultures in the classroom, and it adds commentary on the connection of this concept and its alignment with the newly implemented common core standards that are being seen throughout the United States in 2014.
Problem of Practice through Various Social Lenses

Most people would claim to have a fairly firm understanding of what social justice is in terms of a living concept. Common attributes of this interpretation would likely include fairness and equity, along with a general respect for basic human rights. However, according to Ozlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo (2012), in order to mold a solid estimation of what these human rights entail, a few key questions should be considered (xvii). These questions include identifying what these human rights entail, whether or not they have been achieved, and why they have – or have not – been realized. Furthermore, the concept of respect and individual perspectives on equity and fairness need to be addressed. That makes for a number of considerations for a concept that so many people believe they understand.

The Handbook of Critical Race Theory (2013) acknowledges that the term social justice is rarely used in the field of education. Instead, it asserts that people assume a “level of understanding and agreement on the term” (p. 102). However, most would argue that a more overt definition needs to be offered and implemented in educational settings because there is a perpetuation of power that is not in the best interest of all students, currently operating under the false notion that it is in the name of equity. There is undoubtedly a number of components to the definition of social justice and a cookie cutter definition may not exist in isolation, but rather a fluid understanding and pliable implementation needs to happen in order for a very interpretative concept to work effectively and timelessly in an evolving world. One optimal way to encourage an understanding of this idea and implement a working agenda towards true social justice is to expose students to more cultures and more people that exist beyond their isolated and sometimes fractured independent worlds. English Language Arts classes offer a unique opportunity to explore people, cultures, customs, experiences, and perspectives. However, like so many other areas, full advantage is not being taken of this.
Secondary English Language Arts classes utilize limited texts rooted in multicultural literature. Refraining from the study of these texts, which offer a new and enriched perspective on marginalized populations, can limit students’ understanding of cultures beyond their own (Landt, 2008). In addition, it creates an absence or a void for those students who never see themselves represented in literature. The problem has persisted for decades. In 1969, the Coretta Scott King Award was created to promote understanding and appreciation of the culture of all peoples and their contribution to the realization of the American dream. The award intended, also, to foster racial diversity of authors and also subject matter (Doll, 2012). Today, there remains a need for complex issues of race and ethnicity to appear in literature in order for students to understand there are multiple “truths” and should, therefore, question the dominant interpretations of society. Arlene Barry (1990) asserts that children, between the ages of three and four children are aware of the status assigned by race and sex from the books that are read to them. This being the case, it is more essential than ever that students are exposed to all types of literature in order to have a wider view of the national experience, despite cultural isolation.

**Introduction**

It is estimated that only 251 of the more than 3,000 young adult texts published in 2013 represented marginalized populations (African-American, American Indian, Asian Pacifics, and Latinos). Approximately 232 of the 3,000+ were written by authors from these marginalized populations (Horning, 2002). These numbers emphasize the need for more diverse literature in the classroom so that students can begin to identity with larger cultural groups than what they are exposed to at home, in literature, on tv and in movies. The lack of exposure and buy-in by marginalized populations is having an evident effect in their performance in reading. The lack of multicultural exposure is also having a profound effect on students perception of cultures with which they lack familiarity.
According to the ACT National Profile Report (2012), there is a significant discrepancy between White students and both Black and Hispanic students on reading readiness. The report asserts that a mere 22% of African-American students are prepared for the ACT while 36% of Hispanic students are ready, as marked by readiness assessment tests. These numbers compare to 62% of White students who demonstrate readiness. Upon taking the actual ACT, the performance levels align with the predictions, with an average reading score of 17.2 and 19, respectively. White students scored an average of 22.7. This trend in reading performance demonstrates a lack of performance in reading skills culturally diverse students. One way to increase the chances, and perhaps the number of ethnic students who take such exams (only 13% of tested students were Black and 14% Hispanic) is to encourage better reading habits in these students. For many students, the reluctance to read is a lack of identification in assigned reading material, or a lack of understanding of the assigned cultural reading. Susan Landt (2006) suggests that teacher who incorporate multicultural literature into their curriculum offer students much more broad viewpoints and experiences. She recalls, as a young reader, being exposed to characters who kept her world “small, white, and constrained” (Landt, 2006). Today, she counters, bookshelves are being filled with marvelous, non-mainstream cultures and perspectives to challenge young readers. Not seeing oneself or one’s culture represented in literature can activate feelings of marginalization and cause students to further questions their place in the classroom, in their community, and beyond, in society (Landt, 2006). Landt (2006) shares a retelling of C.D Boyd’s (1997) experience as a young child when she writes “As an African-American female child, I never saw my face or the lives of my family, friends, and neighbors in the books I read”. This recollection of her experiences offers some insight into the continued marginalization of texts students are exposed to in the classroom. For students who feel as though they have nothing to read and nothing to relate to, there is no desire to read at all. If incorporating this type of literature into mainstream classrooms was more regularly practiced, teachers would likely not feel so
disconnected from their students who may represent a different cultural background, and students themselves would feel more compelled to read more frequently, beginning to perform more comparatively with students of privilege.

**Basic Benefits of Multicultural Literature**

One of the primary aspects of choosing quality young adult literature for multicultural purposes is to broaden young readers’ views of the world. The widening of this view “open doors to other cultures”, allowing students to undergo another person’s experience as if it were their own (Landt, 2006). These involvements can offer students the opportunity to become aware of and begin to understand intercultural connections. When students can relate to and identify with similarities between themselves and others who are culturally different, they have the opportunity to see past the differences and take a step towards valuing all of humanity (Bushman, 1993, Landt, 2006). For students who are able to see themselves in the printed words, they begin to comprehend who they are and perhaps see how they fit into the world. Often times, students are awakened to a culture within their own culture that is otherwise invisible or ignored by others (Van Ausdall, 1994). This awareness can open doors to the understanding of life.

Another important elements of using multicultural literacy in the ELA classroom is the interruption of prejudice and misunderstanding (Bersh, 2013). The goal of reading diverse texts is not to allow everyone to feel the same, but to acknowledge the similarities, while acknowledging and appreciating the differences. The teacher has a specific and important task in choosing the books that allow for this experience. Some young adult literature books offer a superficial look at these differences without ever truly addressing the biases and prejudices that are entrenched in a number of societies (Perrini, 2002). If the marginalized groups are to feel truly represented and heard, it is important to choose books that allow them to share their identification on a deep and meaningful basis, while allowing peers to understand and interpret their struggles. The goal of culturally responsive texts are not to make the majority feel safe and content with their
understanding of other cultures, but to allow the otherwise “other” cultures to feel represented in a way that offers them a voice and a presence in their own curriculum.

Through the questioning and discussion of these sincere and marginalized groups, students who are absent from textbooks and literature choices can begin to voice how this effects their self-esteem (Barta, 1996). These discussion, when monitored properly, can often lead to, according to Landt (2006), discussion of intolerance, discrimination, and prejudice that individuals have experienced personally. It is acknowledged in a number of classrooms in real time that white students often find themselves surprised to learn that these incidents of mistreatment and intolerance are happening right in front of them and to their own peers (Walton, 1995). This lack of awareness and naivety has the potential to awaken in privileged students a deeper and more empathetic understanding of their peers and the reality of cultures other than their own.

A Diverse Classroom Curriculum

These writers of diverse young adult literature can clearly understand the need for ethnic and racial characters to be honored and celebrated in literature and in the classroom, even if the full spectrum of theoretical frameworks is not understood. Educators can clearly understand the empirical purposes for embracing such diversity in a classroom, even if the full spectrum of diversity is not understood. Yet, to be most effective, they must learn in order to instruct. Teachers generally agree that a mastery of content knowledge is most appropriate and effective when discussing pedagogical skills, which in turn means, educators cannot teach what they do not know (Gay, 2002). This creates a conundrum for the students who need the exposure of diverse multicultural literature in order to understand the complex dynamics of institutional oppression and to seek identification in characters and content.
This knowledge that teachers require to teach for diversity must go beyond a meager awareness of, respect for, and general recognition of different values for different ethnic groups (Gay, 2002). Educators must acquire specific informational content about various ethnic groups that generates and perpetuates an understanding of the culture itself, and thus, the students who come from that culture. This ultimately effects how students interact with adults in educational settings, and vice versa. Educators must stretch beyond the superficial and often distorted information they have obtained through popular culture and mass media (Gay, 2002). While it may first appear daunting, acquiring this information is not as hard as it may seem at the onset. There is an abundance of information available about cultures present here in America and abroad. Teachers must embrace this plethora of knowledge available and convert it to teaching material. Gay (2002) contends that there are three types of teaching and the need for culturally relevant instruction occurs most abundantly in the third, societal curriculum.

The first is formal curriculum which plans for instruction approved by governing officials, anchored in and complemented by adopted textbooks. The second is symbolic curriculum which makes use of images, symbols, icons and other artifacts that teach students knowledge, skills, morals, and values, according to Gay (2002). This third and culturally relevant – or irrelevant - form of curriculum, societal curriculum, portrays the ideas, knowledge, and impressions about ethnic groups that are depicted in the mass media. There are ethnic distortions of those outside of white mainstream America generated by much of this mass media, perpetuating prejudicial knowledge and ethnic stereotyping (Gay, 2002). This is where the job of the educator comes in, to teach students how to discern between information disseminated to them that may or may not be manipulated by popular culture.

Students of these cultures tend to be reflected in a sometimes poor light that then shapes other’s perception of their behaviors, unaware of contextual factors that are truly indicative of their actual culture. Using books to help mediate the incorrect and often biased reports of these
marginalized individuals that mass media shares, teachers can assist students in broadening their knowledge of the world and learn more about themselves in the process (Was Van Ausdall, 1994). Educators should be moved by the need to generate relevant classroom materials that represent the past, speak about the present, and offer insight to the future of students who are living as a part of marginalized ethnic communities. These selections must include more than government assigned short stories, essays and grammatically correct sentences. They need to, instead, be inclusive of a selection of materials that represent different voices and different experiences. These voices represent issues relevant to students’ societies. Literature is rich in its experiences and by the process of reading and discovering multicultural literature, educators and peers become a part of the experience bot by intrusion, but by invitation. The avenue provided by this exploration can provide healing, discovery, opportunity, and insight.

**Conclusion**

One of the primary aspects of choosing quality young adult literature for multicultural purposes is to broaden young readers’ views of the world. The widening of this view “open doors to other cultures”, allowing students to undergo another person’s experience as if it were their own (Landt, 2006). These involvements can offer students the opportunity to become aware of and begin to understand intercultural connections. When students can relate to and identify with similarities between themselves and others who are culturally different, they have the opportunity to see past the differences and take a step towards valuing all of humanity (Sensoy, 2012). For students who are able to see themselves in the printed words, they begin to comprehend who they are and perhaps see how they fit into the world. Often times, students are awakened to a culture within their own culture that is otherwise invisible or ignored by others (DeCuir, 2012). This awareness can open doors to the understanding of life.

Another important elements of using multicultural literacy in the ELA classroom is the interruption of prejudice and misunderstanding (Barta, 1996). The goal of reading diverse texts is
not to allow everyone to feel the same, but to acknowledge the similarities, while acknowledging and appreciating the differences. The teacher has a specific and important task in choosing the books that allow for this experience. Some young adult literature books offer a superficial look at these differences without ever truly addressing the biases and prejudices that are entrenched in a number of societies (Bushman, 1993). If the marginalized groups are to feel truly represented and heard, it is important to choose books that allow them to share their identification on a deep and meaningful basis, while allowing peers to understand and interpret their struggles. The goal of culturally responsive texts are not to make the majority feel safe and content with their understanding of other cultures, but to allow the otherwise “other” cultures to feel represented in a way that offers them a voice and a presence in their own curriculum.

Through the questioning and discussion of these sincere and marginalized groups, students who are absent from textbooks and literature choices can begin to voice how this effects their self-esteem (Hendershot, 1999). These discussion, when monitored properly, can often lead to, discussion of intolerance, discrimination, and prejudice that individuals have experienced personally (Lesesne, 2002). It has been confirmed in a number of classrooms in real time that white students often find themselves surprised to learn that these incidents of mistreatment and intolerance are happening right in front of them and to their own peers (Briscoe, 2005; Daniel, 2009). This lack of awareness and naivety has the potential to awaken in privileged students a deeper and more empathetic understanding of their peers and the reality of cultures other than their own while serving as an identification tool for marginalized students.
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Could You Speak Spanish After a Year? So How Can They Speak English?

Considering Second Language Acquisition Research, What is Wrong With the Education Policy of English Language Learners

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Abstract

English language learners represent an exponentially growing population of students in our United States classrooms. Currently there are 5.5 million English language learners speaking more than four hundred languages. As a middle school teacher I have witnessed these students struggle to understand and navigate this foreign world. They are overwhelmed as they are compelled to learn both their grade level academic content and a foreign language. Currently, policy in Massachusetts dictates a sheltered English immersion approach, which engrosses students in English instruction with some support to quickly learn enough English to be mainstreamed within a year. Data from linguistic research demonstrates why most English language learners are still in the program for years and cannot close the gap in their achievement on standardized assessments compared to their English speaking peers including two types of languages basic interpersonal communicative skills or social conversation skills do not reach proficiency levels until after two to four years and cognitive academic language proficiency takes nearly five to seven years. (Cummins, 1979). Unfortunately for English language learners and their families, and their teachers and the schools in which they are enrolled, a policy was made on a misguided prejudice to immigrants and multilingual people. The policy did not consider research and therefore has burdened and overwhelmed all involved. Massachusetts should take into account the current linguistic research as well as the capabilities of their teachers and schools to devise policy that enables success of students.

Keywords: English as a second language, ESL, English language learners, ELLs, sheltered English immersion, SEI, diversity, multiculturalism, culture, 2002 Massachusetts
Question 2

Could You Speak Spanish After a Year? So How Can They English?

Introduction and Context of Literature Review

David sat in my classroom staring off into space. Even after I would redirect him, walking over and motioning towards his white lined paper with only his name, he would turn back towards the window. Erika nodded her head that she understood the instructions and then doodled in her notebook. When I walked over to her and asked what she should be doing she only responded with a “Huh? I don’t know.”

You may think that these children were not paying attention, perhaps due to ADD or maybe they were just too lazy to care what I had instructed them to do. The truth was they didn’t understand what was going on. Not because they didn’t want to know what I was saying, but I was not speaking in their language. David was a sixth grade student from Georgia and this was only his second year in the Raynham Middle School. He was “not yet eligible” to receive English as a second language services. Erika was an eighth grade student at the Raynham Middle School; she had come to the district in the fifth grade from Egypt. During this year she was placed on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) a legal document entitling her to special education services for a “disability”. Truthfully, it was a cover. No one knew if Erika certainly had a learning disability because she would need to be tested in her native language of Arabic, which no one spoke. In this way, however, she would receive small group instruction and individualized support.

It was my first year as a teacher, and with my training in learning a foreign language, I knew that these children had not enough time to develop language learning skills, let alone to learn their grade level content. I tried to explain to the principal as well as the special education
teacher that these children needed to develop language proficiency before expected to perform like any other American student their age. I was met with an apathetic attitude. At the time, there was nothing more that could be done by anyone. Every day I would walk into school, frustrated that as their teacher, I could not do more to help them learn. I fathomed that if these two students were sitting in my class lost, more students were doing the same somewhere else.

According to a report released by the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants in 2010, there were more than 147,000 non-native English speakers and ELL students enrolled in the Massachusetts school systems in 2009. Since the passing of question 2 on the November 2002 ballot, Massachusetts is now one of several states that have prohibited bilingual education in favor of the sheltered English immersion (SEI) method. This method is supposed to force ELL students to rapidly be proficient in the English language, while they are maintaining grade level academia. Question 2 amended the Transitional Bilingual Education statute, G.L. c. 71A of Massachusetts law. Unless a waiver is granted or the student is placed in a two-way bilingual program, Chapter 71A requires students who are English learners to learn English through a sheltered English immersion (SEI) program for a period of time not to exceed one year without exception.

SEI is a methodology to support students to help make content more comprehensible. Currently, ELL students are being placed into mainstream classrooms “where teachers do not modify their instruction to make it more comprehensible for ELLs” (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 17). Test results from the Massachusetts Department of Education demonstrate that the majority of the ESL students continued to be at the beginning level of proficiency after a year nor have MCAS shown much growth and improvement. The mainstreams classrooms are not adapting to the needs of its English learning students, the setting is a “sink or swim” situation. The people that proposed and voted in favor
or SEI did not consider or even understand the complex process of learning another language. Erroneously, sheltered English immersion does not provide English language learners with the resources to an equal education, violating federal laws and hurting the academic success of this population.

Who Are English Language Learners

The fastest-growing student in U.S. schools is children of immigrants half of whom do not speak English well enough to be considered fluent English speakers (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011, p. 104); in 2009, there were more than 147,000 students enrolled in Massachusetts schools who identified their first language as other than English. According to the Department of Education, an English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English. School districts across the country determine whether children are Limited English Proficient (LEP), a federal designation for children whose English proficiency is too limited to allow them to benefit fully from instructions in English (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). The former name is preferred as it does not highlight a student’s deficiency. The names, however, are used interchangeably depending on the resource.

The term English language learner does not encapsulate the monumental task these children face when they go to school, it “restricts the understanding of a person who is doing much more than learning English” (Rosa Berriz, 2006, p. 15). Rosa Berriz (2006) believes these students should be called “immigrant students” to honor their family history and knowledge. Sadly, the language barrier prevents ELLs from demonstrating their aptitude. Their lack of participation and low achieving assessments result in them being placed in low academic level classes.
Multiculturalism Isn’t New

People entering the United States speaking another language is not a new occurrence. In fact, the Native Americans who first owned this land did not speak English. Our ancestors came from England, Spain, France, and Portugal to settle in the “New World”; “the United States of America has always been a country of immigrants, but perceptions about how those immigrants should be integrated into American society have changed dramatically over time” (Burdick-Will & Gomez, 2006, p. 210). Historically, Americans have isolated and maltreated groups of people unlike the white male majority. Social studies classes detail stories of blacks being slaves, women being forced to work for their husbands and bearing children, the Oriental in California, the Irish, etc. Yet, we were founded by different groups.

America is often referred to as a melting pot based on this fact, we are a nation of different groups. However, the melting pot term implies that the groups come together to form one solid and homogeneous group. Preferably, America should be referred to as a “salad-bowl”, “these groups actively shape their own lives and identities […] their differences are an asset to society and a defining characteristic of this country” (Zhou, 1997 as cited in Burdick-Will & Gomez, 2006, p. 213). With media coverage of illegal immigration, particularly from Mexico, showing Mexicans hopping the border, taking wages and jobs from Americans while not paying taxes, there has become a prejudice for multilingual and multiculturalism. Americans decry the very diversity that started our country, “an immigrant must give up his or her cultural heritage and native language as part of the price of becoming an American” (Burdick-Will & Gomez, 2006, pgs. 210-211). In reality, while most speak English, our forefathers did not put in an official language in the Declaration of Independence as to not offend any settler, including Native Americans. However, English is the majority language and the language of instruction so students are all expected to know it to learn.
Laws Dictating Education of English Language Learners

On November, 5, 2002, Massachusetts voters passed Question 2 (Q2), an initiative sponsored by English for the Children of Massachusetts to provide students whose first language was not English with

... nearly all classroom instruction [...] in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language. Books and instructional materials are in English and all reading, writing, and subject matter are taught in English. Although teachers may use a minimal amount of the child’s native language when necessary, no subject matter shall be taught in any language other than English, and children in this program learn to read and write solely in English (Massachusetts General Law, Chp 71A, 2002).

Ron Unz, a businessman from California, created the organization English for the Children which sponsored efforts to promote and pass English-only education laws in California(Proposition 227) and in Arizona (Proposition 203). Unz’s background did not include linguistic research or education. The majority of Massachusetts voters voted yes; “born out of both ignorance and intent, the support that allowed for the passing of question 2 paved the way for the rapid dismantling of bilingual programs” (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 16). The referendum replaced the state law requiring Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) in districts with 20 or more limited-English proficiency students from the same language group (Adams & Jones, 2006). TBE programs used native language materials and instruction to support content knowledge while developing students' English as a second language skills in both oral communication and literacy, and eventually transitioning them into all-English instruction (Adams & Jones, 2006). Districts across Massachusetts were quick to answer to the new law and
diligently worked to implement the new program, offer professional development and order necessary materials. Adams & Jones (2006) noted that “the school systems' prompt response [...] in no way resembled the foot dragging and resistance that occurred when bilingual education (native language instruction) became the law in Massachusetts back in 1971” (p. 16).

The law, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71A, required public schools to educate students classified as English learners through a sheltered English immersion program, normally not lasting more than a year. Despite the inappropriate wording of Question 2, stating that ELLs shall receive sheltered instruction for a temporary period "not normally intended to exceed one year", Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights act does not permit time limitations placed on ELLs' English language acquisition (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003). In the program, all books and nearly all teaching would be in English, with the curriculum designed for children learning English. Schools are encouraged to group students by English proficiency. Once a student is able to do regular schoolwork in English, the student would be transferred to an English language mainstream classroom.

Long before Question 2, federal laws have impacted the education of English language learners. Until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, minority students were educated in “sink or swim” English immersion classes. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. ELLs were not offered much support in their English learning. Four years later, English language learners were specifically addressed in Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968, also known as The Bilingual Education Act, which established federal policy for bilingual education to allocate funds for innovative programs, and recognized the unique educational disadvantages faced by non-English speaking students. Between 1978 and 1994, there were several amendments to Title VII:
• 1978: emphasized the strictly transitional nature of native language instruction, expanded eligibility to students who are limited English proficient (LEP), and permitted enrollment of English-speaking students in bilingual programs

• 1982: allowed for some native language, provided funding for LEP students with special needs, support for family English literacy programs, promoted teacher training

• 1988: increased funding to state education agencies, expanded funding for "special alternative" programs where only English is used, established a three-year limit on participation in most Title VII, created fellowship programs for professional training

• 1994: improved research and evaluation at state and local level, supplied additional funds for immigrant education

("Colorin colorado," 2011)

Some cases have gone to the Supreme Court which have also had say in the education of English language learners. Most notoriously, in 1974, the US Supreme Court, in *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974), held that school districts must take affirmative steps to help students overcome language barriers so that they can participate meaningfully in each school district's programs. The Lau case was a suit brought on behalf of 1,856 Chinese-speaking students in the San Francisco schools who claimed that the schools had made no effort to accommodate their needs and that they were therefore denied equal access to an education. The lower federal court had rejected the students' claim, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in refusing to intervene on the students' behalf, concluded that children had arrived at school with "different advantages and disadvantages caused in part by social, economic, and cultural created and continued completely apart from any contribution by the school system." In the Ninth circuit's view, schools were not required to rectify these differences and disadvantages. The Supreme Court reversed the ruling but did not find a
violation of the 14th Amendment as it had in Brown; rather, it found that the district had violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, relying heavily on the view of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that language discrimination was for a form of national-origin discrimination. Moreover, language policies that effectively excluded children from an educational program could amount to impermissible discrimination (Gandara, Moran, & Garcia, 2004; Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011).

More recently and controversially, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which provides funds to states to improve the education by giving equal access and promoting high standards. The Act requires states to set high standards by developing standards-based education reform which sets high standards and established measurable goals. Each state sets its own standards and assessments for all students. In respect to English language learners, NCLB appropriated fund for states to improve the education of ELLs to learn English and improve their assessment on state standardized tests. In responding to the NCLB Act's requirements to have in place standards for English language proficiency, states have drawn on several options. Some states have developed their own standards; some states have borrowed from existing work, such as the TESOL standards; and some states have created multistate consortia, such as the WIDA Consortium (named after the first three states involved: Wisconsin, Delaware, and Arkansas) or the Mountain West Assessment Consortium to undertake the task. Massachusetts took the first route when it constituted a working committee of English as a Second Language (ESL) professionals, selected from across the state that met over a period of 2 years to develop a framework integrating English language competencies with state curricular standards. The resulting document, the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/benchmark), approved by the Massachusetts
Board of Education in June, 2003, provides a potential road map for access to subject matter covered by the state's content standards and assessments (Freeman & Riley, 2005).

**What is Sheltered English Immersion**

Structured English immersion is defined as "nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003, as cited in Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 16). The original conceptualization of sheltered English immersion (SEI) treated it as an instructional approach reserved for ELLs at an intermediate English language proficiency level with native language used to support students at early proficiency levels so that content knowledge would be more comprehensible (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 17).

Therefore, ideally, SEI is an instructional approach meant to assist ELLs acquiring English language proficiency while simultaneously learning grade-appropriate academic content knowledge. In SEI classrooms, teachers should scaffold instruction using strategies tailored to their current English proficiency to make the language and content more comprehensible to the varying levels of English language proficiency. In other words, “SEI teachers develop their ELL students' English language abilities through linguistically modified instruction in the content areas such as math, science, and social studies” (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 17).

**Research on Second Language Acquisition**

Noam Chomsky (1962) and Stephen Krashen (1978, 1981, 1985), two pioneers of the linguistic research field, posited that the process of learning a second language is innate. Krashen developed the Monitor Model (1978) which detailed five theories of the second language acquisition process.
His natural order hypothesis indicates that the acquisition of grammatical structures by the second language learner occurs in a predictable natural or predictable order void of the first language.

His input hypothesis says that language learners need comprehensible input, measured at i+1, or in other words at a level slightly above their current proficiency in order to acquire language.

His affective filter hypothesis implicates stress and motivation as dependent variables on the language learning process.

His monitor hypothesis states that an innate monitor is developed in order to self-correct utterances in the target language.

His learning acquisition hypothesis states that learning a language occurs consciously while acquisition occurs subconsciously.

More significant research in the field of linguistics comes from Jim Cummins (1981, 1984) who theorized that there are two kinds of language acquired: basic Students learning English may at times sound like they are fully adept in the target language; indeed, students often develop their BICS, or language for social communication, in one to three years (Dailey, 2009, p. 128). Another dimension of language proficiency that clouds the issues of assessment and is critically important to an understanding of competency is what Cummins (1981, 1984) refers to as the BICS/CALP distinction. BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) are context-embedded everyday language skills, while CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency) is a more decontextualized, cognitive-linguistic communicative skill. This is important because a student may have a well-developed surface communicative competence (BICS) be able to perform successfully in a conversational mode, without having developed a strong facility with the complex language skills required for academic success (CALP). According to him,
proficiency in BICS takes 2-4 years, while CALP takes five to seven years on average (Cummins, 1984, Dailey, 2009); the implications of this theory for the measurement of language proficiency and program placement are enormous “and are not well-accounted for in the current state of the art of language proficiency assessment” (Cummins, 1984; De Avila, 1990 as cited in Gandara & Merino, 1993, p. 326). Studies demonstrates that students learning another language need “rich and varied language experiences; teach individual words, noun phrases, and idioms; teach word-learning strategies, such as looking for prefixes and root words; and foster word consciousness that makes clear the importance of learning as many words as possible throughout the day” (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011, p. 110).

Similarly to learning our first language, vocabulary is the foundation for second language learning success for English learners and other students (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). Language teaching methods often detail direct vocabulary instruction for frequent exposure to a word in multiple forms; ensuring understanding of meaning(s); providing examples of its use in phrases, idioms, and usual contexts; ensuring proper pronunciation, spelling, and word parts; and, when possible, teaching its cognate, or a false cognate, in the child's primary language (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). Classroom teachers now become language teachers under the mandate of sheltered English immersion and need to understand the theory and process of second language acquisition.

**Putting it All Together-Problems with the ELL Education**

Since the passage of the NCLB Act and Question 2, Massachusetts Department of Education has developed the RETELL initiative in order to comply with the new accountability measurements from the NCLB to increase teacher education and professional development. Freeman & Riley (2005) noted that teachers and districts are feeling the pressure as the mandates and regulations come from the top-down. Even with some professional development, mainstream teachers still feel ill prepared to meet the needs of ELLs in their classrooms (Adams & Jones,
Formerly, when bilingual education was in place, teachers were required to have special licenses which required a master’s degree in linguistics or English as a second language. These programs would feature several courses about language learning theories and the implications for the students in classrooms. With SEI, content teachers are now also English as a second language teachers and must try to adapt their lessons while not understanding the process their students are undertaking;

“to expect a mainstream math teacher to teach arithmetic while helping a newcomer conquer English, become literate, learn the material at hand, and prepare for a high-stakes test in order to advance and graduate is not realistic or fair to both teacher and ELL student” (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 17).

There is a huge difference between a class in which a student is learning a language and a class in which a student is expected to learn academic material using that new language (Dailey, 2009). ELLs are expected to go to school and learn English and learn their grade level academic material (Canagarajah, 2006).

According to the reports by the Massachusetts Department of Education, English language learners are consistently underperforming on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test (Adams & Jones, 2006). Furthermore, English language proficiency assessments show that most ELLs are still at the beginning proficiency level after a year (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2005). These results demonstrate what a lot of research is also saying: “SEI doesn't work well” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 21).

Districts are hiring ESL teachers, who are only a small part of the ELL students’ day. Most of the time, ELL students are interacting with their academic content teachers who are unsure of how to work with their ELL students;
“scheduling meeting times to discuss strategies, issues, and progress is often difficult because ESL teachers do not always share common planning periods and are not available for team meetings with the content area teachers and administrators of their students” (Brooks, Adams, & Mullaney, 2010, p. 146).

A lack of communication between ESL teachers and the academic content teachers hurts the students who are not getting the necessary scaffolding to understand the material, “content area teachers and administrators make decisions without a full understanding of how their decisions will impact ELL students” (Brooks, Adams, & Mullaney, 2010, p. 146). To fully grasp what their students endure, “teachers and administrators need to experience firsthand the turmoil, fatigue, and frustration […] as they struggle to assert themselves as students and human beings with only limited English” (Dailey, 2009, p. 127). Without the background knowledge, ELLs are placed in setting where teachers do not modify their instruction and practices (DaSilva Iddlings, 2005; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez & Asato, 2001; Manyak, 2002), and therefore ELLs are prevented from meaningful access to instruction and curriculum because they cannot comprehend the teacher or instructional materials and demonstrate their content knowledge (Adams & Jones, 2006). This stress lowers their affective filter (Krashen, 1978) which does encourage successful language learning or motivate students to succeed. ELLs often drop out before graduating high school.

The reality is that in the beginning stages of learning English, ELLs require a well-developed English language development curriculum and program (Adams & Jones, 2006). However, even those districts that service ELLs through appropriate SEI often “violate the civil rights of ELLs by prematurely withdrawing needed language support and transitioning them into mainstream classrooms before they are sufficiently proficient in English” (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 17). As Cummins discovered, students can appear proficient in a language during basic conversations, but their academic language proficiency which is necessary for school success
may still not be developed. In the process of learning a second language, ESL students must keep up with a demanding program of studies (Ernst, 1994). Despite the potential effectiveness of SEI and its numerous implementations, “it has failed to live up to English-only proponents' false claim that ELLs can reach full English language proficiency in one year's time” (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 17).

A problem with both the NCLB and the Question 2 mandate is that there is no section regarding the content of these classes or what should become of the students once they become proficient in English, such as whether this program should replace a normal year of schooling or the students should be held back a year (Burdick-Will & Gomez, 2006). Perhaps composing such standards or specific details could make the SEI mandate for practical for the content level teachers.

Implications for Research

Looking at what research says is necessary to learn another language—including the time. Policy makers need to work with content teachers and linguistic researchers to research and develop policies that will promote the message of NCLB. Should ELLs be kept back a year in a language learning program? How can districts with small numbers of ELLs fund such a program? Cummins (2010) argued that all teachers and administrators in schools must:

- change their view of the languages and cultures of ELL, integrating students' language and culture into curriculum and instruction, accurately assess ELL students focus on critical thinking skills in which students learn to question the world around them and work to make a difference in their communities and build relationships with parents of ELL students

(Brooks, Adams, & Mullaney, 2010)
It is important that the people creating policy consider those people affected by the policy mandated.

**Conclusion**

I have studied foreign languages since the seventh grade. Since that time I have studied four languages; I understand the difficulties and rewards of foreign language learning. In each language I have achieved different levels of proficiency based on length of study and the capacity of that studying. Language research has demonstrated that two to four years are required to gain social language proficiency and as many as five to seven years in a language program before achieving academic language proficiency. Yet the ELL student population is forced to sit in mainstream classes before they are ready and without auxiliary support. Stephen Krashen (1978) hypothesized that an affective filter can interfere with a child’s ability to learn another language. ESL students are overwhelmed to learn English and content in the core classes and their affective filter under these circumstances will be high. As teachers, how can we help kids like David or Erika to learn English and the academic information they need? We need to “believe that pedagogy in schools must be focused on morally impacting ends” (Jenlik, 2005, p. 9). Scaffolding and a well-developed curriculum provide equal access to learn for the ELL students; they will receive the same rigorous curriculum modified to their capabilities.

Massachusetts has launched the RETELL initiative in order to better educate teachers with ESL students. Districts are providing category training on the different aspects of ESL students in the classroom, yet many teachers are still unable to translate the message from these trainings to their lessons. As a member of the Child Study Team in my school, I have seen children referred for testing or more accommodations that are considered ESL; an ESL student was referred because the student was not completing homework and some classwork. Obviously a child with limited
English will be unable to complete homework if they do not have language support from a parent and in the classroom, the child may not be given the language support when the teacher has to tend to the needs of thirty additional children.

Teachers should be properly trained about the affective filter in order to reduce the stress and anxiety of ESL students and increase their motivation; the differences in culture and linguistic barrier that exist even if an ESL student presents with a high proficiency level of English (know the differences between attaining social vs academic language). As the Hispanic population continues to grow exponentially, the Department of Education needs to address their policy of education considering the 1974 ruling of *Lau vs. Nichols* in which schools were required to provide services and the same education to “limited English proficiency” students who too are a protected class just like women and the disabled. With hope, conducting further case studies and policy changes, we can provide ESL students with a strong education in not only learning English as a second language, but also in the subject areas so they are prepared to be active members of our society.
References


Introduction

Public educational system provides opportunities through the teaching and learning process not only to replicate the social system as it stands, but to also reform society as agent of social change (Pang & Park, 2011). Classrooms are becoming more diverse than ever before - ethnicity, race, social class, sexual orientation, ability, language, religion are some of the ways. Through globalization and immigration the world is becoming smaller and students are being prepared for realities quite different than before. Demographic shifts have impacted the student population in North America. This trend is mirrored in many economically advanced countries around the world where ethnic and cultural homogeneity is no longer the norm, and policies predicated on the assumption of homogeneity are no longer meaningful, or appropriate (Singh, 2010). In this current reality issues of social class and poverty are on the front burner of issues to be addressed in schools and classrooms by teacher candidates. Many new teachers will be in classrooms where home languages, cultures and contexts of students will be different from their own. Diversities in learning styles, interests, developed abilities, sexual orientation and socio economic status will be evident for teachers who will interface with the many identities of their students (Darling-Hammond, 2011). Darling-Hammond argues further that “teachers unaware of cultural influences on learning – as well as the structure and substance of inequality, will find it
difficult to understand students whose experiences do not resemble what they remember from their own necessarily limited experiences” (p. x).

Teacher education programs must ensure that teacher candidates develop strategies, to work with the diversity presented in classrooms (Hollins, 2008; King, 2005; Villegas & Davis, 2008) as well as the habit of mind (Hollins et al. 2004) to work with students who are socialized differently from them. Grant and Gibson (2011) suggest that, “marginalized student populations require different dispositions, beliefs, and practices than that traditionally present in teacher education program” (p.24). This requires critical and reflexive action by teacher candidates to become agentive in gaining a deeper understanding of students and more effective ways to teach them. There have been calls for teacher education programs to make greater connection to K-12 classrooms, in other words transferring theories to practical actions in classrooms (Grant & Gibson, 2011). According to Ball (2009) it is important that teacher candidates add to what they learn in teacher education programs by connecting that knowledge to personal, professional and student-centered knowledge as it enables them to produce new knowledge that is useful in diverse classrooms. Ball (2009) referred to this as generativity. Ball suggests that by using generativity teachers can envision their classrooms as communities of change, where transformative teaching takes place. In this regard teacher educators (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; Irvine, 2003; Villegas and Lucas, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995a) suggest that teacher candidates must study structural inequality in society to enable them to better understand the social contexts of schooling.

As a teacher educator my goal is to prepare teacher candidates to become agents of change in their own classrooms by challenging systems and structures that impact students
negatively, questioning norms and practices that continue to marginalize and exclude. Forms of marginalization must be addressed in ways that empower students, not blame them and their parents. In this regard, Oliver (2001) calls for an asset building approach instead of some of the deficit-thinking approaches that is so pervasive in current discourses. An asset building approach recognizes that students who are poor, who come from immigrant homes, racialized, speak a first language other than English, come from low socio economic backgrounds and so on not only have a right to a fulfilling education, but hold vast potential in their ability to contribute to society. We must be mindful of labels such as “at-risk” that sometimes make it seems that children are born “at-risk” instead of “student who are at risk” given the circumstances in which they find themselves. Focusing directly on students who are from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, live in economically poor circumstances, whose families live below the official poverty line - teacher educators must train and prepare new teachers to see students beyond their circumstances and see them for their potential, taking focused actions in pedagogy and the curriculum to empower and support. We know from research that poverty affects student learning and achievement. According to Hornbeg and Pauli (2007) child poverty and social inequality in Western Countries are growing in both scope and complexity. As such teacher candidates must develop agency to work with students who are poor, live in low socio economic circumstances supporting them to find their potential.

This paper is about my work as a teacher educator in a large teacher education program teaching the Social Foundations of Teaching course. In this course, in addition to understanding the social and historical contexts of schooling, teacher candidates think critically about issues of equity, diversity and difference, developing a mindset of critical praxis that will push them to take bold action on behalf of students. We discuss issues of difference that exclude and
marginalize some students, including poverty and social class. In this paper I discuss ways that I use the “Critical Incidents” as a pedagogical tool to support the learning objectives and outcomes. The paper is organized as follows: First I discuss a brief overview of the theoretical framework that undergirds my work – culturally responsive pedagogy and critical multicultural education; secondly I discuss critical incidents as a pedagogy tool. I end with a discussion of the transformative learning that occurs through the use of the critical incident assignment.

**Theoretical Framework**

Culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Villegas and Lucas, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995a) and critical multicultural education (Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995c; May & Sleeter, 2010) undergird my teaching approach and research. Both frameworks draw on critical theorists such as Freire, (1970); Giroux and McLaren (1989). Culturally responsive pedagogy has emerged as an effective way of centering the cultures, languages and experiences that diverse students bring to classrooms to increase their engagement and academic achievement (Irvine & Armento, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In the literature culturally responsive and culturally relevant pedagogy are used synonymously. According to Ladson-Billings (1995b) “the primary goal of culturally relevant pedagogy is to empower students to examine critically the society in which they live and to work for social change. Ladson-Billings (1995a; 1995c) identified three principles of culturally relevant teaching. First, students must experience academic success and intellectual growth by engaging in activities that require them to pose and solve higher-order problems. Second, students must develop cultural competence as a vehicle for learning, and see their identities and cultures as strengths. Thirdly, students must develop socio-political and critical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values and institutions that
produce and maintain social inequities. Similarly, critical multicultural education is a transformative pedagogical framework that brings diverse experiences and student voices to the center of the teaching and learning process, whereby students gain the confidence to challenge societal norms that exclude and undervalue some people (Banks, 2004; May & Sleeter, 2010).

Critical education challenges, confronts, and disrupts structural inequities, based on class, race, gender and other social and human differences (Nieto & Bode, 2008). A framework of intersectionality also informs this work. According to Dei (1996) acknowledging different forms of social marginality and intersectionality within changing social conditions is important. Intersectionality frameworks emphasize that people have many identities that combine with discriminatory social practices to produce and sustain inequity and exclusion (McGibbon & McPherson, 2011). Teachers should strive to commit to the struggle of moving beyond the status quo to take action to address on complex social issues such as race, racism, gender bias, disabilities, religion, language, culture, immigration and classism (Pang & Park, 2011).

**Critical Incidents as a Pedagogical Tool**

Critical incidents are moments of deep learning from practice that cause us to think and engage in deep reflection about things that trouble us (Griffin, 2003; Tripp, 1993; 2012). Critical incidents provide a deeper and profound level of reflection of an event or occurrence, because in addition to a detailed description of the event that created moments of deep learning, it also involves analysis and reflection on the meaning of the event (Griffin, 2003). Critical Incidents (Tripp, 1993) as a pedagogical tool give pre-service teachers a way to think critically and reflectively about their practice. The notion of teacher reflection goes back to Dewey (1933) who identified three attributes of reflective teachers: open-mindedness, responsibility, and
wholeheartedness. These are important attributes that teacher candidates must develop to take on the many challenging issues they will face in schools.

Critical incidents can be posed as problems of practice that create learning and might pose more questions in the process. The purpose of utilizing this pedagogical approach is to create agency among teacher candidates to act within their sphere of influence in their classrooms to create change. Tripp (1993) outlined four essential ingredients in using ‘Critical Incidents’ in teaching: (a) describe and explain the incident; (b) find a general meaning and classification for the incident; (c) take a position regarding the general meaning; and (d) describe the actions to be taken. This framework was used to develop the assignment in the Social Foundations of Teaching Course.

Critical incident assignment description. Critical incidents are highly charged moments that you encounter that impact you professionally and personally as an educator. These moments are usually unplanned, cause you to think about your teaching practice, evoke real learning and transformation. These moments might also cause you to examine your beliefs and assumptions, knowledge that you hold and contemplate change in your practice and how you go about the business of educating ‘other people’s children’. The assignment will be completed during your first practicum.

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3 In Ontario teacher candidates complete 40 days of practicum. At OISE these are currently completed in 2 blocks of 20 days each. As of September 2015 teacher education will be lengthened to 4 terms and 80 days of practicum. OISE/UT will only offer teacher education at the graduate level.
In preparation for the assignment issues of equity, diversity and social justice are discussed in class supported by articles that focus on the different issues, including poverty and social class.

**While on practicum:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Critical Incidents</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description and explanation of occurrence</td>
<td>Describe and summarize an incident relating to equity, diversity, social justice or areas of difference discussed in class that caught your attention or had an impact on you professionally or personally. The incident could involve more than one issue keeping in mind notion of intersectionality and multiple identities of students. Provide a thorough description of the critical incident and issue, describing the context to guide the reader. This could include information about the school environment, classroom environment and other important information about the school and the students. In your description, keep in mind issues of confidentiality and privacy of students and colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of the issue – identify equity issue</td>
<td>Identify the equity issue involved in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4 See examples of articles used to discuss poverty at end of the paper
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>involved or issue of difference</th>
<th>occurrence, discuss what assumptions, knowledge or beliefs you had about the issue – draw on class readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination of knowledge</td>
<td>Discuss how the event or issue impacted you – what issues came to mind, what questions you were prompted to ask, what did you have to learn or unlearn about the issue, what new knowledge was created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions to be taken – impact on practice</td>
<td>Describe the actions you will take as a teacher to address the issue in your classroom and school. Insights and Learnings – reflect on what you learned from the incident. Explore the impact on your teaching practice and connections made to the Ontario College of Teachers Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards(^5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation**

Evaluated is based on the following criteria:

- Description and summary of critical incident thorough including context who was involved, setting, creates context for reader
- Examination of issues of power, equity, 

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\(^5\) Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) Foundations of Professional Practice includes the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession. Details of the OCT Standards can be found at http://ww/oct.ca
| diversity and difference (who is affected and how - analysis thorough and reflective |
| • Depth of the analysis - meaningful, reflective, learnings identified |
| • Impact on self and practice (thorough, reflective, actions to be taken |
| • Reference to course readings and other materials and class discussion |

**Transformative Learning**

Debriefing of the critical incident assignment takes place is discussed in the first class after teacher candidates return from the first practicum when the issue is fresh in their minds. In this debrief teacher candidates are asked to reflect on the incident itself, the equity issue that it raises for them and the use of critical incidents as tool to assist in the deconstructing of their experience. In my six years of using critical incidents as a pedagogical approach in the Social Foundations class most students say that it was the first time that they were asked to think about moments as “critical incidents”. The teacher candidates found that the critical incidents assignment provided them with an organized way and a schema to reflect on occurrences during practicum. They also notes that issues were multifaceted and involved in some instances more than one issue. Through the critical incident assignment the teacher candidates gained a more robust understanding of equity issues and issues of difference recognizing the complexities.
In looking specifically at poverty and issues of social class what I noticed from the critical incident assignment was the surprise and shock often expressed by teacher candidates, as they were not aware of the level of poverty in Canada and Ontario. In the conversations and debrief teacher candidates in some instances begin to see the complexities of issues and the interaction of class, race, sexual orientation, urban, rural immigrant status and other forms of difference. The debrief and dialogue of the critical incidents also opened up conversations about bias, stereotypes, and assumptions that they might hold about students. To support the teacher candidates ongoing learning I asked them to keep a journal of issues that they found troubling and areas of their own practice that need to be strengthened to address the issues raised. I did not ask the teacher candidates to be vulnerable in the class and only to share what was within their comfort zone. They could also speak to me one-on-one. For example, they wrestled with how to engage their associate teachers in dialogue when they heard comments about students that made them uncomfortable such as talking about “those parents who have no interest in their children” or dealing with students who might ask them for money, come to class late because they are working in a factory until 2:00 am to support the family.

The discussion of the critical incidents not only assisted teacher candidates in reflecting on the issue, examine stereotypes and biases but most importantly made them think about actions that they would take in their own classrooms and schools. Research has shown that poverty, no matter the country has a negative impact on the achievement of students. For teachers and educators to make meaningful change the myths surrounding poverty in schools must be challenged (Pollock, Lopez & Joshee, 2013). According to Bergeson (2006) students from low-income families regardless of race or ethnicity consistently score well below average. Poverty remains a persistent issue in Canada. Canada has been unsuccessful in eradicating poverty, and
over the past decade inequity in family incomes has grown (MacDonald & Wilson, 2013). Studies in Canada have shown a connection between low-income households and decreased school readiness (Ferguson, Bovaird & Mueller, 2007). Research done by Thomas (2011) showed that Canadian children from lower income households score significantly lower on measures of vocabulary and communication skills, numeracy and the ability to concentrate and engage in cooperative play with other children. Levin and Gaskell (2010) conducted research on urban poverty in Canadian schools and found that socio-economic status continues to be the most important single determinant of educational and social outcomes for students.

Levin and Gaskell (2010) in their research on urban poverty and Canadian schools found that socio-economic status continues to be the most important single determinant of educational and social outcomes for students and that more needs to be done to address the issue of poverty policy makers. They argue that although poverty is not created by schools, and the problems of poverty cannot be resolved by schools, there are steps schools can take to understand the issue more fully and to cope with it more effectively.

The issue of poverty in First Nations communities in Canada is of concern to educators and those working for the cause of social justice. Half of status First Nations children in Canada live in poverty (MacDonald & Wilson, 2013). They suggest that children living in poverty in Canada, are in three distinct groups. The first group, with a poverty rate of 12%, excludes Indigenous, racialized and immigrant children. The second group of child poverty includes racialized children who suffer a poverty rate of 22%, immigrant children whose poverty rate is 33%, and Métis, Inuit and non-status First Nations children at 27%. Most shocking, however, is that fully fifty percent of status First Nations children live below the poverty line (MacDonald &
MacDonld and Wilson has sounded an alarm about poverty among First Nations peoples and suggest that Indigenous children trail the rest of Canada’s children on practically every measure of wellbeing: family income, educational attainment, poor water quality, infant mortality, health, suicide, crowding and homelessness. Issues relating to Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal knowledge are discussed in the course and the Initial Teacher Education program at OISE supports Aboriginal infusion across the entire program.

Through feedback, and reflective inquiry teacher candidates share their growth and development in understanding. Given that most teacher candidates who work in low socio economic schools do not always have similar experiences to their students, it is the hope that the critical incident assignment will help teacher candidates to develop more culturally responsive approaches, by examining their practice and forging new alliances with communities that they serve. No matter what a teacher’s social location might be in terms of class, ethnicity, race or other forms of social identity, that teacher is most likely to interact with students on a daily basis whose backgrounds and experiences are different from their own (Dei, 1996). Noguera (2001) suggests that the inclusion of poor parents who are often alone and have little input in the ways that public schools educate or fail to educate their children is integral to disrupting the cycle of poverty experienced by some children. Noguera further argues that schools are important in breaking the cycle of poverty for many students. Culturally responsive and socially just approaches to teacher education encourage teacher candidates to question current norms and confront injustices (Lopez, 2013).
References


Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Mathematics for Social Justice

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Abstract:

We will discuss possible challenges and opportunities associated with teaching mathematics for social justice (TMfSJ), including hunger, economy (wealth distribution) and poverty. Classroom-tested learning activities will illustrate the implementation TMfSJ.

Introduction

The intent of this paper is not to limit the definition of social justice, but to provoke more questions and to stimulate new discussions about the many meanings of and possibilities for teaching for social justice (TMfSJ) (North, 2006), and its relationship with teaching mathematics. The included activities have been tested with classroom students, and pre- and in-service teachers. The activities will be used as an instrument to clarify the idea of TMfSJ and facilitate discussion. In TMfSJ, students use mathematics as a tool to analyze injustices affecting marginalized peoples. The injustices may come from students’ communities, cultures and life experiences. The general objectives of this paper are the following:
1. Discuss the importance of “teaching mathematics for social justice” as a context of mathematics learning, and standard-based mathematics content and practices.

2. Provide hands-on experiences with activities that illustrate this type of learning environment for different grade levels, and pre- and in-service teachers.

3. Help develop a higher level of awareness for the possibilities of this topic in the mathematics classroom.

4. Discuss how to adapt or create other activities for this purpose.

The content of the paper includes social issues; such as hunger, economy and poverty; and links to number (whole numbers, decimals, fractions), operations, graphs, and problem solving. Problem solving is a major overarching framework, goal, process and skill.

Defining TMfSJ

TMfSJ can be visualized as a “sliding signifier,” which suggests that defining what teaching for social justice “actually means is struggled over, in the same way that concepts such as democracy are subject to different senses by different groups with sometimes radically different ideological and educational agendas” (Michael W. Apple, as quoted in Bartell, p. 2). Cochran-Smith (2004) indicated “… doing teacher education for social justice is an ongoing, over-the-long-haul kind of process for prospective teachers as well as for teacher education practitioners, researchers, and policy analysts” (p. xviii). TMfSJ is a moving target, which could change as you experience this type of teaching framework.
Critical Theory

Theoretical and Pedagogical “roots” of TMfSJ come from critical theory and critical pedagogy. The origin of critical theory is often associated with the Frankfurt School (circa 1920s), which holds a Marxist theoretical perspective: to critique and subvert domination in all its forms (Bottomore, 1991). “As these critiques, originating in the social sciences, evolved they became known collectively as critical theory sometime during the early to mid-twentieth century. Scholars such as Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse are key figures in the development of critical theory” (Stinson & Wager, 2012, p. 6). And although the Frankfurt School and the seminal works of Karl Marx (and Friedrich Engels) are foundational in its development, it is important to keep in mind that critical theory is not coextensive with either of these or both of them together (Crotty, 1998).

“In the most general sense, critical theory maintains sociopolitical critiques on social structures, practices, and ideology that systematically mask one-sided accounts of reality which aim to conceal and legitimate unequal power relations” (Bottomore 1991)” (as cited in Stinson & Wager, 2012, pp. 6-7). More specifically, “[i]n the context of education, critical theory, in the mid-twentieth century and beyond, began to provide different theoretical tools to examine schools and their functions and to explore the persistent inequities and injustices too often found in schools” (Stinson & Wager, 2012, p. 7). “Most critical theory analyses conducted today examine social inequities and injustices within the inter-sectionality of race, class, and gender as well as sexual orientation, dis/ability, and religion (e.g., Rosenblum & Travis 2008)” (as cited in Stinson & Wager, 2012, p. 7). In this manner, critical theory challenges most points of view and tries to analyze thoughtfully what we do. It takes a look at why we do what we do in the
classroom. For example, if a teacher assigns homework everyday to his/her students. Does he/she have a rationale to defend this instructional practice or is this just something he/she does without a strong valid reason?

**Critical Pedagogy**

A byproduct of critical theory is critical pedagogy. As teachers consider how to integrate social justice into our math programs, a question we can ask ourselves is this: “*How can numbers be used to change the world and make it a better place?*” An example of this type of reasoning is the Scholarship of Paulo Freire. Stinson & Wager (2012) indicated the following characteristics of critical pedagogy and the Scholarship of Paulo Freire:

- Rooted in a democratic project of justice and freedom, critical pedagogy supports pedagogical theories and practices that drive both teachers and students to acknowledge and understand the interconnecting relationships among ideology, power, and culture and the social structures and practices that produce and reproduce knowledge.

- Rejecting any claim to “objective” universal truths, critical pedagogy motivates new theories and languages of critique and resistance to examine and transform social and pedagogical practices that maintain unjust social codes (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996).

- Critical pedagogy, however, is not a one-size-fits-all pedagogy, but rather a humanizing pedagogy that builds on and values students’ and teachers’ background knowledge, culture, and lived experiences (Bartolomé, 1996) while using social injustices as a point of departure not only for learning but also for action.
• In other words, to be critical, pedagogy must be developed in and through students’ and teachers’ local knowledges and sociopolitical experiences as both students and teachers advance more equitable and just social and political transformations (pp. 6-7).

The following quote from Freire (1970/2003) illustrates his philosophy:

We must never merely discourse on the present situation, must never provide the people with programs which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears - programs which at times in fact increase the fears of the oppressed consciousness. It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their situation in the world. Educational and political action which is not critically aware of this situation runs the risk either of "banking" or of preaching in the desert (p. 96).

More closely related to TMfSJ, Gutstein (2006), when referring to reading and writing the world using mathematics, indicated,

To use mathematics to understand relations of power, resource inequities, and disparate opportunities between different social groups and to understand explicit discrimination based on race, class, gender, language, and other differences. Further, it means to dissect and deconstruct media and other forms of representation. It means to use mathematics to examine these various phenomena both in one’s immediate life and in the broader social world and to identify relationships and make connections between them (p. 45).
Critical Mathematics

Social justice mathematics is one approach to critical mathematics. As quoted in Stinson and Wager (2012),

Skovsmose (2005), who positions social justice mathematics as just one approach to critical mathematics, continues to re-conceptualize the open and uncertain possibilities of a critical mathematics education. In so doing, he speaks not only about traveling through different philosophical considerations but also physically traveling through different places around the world, experiencing different people, different cultures, different educational contexts—and different possibilities. Skovsmose claims that traveling through differences constitutes the turbulent development of critical mathematics, as aspirations and hopes are continuously recontextualized and reformulated, and uncertainties appear (Skovsmose, 2009) (p. 6).

Skovsmose (2005) claims that attempts to bring clarification or meaning to a concept such as critical (or social justice) mathematics often takes us in the opposite direction of any fixed meaning in which “clarification of ‘something’ brings us to consider ‘everything’” (p. 216). I hope that you also start or continue to undertake your own journey of making meaning(s) of teaching (mathematics) for social justice, going through your own process of considering everything as you consider something—starting, stopping, and even sometimes turning back. Undeniably, “TMfSJ is a journey, not a destination” (Stinson, Bidwell, & Powell, 2012).
Setting the Stage

A good place to start is to ask the following questions to yourself and eventually to your students before you start. A great part of the motivation comes from personal realities and interests (you want to make the process as individual as possible):

- What social issues are of interest to you? List the ones you want.
- What could be some possible examples for your students?
- Examples: poverty, financial literacy, sweat shops, racism, genocide, abuse, hunger, human trafficking, homelessness, profiling, …
- What are possible challenges to include topics like these if students are interested?

Depending on the age level, students might have different ideas of what we mean by social justice issues and might struggle with stating possible answers to this question. However, after some examples and some activities involving this type of issues they do better. The second thing is to make sure that they visualize the connection with using mathematics as a tool to define and clarify social justice issues.

Working with Word Problems and Activities

Traditional word problems and activities could be used as a starting point, and rewritten using the ideas of TMfSJ as a framework. The following is an example of how a traditional problems could be turned into culturally and socially relevant problems, which could still address the mathematical concepts and skills needed, but have “value added” in the sense that they address real issues in our world.
Word Problems

The following is a more traditional mathematics word problem, which will be used as a starting point. Read the following word problems and think about how you could make it have a social justice approach.

A group of youth aged 14, 15, and 16 go to the store. Candy bars are on sale for 43 cents each. They buy a total of 12 candy bars. How much do they spend, not including tax? (Gutstein & Peterson, 2006, p. 6).

According to Gutstein and Peterson (2006) possible adaptation of the word problem is the following:

Factory workers aged 14, 15, and 16 in Honduras make McKids™ children’s clothing for Walmart. Each worker earns 43 cents an hour and works a 14-hour shift each day. How much does each worker make in one day, excluding any fees deducted by employers? (p. 6).

In methods courses, students could evaluate the revised word problem: Is this a feasible problem? Why or why not? Also, student could question the specific mention of Honduras and wondered this might be challenging for students who are from Honduras. This could be a concern, but at the same time this is actually happening. The main thing is that you are trying to look at the social justice issue; you are not trying to make them take a specific stand on the issue or agree with you.

Mathematics as a tool. Both of these word problems address the same mathematical concept, but one deals with buying candy bars while the other connects directly to a critical
global issue. When mathematics and social issues intertwine as they do in the second problem, not only does mathematics become “more lively, accessible, and personally meaningful” to students, but also mathematics becomes a tool “that helps students more clearly understand their lives in relation to their surroundings” (Gutstein & Peterson, 2006, p. 1). In order “to have more than a surface understanding of important social and political issues, mathematics is essential,” and without it, “it is impossible to fully understand a government budget, the impact of a war, the meaning of a national debt, or the long-term effects of a proposal such as the privatization of Social Security” (Gutstein & Peterson, 2006, p. 2).

**Mathematics Activities**

The following is a mathematics activity from Smart Bansho! (2013) used to illustrate how to present social justice in the mathematics classroom. Read the following activity and think about how you could make it have a social justice approach. What are some challenges/questions/issues related to this problem?

Examine the pizza party task: Our class is having a pizza party. Here are the results of what the students want to eat:

- 3/5 want pepperoni,
- 0.1 Veggie, and
- 25% want cheese.

How many slices of each should we order for a class of 25 students?

Some possible issues you might think about are the following: Who has food allergies in the class? (Gluten?) Is the cheese halal? Is the pepperoni all beef or beef and pork? Would any pizzas be ordered half cheese and half beef? (some will not eat this) Do the pizzas meet TDSB
nutritional guidelines for school lunches? Who is going to pay for the pizza? (economy challenges) How can you make this problem have a social justice approach? The following is a possible adaptation of the activity (Smart Bansho!, 2013):

A school collected data about the top languages spoken at home. Here are the results:

- 3/5 speak Bengali
- speak English, and
- 25% speak Urdu.

How many students speak each language, if this school population of 100 students?

How many students speak each language, in a class with 25 students?

**Critical literacy link.** At this point, you can ask the following questions to expand the discussion and emphasize the use of mathematics for social justice: Why is these data important for a school to know? If the school office only printed newsletters in English, what would be the impact on the community? (Smart Bansho!, 2013).

**Wealth Distribution Activity**

This activity illustrates TMfSJ using wealth distribution in the United States (U.S.), and possible misconception regarding this wealth distribution. The ideas we have regarding wealth distribution could affect the way we react to related social justice issues. In this activity, mathematics is used once again as a tool for understanding the issue. Read the following activity and, if possible, use crayons to illustrate your answer on the rectangles (see Appendix for handout format).
In terms of wealth distribution, divide the 1st rectangle (representing 100% of the wealth in U.S.) into five groups representing the current wealth distribution (see Fig. 1):

- from wealthiest fifth (top 20%): yellow;
- next wealthiest (second 20%): blue;
- next wealthiest (third 20%): purple; next wealthiest (4th 20%): green;
- down to poorest fifth (bottom 20%): orange (see Fig. 2).

This will be your estimate of the current wealth distribution per group. See Figure 1 for an example of a possible wealth distribution.

Fig. 1. Example, first rectangle and second rectangle for your estimates for U.S. wealth distribution
Similarly, in the 2nd rectangle (see Fig. 1), estimate what you think should be the ideal wealth distribution in the U.S. This will be your estimate of the ideal wealth distribution per group.

Finally, answer the following questions related to your two estimates of wealth in the U.S.: How do the two charts you made compare? If possible, compare your charts with the charts of another person. How do they compare? Would you make any changes? Explain.

**Concluding Remarks**

TMfSJ is a great way to incorporate relevant and challenging issues in the mathematics curriculum. However, there could be challenges to the incorporation of this approach in the classroom. As indicated by Stinson and Wager (2012),

Critics of teaching mathematics for social justice—or mathematizing our conscious bodies (to use Freire’s words)—are often concerned that the emphasis on controversial social issues and contradictory political ideologies during mathematics lessons take precedence over learning “rich,” rigorous mathematics (e.g., Ravitch 2005). On the contrary, the foundation of TMfSJ is rooted, in part, in the belief that all children should have access to rich, rigorous mathematics that offers opportunities and self-empowerment for them to understand and use mathematics in their world—in a word, mathemacy *(to use D’Ambrosio’s word)* (p. 10).
Some support for the use TMfSJ comes from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2012), which based on the NCTM Standards (NCTM, 2000). *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (NCTM 2000), the NCTM signature document, opens with the statement: “Imagine a classroom, a school, or a school district where all students have access to high quality, engaging mathematics instruction” (p. 3). Many educators “… share this vision for school mathematics and suggest that TMfSJ is a powerful means to achieve these imagined classrooms and schools. The TMfSJ framework aligns with and extends (critically) the NCTM Standards. The NCTM Standards do not explicitly recommend teaching mathematics for social justice, but they certainly are not inconsistent with them. For instance, the *Principles and Standards* (2000) explicitly calls for students’ understanding of the use of mathematics in everyday life and the workplace. This call for mathematical competencies that offer access to opportunities is a crucial element of TMfSJ. Critical/social justice mathematics, however, extends this notion to prepare students to take action and use mathematics for social change—to read and rewrite their world into more humanizing possibilities with and through mathematics (Gutstein & Peterson, 2006). Moreover, a core value on which the “*Principles and Standards is founded is unequivocally shared by teachers of mathematics for social justice*: the Equity Principle holds that “all students, regardless of their personal characteristics, backgrounds, or physical challenges, must have opportunities to study—and support to learn—mathematics” (p. 12).
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Appendix: Wealth Distribution Activity

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In terms of wealth, divide the 1st rectangle (representing 100% of the wealth in U.S.) into five groups representing the current wealth distribution (see example below on the left side):

- from wealthiest fifth (top 20%): yellow;
- next wealthiest (second 20%): blue;
- next wealthiest (third 20%): purple;
- next wealthiest (4th 20%): green;
- down to poorest fifth (bottom 20%): orange.

This will be your estimate of the current wealth distribution for each group.

Similarly, in the 2nd rectangle, estimate what you think should be the ideal wealth distribution in the U.S.

- from wealthiest fifth (top 20%): yellow;
- next wealthiest (second 20%): blue;
- next wealthiest (third 20%): purple;
- next wealthiest (4th 20%): green;
- down to poorest fifth (bottom 20%): orange.

This will be your estimate of the ideal wealth distribution for each group.
• How do the two charts you made compare?  

• Compare your charts with the charts of another person. How do they compare?  

• Would you make any changes? Explain.
Narratives and Counter-Narratives about Colorblindness
in a Writers’ Workshop for Teachers

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Abstract:

This study is a qualitative narrative study that explores a critical analysis of how teachers talk about racism and colorblindness as educators and members of differently positioned racial groups. Teacher candidates, teacher educators and teachers in a large university in Southern Florida engaged in dialogic conversations and narratives in a writing workshop that formed part of a university course. They explored questions about the teaching of writing through discussions of readings and writings about classroom practices. This paper shares the transformative narratives of two teacher participants in the writing workshop on issues of race as they attempt to address inequities and losses for disenfranchised students. In attempting to make sense of their narratives and counter-narratives, the teachers demonstrated in both conversation and writing how they reclaimed their subjugated memories and knowledge of their classroom experiences and how these experiences were used as sustenance for survival in a racist society. Their stories portray legitimate frustration and anger with communities that to this day still perpetuate racial prejudice, colorblindness and stereotypes. These two teachers recognized the continued resistance and confusion that white people often display and how these racial positions are rooted in historical contexts.

Description

In her session, Elsie L. Olan will review and critique data gathered at a summer 2013 Writing Workshop retreat for elementary and secondary public school teachers held at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. During the exchange of lesson plans, teachers and workshop leaders took notes about how each participant discussed the notions of race,
colorblindness and how their personal experiences help them make sense of their social reality while framing the scope of their respective classrooms.

**Context of Study**

Schools are more diverse than ever before. This demographic shift and new reality has placed teachers at the forefront of this change. Teachers are called on to engage in new pedagogies and deliver curriculum that is inclusive and build on the lived experiences of students. According to Banks (2006) the ethnic texture of the United States is changing and most teachers are like to have students from diverse ethnic, racial, language, and religious groups in their classrooms. This deepening ethnic texture has given rise to interracial tensions and conflicts (Banks, 2006). By 2044, more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group and by 2060, nearly one in five of the nation’s total population is projected to be foreign born (Colby & Ortman, 2015). Many would argue this is the reality in many Western countries. Changing demographics and social realities in schools have increased calls for more diversity and social justice in teacher education in response to the increasing diversity of the student population (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008).

Despite the demographic shift and increasing diversity of the student population the teaching population remains white and middle class (Howard, 2006; Nieto, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999). In this context and despite their best efforts there continue to be tensions around issues or race and other forms of difference. Banks (2006) suggests that race relations in schools and classrooms must be improved so that all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to participate in cross-cultural interactions and personal, social and civic action that will help make the nation more democratic and just. If teachers are going to meet the needs of
students and current educational realities then they must continue to reflect on their practice and how they are implicated in the teaching and learning process. According to Howard (2006) teachers must engage in transformationist pedagogy and step out of their comfort zones and discover alternative and more authentic ways to engage both across and within the various ethnic and racial communities. Current realities demand that schools and teachers implement more inclusive and culturally responsive and socially just practices (Lopez, 2015).

This paper explores teacher educators and teachers’ perceptions of dialogic interactions within a framework of social justice education that influences their pedagogical practices within language arts classrooms. As Au (2009) argues “language is central to culture, and how I understand and treat language in our classrooms speaks to issues of polt both inside and outside education” (p. 4). Utilizing a framework of narrative pedagogy (Olan, 2012; Goodson & Gill, 2011) teachers and teacher educators participated in a writing workshop where they engaged in dialogic interactions (Bakhtin, 1981,1986) and shared narratives (Goodson, 1991; Goodson & Goodson, 1992; Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997) on their teaching, pedagogical approaches and classroom practices.

Theoretical Framework

Narrative pedagogy (Olan, 2012; Goodson & Gill, 2011) and dialogic inquiry (Wells, 1999,2000) undergirds this research. According to Godson and Gill (2011), narrative pedagogy as a theoretical framework consist of the following four key elements: (1) Teacher’s authentic engagement including sharing personal narratives. (2) Deep caring relationships (3) Respect (showing respect and appreciation for an individual’s nature and disposition) (4) love. The importance of dialogic interactions is acknowledged as present in narratives and conversations
because it is through dialogic expression that ideas are probed, questioned and reflected upon. According to Bakhtin (1986) “At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of dialogues subsequent development along the way they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context)” (p.170). Teachers are able through these dialogues to inform their pedagogical practices and beliefs and concurrently, recognize current issues and initiatives that affect their teaching.

Perspective transformation contributes significantly to these dialogic interactions. Mezirow (2000) defines transformative learning as “the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic worldview and specific capacities of the self: transformative learning results from a disorienting dilemma...resulted from an accumulation of transformations in meaning schemes over a period of time.” When teachers experience difficult, troublesome events and/or experience situations they cannot immediately resolve, teachers step back to question and analyze their experiences. I argue that when teachers are afforded narrative practices and opportunities to share their narratives, they revisit their assumptions and make decisions regarding their writing instructions and pedagogical practices and beliefs. Narratives and “life history approaches are widely used in the study of teachers’ lives” (Goodson, 1991; Cortazzi, 1993; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996, Beattie, 2003; Day, 2004) and in teachers’ thinking and personal and professional development (Carter, 1995; Casey, 1995; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Cole & Knowles, 2000, 2001; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Elbaz, 1990; Goodson, 1992; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). A framework of pedagogical narrative practices offers a deeper understanding into teachers’ practices and beliefs. I rely on Hinchman & Hinchman’s (1997) definition of narratives when depicting teachers’ narratives. They define narratives as:
Narratives (stories) in the human sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people’s experiences of it. (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997, p.xvi)

According to Milner & Howard (2013, p.542) narratives and counter-narratives are valuable research tools with teacher populations, as they provide a means of elaborating and sharing lived experiences. Especially noticeable is the presence of counter-narratives within teachers’ life stories and histories, which are defined as narrative spaces in which narrators share their experiences in ways they have never done before. Ladson-Billings (1998) argues in favor of counter-narratives as a means to study and define realities that are juxtaposed to prevalent narratives. Counter-narratives open doors to disruptions and re-interpretations of reality as expressed through pervasive, socially accepted stories. These counter-narratives are also triggered by dialogic interactions.

Dialogic interactions positioned the participants and teacher educators as thinkers, theorizers and/or critics. These dialogic interactions were perceived from a hermeneutical perspective where participants’ communication and development relied on adjusting, revisiting and questioning perspectives, ideas and attitudes between participants’ practices, experiences and beliefs. Initially, these interactions began as dialogues where there was a back-and-forth between participants, formal and informal talk, in small groups and large groups, one-to-one conferences and written text to a set audience (writing workshop participants). Finally, dialogic interactions were couched in conversations where participants shared, informed, questioned, challenged,
exchanged information and views while eventually taking an inquiry-based approach to the topic presented and worked in order to generate their own evidence and reasoning.

Through this study I sought to understand teachers’ perceptions of narratives and dialogic interactions as they crafted and shared stories about issues in education and their hopes and desires for transformative and innovative classrooms.

**Method(s)**

This research was conducted as a qualitative narrative study using focus group as the methodological approach. Using as our model narrative study (Sarbin, 1986; Bruner, 1990; Linde, 1993; Ochs, 1997; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992; Case, Marshall, & Linder, 2010) I purposefully sought out to answer the questions: first, how might engagement in dialogic interactions, writing narratives, and sharing of narratives foster innovative and transformative teaching practices? And secondly, how, if at all, can narratives and counter-narratives provide opportunities for teachers to self-reflect and critically reflect about their teaching experiences and students’ learning?

Michaels (1981), Heath (1983), and Reissman (1991) emphasize that race, class and gender—and most important, power relations—play a significant part in narrative study, conventions and collaborations.

**Participants.** The participants in this study were teachers and a teacher educator who participated in a ten-day writing workshop aimed at their perceptions of social justice and dialogic interactions that influence their pedagogical practices, writing experiences, writing instruction and beliefs in Language Arts classrooms. During the writing workshop participants engaged in sharing their personal narratives and counter-narratives and establishing relationships characterized by respect, collegiality and dialogic interactions. The teacher candidate participants
were English/ Language Arts majoring in elementary or secondary education. Teacher participants taught different subject areas such as: English/ Language Arts, math, science, social studies, performing arts, ESL, and psychology. These teacher participants taught grades five through twelve. The teacher educator participant represented the Language Arts program from the university.

**Writing Workshop.** During the ten-day writing workshop, the teacher educator provided ten-day activities where all developed a personal perspective toward their own writing, sharing their stories, participating in the activities and interacting with the participants. Throughout their time at the workshop and as teachers engaged in dialogic interaction, participants moved from inquiry to observation to self-discovery and finally, transformation.

**Data collection and data analysis.** Data were collected through an initial questionnaire, semi-structured interviews (Patton, 1990; Drever, 1995; Silverman, 2005; van Teijlingen, 2014), personal reflective journals, and document analysis that included drawings, recordings, photos of teaching, assignments of the teacher candidates, the teacher participants and teacher educators. These documents were useful for establishing participants’ perceptions of narratives, dialogic interactions, pedagogical practices and beliefs. Data also included observations made by the researcher/teacher educator/participant during the writing workshop. Identified themes emerged from the documented stories, which were largely determined by narrative pedagogy.

During the first weeks, I identified the intersectionality of themes and storylines. Rex & Juzwik (2011) stated that “these methods of narrative analysis can help educators learn about themselves and others and to act more effectively” (p. 38). While identifying these themes, I recognized the need to address issues of trustworthiness and credibility and draw on Guba’s
(1981, 2011) Model of Trustworthiness used for the assessment or merit of qualitative and quantitative research. This model is based on four (truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality) aspects of trustworthiness that increase rigor aspects of trustworthiness of qualitative or quantitative studies. It offers criteria to assess the value of the findings of qualitative research.

Participants’ Narratives

The narratives of Casey and Eric (High school English teachers) are shared as they wrestle with issues of race and how this has impacted them as teachers? Casey and Eric were asked to respond to a set of guiding questions. These guiding questions generated storied responses. Casey and Eric were asked to respond to the following questions:

a) How do you teach concepts of poverty, social justice and inequality? How does this teaching affect you as an educator? As a teacher-leader? As a community organizer?

b) How does your classroom discipline define the notion of social justice? What are your discipline specific experiences with working through the issues of social justice with the students?

c) How do you, as an educator, work with students on issues of poverty? What have been our experiences? How have these experiences changed your and your teaching? How have these experiences changed your students’ perception of themselves?

In the vignettes below, Casey a white ninth grade female teacher who struggles with earning her students’ acceptance and trust shares her childhood experiences:

When I was a little girl, I always pictured myself inspiring students to find their own

6 The names of all participants are pseudonyms
creativity to become innovators rather than filling children’s minds with facts like filling pails. It is disheartening to see myself slowly shift to focus more on data analysis, to where I now see students as numbers instead of unique souls to be fostered. I feel like I’m in school again…faceless…invisible and not worthy (pause…silence). I am not privileged. My family was dirt poor as many of my students of color [pause...red-faced...silence]. I do not want to forget where I come from and the access I have but I know that because of where my students are from they won’t trust me.

In an attempt to answer questions b and c (above), Casey shared her teaching philosophy woven in her storied response:

I do not want to lose the creative fire to stimulate students in our system but would rather reform it to where teachers have the freedom to do so. Although I have found some hope and freedom through the IB [The International Baccalaureate] programs, I still feel constrained in some ways. It is because of this restraint that over the last year I have been searching for a way out in order to teach the way I know is best for kids. Truth be told, I was actually researching jobs to go back overseas prior to this year’s writing workshop because I am so fed up with the way administrators want us to “educate.” I see our current secondary education system producing hollow drones rather than evolving souls to better humanity. Our system should be challenging students to think critically.

Eric, a black male eleventh grade teacher that wrestles with the “angry black man” stigma talked about his experiences as child and how that impacted him as an educator.

As a black man, I teach because I believe that teachers have the power to change the world every day, no matter how small a change that may be. Each time a teacher makes a
student smile or encourages someone on their work or rewards a student’s effort they change that students world. Teachers hold great power, and they can make the world a better place in the blink of an eye. All I got to do is look in the mirror and that is my daily reminder of where I come from and what I’m judged by. I truly believe that the first misconception is that all black men are angry black men that come from poverty.

When I was a boy, I was invisible to some or visible to all. If I was in class, I could blend with the rest of my classmates. Teachers would not look at the color of my skin and question my intellect. When I was out in gym class or during lunch, I was no longer invisible. I was a black boy that was too loud during recess. Teachers would jump if I jostled with another classmate or even if I laughed too loud.

I believe that learning is not something that can be truly quantified. Learning is thinking, and for students to become a better, more efficient, capable member of our society they need to develop critical thinking and analytical skills. They need to know how to apply specific skills to real life, but they also need to know how to make informed decisions, to form educated opinions, and engage in intellectual conversations as well as be able to back up their arguments with facts.

I am the energetic, go-getter. The passionate “crazy” teacher who loves books and writing –the one who values everything my students have. Some kids might call me crazy after witnessing my eccentricities, but they know I am very knowledgably and fun. I approach every day as a chance to enrich one’s life, and I bring that to the classroom. I know I can make myself a better teacher because I am a lifelong learner and I
continuously work to make the classroom a fair place.

Eric’s attempt to answer questions b and c (above) resulted in a storied response about his classroom, students and teaching style. His answer tapped into his teaching philosophy.

The atmosphere that I will work to foster in my classrooms is one of close community and Socratic methodology. I do not want my students to walk in my class and look at me as the angry black teacher, but the teacher that treated us fairly. Students need to know that the system put in place will not let them down, and wants them to succeed. They need to be edified and validated. When they lose faith in their teachers they lose faith in themselves.

They need to feel that the learning space they are in is one that is open, fair and non-hostile.

My classroom/learning environment is a completely free and nebulous space in which they [students] can express themselves and think and voice their opinions. Students need to know they are respected and they are valued on every level as smart and independent, free thinking individuals. Discussion, debate, and writing will permeate every aspect of my classroom and the community I build together will be one that my students will use to feed off of each other and explore the great issues and themes of the world and of the literature I will read.

Teachers have a great deal of responsibility thrusted upon them. I view educators as social healers equal to doctors, lawyers and holding the gravitas of police officers and government officials. Teachers are seen in such a harsh and favorable light simultaneously. They are placed upon the pedestal and they are scrutinized, criticized
and at times ostracized. Society expects so much of teachers and I believe that with that responsibility comes great power. We are the agents of social change. What is just theory on the debate floor or the streets becomes reality in the classroom whether it is policy or not.

The reality is that standards and testing are part of our system, and as a responsible and accountable educator I will do everything in my power to meet the requirements and benchmarks placed on me and my students, I will not stop there however, meeting those checkmarks is not the end all of education, it is merely a factor that merits attention. I will never teach to the test, I will never dilute a lesson or sell my students short because the system only requires this. I will require much more of my students than anyone else ever will because I know what they are capable of achieving. I value the importance of knowing ones students. I will not overreach their potential, but I will know them and I will know what they can accomplish if they put their minds to it.

These storied responses are marked by inherent contradictions and predilections. Nevertheless, these narratives and counter-narratives depict common themes throughout participants’ storied responses.

Conclusion

These following five themes are particularly significant for the understanding of our participants’ perception of fair classroom practices. The five themes that emerged from our data were:

1. Teachers’ perceptions of power, positionality and change

2. Lived experiences influencing pedagogical practices, beliefs and values.
3. Challenges of sharing (as teachers) issues about race, inequalities and poverty

4. Inquiry as a stance for professional growth

5. Dynamics of inequality and poverty influencing choices in teachers’ teaching and learning. And how these ‘influences’ shape and define your passion for your own professional goals and attributions.

The first three themes explored indicated participants’ struggle with their teacher’s perception of power and change via narratives and counter-narratives about lived experience influencing their pedagogical practices, beliefs and values. The last two themes were reflective of teachers’ values and challenges of sharing in an environment where power in not perceived as equal. As a teacher educator, my struggle to afford teachers nonthreatening spaces where narrative practices and dialogic interactions can occur permeated my conversations. The struggle between what I want for our teachers and what I can offer were reoccurring themes in our group discussions and reflections.

I recognized that as a teacher educator, I brought to this workshop certain dispositions and predilections about what should and can happen in my students’ classrooms. I recognized that teaching, at its best, is a personal journey towards self-discovery and that the desires of one educator might not be the same priorities as another. Finally, I also recognized that my teachers – new and experienced – face a myriad of moral, social and political restraints that may or may not impinge upon their classroom instruction. That said, our combined understanding of what is and what I know, often, found my teaching in direct conflict with my own perceptions of what might be best practices for our students and their own students. As noted everywhere, high-stakes testing and standardized curriculum are the bulwarks of today’s public school classrooms.
Teachers and their students face unrealistic demands and constraints that often obtrude upon their natural inclinations to provide free-flowing and personal narrative classroom instruction.

The desire to ‘fit in’, to ‘teach to the test’ and/or to ‘conform to today’s demanding and rigorous classroom standards’ can often impede the judgment of even the most knowledgeable and progressive classroom teacher. It became apparent for me, as teacher educator, that my responsibility was to guide our workshop participants towards the gradual realization that their own personal understandings of what makes students ‘tick’ was far more valuable and instructive than often stated curriculum and policy objectives. ‘Biting my tongue’ was my standby objective as I allowed the participants to speak openly and honestly about who they were, what they taught, and why they taught it. I knew – as the workshop progressed – that my own self-realization that ‘learner must teach themselves’ – must become the byword or our instructional design and self-study of our pedagogical practices.

As a researcher, I identified three implications in our participants’ narratives, counter-narratives and dialogic interactions during our Writing Workshop. These three implications reveal the depth and breadth of this study. They are

1) **Implication for Teacher Education**: Research related to teacher education and preparation that considered approaches that foster the maintenance of critical reflection and narrative pedagogy for beginning and novice teachers. Counter-narratives open doors to disruptions and re-interpretations of reality as expressed through pervasive, socially accepted stories. Provide opportunity for teachers’
reconstruction of experience in a process of growth and change in knowledge of teaching and learning.

2) **Implication for Teachers:** Research related to narratives and dialogic interactions indicated how narrative pedagogy and dialogic interactions afford teachers with narrative crafting, revisiting and sharing while generating novel interpretations or analyses. The discovery of alternative and more authentic ways to engage both across and within the various ethnic and racial communities. Teachers negotiating the social interaction in their dialogic interactions of a learning environment (writing workshop).

3) **Implication for School Contexts:** Research related to how curricula can be designed to foster opportunities for students to write about race and inequalities via narratives and dialogic interactions in order for students to weigh arguments with warranted evidence while clearly explicating their reasoning so others could understand, build upon and/or critique their ideas.

As I continue my study, I hope to expand upon the five distinct themes identified in this study, underscoring how developing a personal theory about teaching and learning is always intertwined with the moral, social, political realities of our time.
References


Making a global difference for women and girls:

The World Academy for the Future of Women

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Abstract

The World Academy for the Future of Women is a bold and daring leadership program for women committed to acquiring skills and confidence to develop as global leaders. The findings of research conducted during the program will be reported. Four hundred twenty WAFW participants and 100 facilitators were the population for the study. The results indicated the majority (93% of respondents) of the responses indicate knowledge of the vision, mission and goals of the WAFW.
Introduction

Due to recent publicity about many well-known athletes, the issue of violence against women has become one of great interest and has been receiving much attention. Articles in the New York Times discuss a mayor in Valladolid, Spain who recently made comments about women's "false claims of rape" (September 24, 2014); comments from the equal opportunity commission from 2013 found that 87% of the engineers at Google are men, 79% of its managers are men, and that of its 36 executives only three are females (September 23, 2014). A study looking to determine if bias existed in selection of science faculty hires conducted at Yale in 2012 found that bias towards male candidates existed within both male and female faculty surveyed (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012). As one continues to read in the science section of the New York Times, one finds a study by Dr. Katherine Clancy, an anthropologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who, through the use of e-mail and other social media, invited scientists to complete an online questionnaire concerning any experiences while working in the field. To Dr. Clancy’s surprise they received 666 responses, 75% from women in 32 disciplines in the sciences. The response has indicated that approximately 66% of the women have been sexually harassed while working and more than 20% have been sexually assaulted while working (Aschwanden, 2014). Why do we still have such discrimination against women? What does the literature say? Why is educating young women such a dangerous global issue?

Literature review

As a society, and in some countries by law, we are obligated to provide equal opportunity to education for all students – male and female. Yet in many parts of the world the educational
opportunities for female students are not available and certainly not at an equal level as the opportunities provided to male students. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization reports that over 40 million girls worldwide are not being given the same opportunity to attend primary school as boys (2008). The circumstances of women and girls wield dire consequences for women’s access to opportunities and services, marginalizing their ability to gain equality and improve the overall quality of life for their families and communities. While we know of these horrendous problems facing young women today, we need to work for global solutions so that all women will be treated equally. As Sheryl Sandberg states in her book, Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead (2013), “being aware of a problem is the first step in correcting it” (p.81)

In light of the information reported concerning women and girls and the opportunities provided them, the World Academy for the Future of Women (WAFW) was created in 2009. The WAFW believes that:

Women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality are key to achieving sustainable development. Greater gender equality can enhance economic efficiency and improve other development outcomes by removing barriers that prevent women from having the same access as men to human resource endowments, rights, and economic opportunities. Giving women access to equal opportunities allows them to emerge as social and economic actors, influencing and shaping more inclusive policies. Improving women’s status also leads to more investment in their children’s education, health, and overall wellbeing (2012, http://data.worldbank.org/topic/gender)

The purpose of the WAFW is to advance and accelerate women’s leadership worldwide. It is the mission of the WAFW to empower women through the discovery of their passion,
purpose and path to success, calling forth the full expression of human possibilities through collaborative and inclusive partnerships. The program has been built on the concept of partnership and volunteerism (http://wafw.org). The organizational structure of the WAFW consists of ten executive board members, 100 volunteer facilitators, mentors, a team of students who support the work at the partnering University, and usually 100 participants for each new Academy annually. At present, over 400 participants have completed the modules of study offered in the one year Academy.

The main components of the program are the facilitators who deliver the leadership content, the mentors who support the members in the program and universities that partner to provide the room and board for the facilitators. For the past five years, the WAFW is working in partnership with the SIAS International University and has grown to include the first year Academy, the second year Advanced Academy, the third year Academy in Action, the Men’s Academy for the Future of Women and the Men’s Advanced Academy for the Future of Women. The WAFW selects university students from various schools of study at the university who demonstrate leadership qualities. The application process involves an application, letters of recommendation and documentation of commitment to the program by promising to give at least 8-10 hours a week to the WAFW in addition to their undergraduate studies. A key component of the Academy is the eight modules of study which seeks to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The eight modules are: Module 1: Creating Possibilities; Module 2: Your Leadership: Discovering and Exploration; Module 3: Embracing Passion and Purpose; 4: Community Building; Module 5: Capacity Building; Module 6: Project Development; Module 7: Project Implementation; and, Module 8: Legacy of Your Leadership. Volunteer facilitators who have served in leadership roles in business, industry, medicine and education present the
modules to academy members. The facilitators attend a three-day orientation that prepares them
to deliver the content of the modules at a university with whom WAFW partners. The intent of
our study was to gather initial data on the value of the Academy. The evaluation component of
WAFW was undertaken to determine, through survey research, the members knowledge,
perceptions and opinions about the WAFW.

Procedures

This study was conducted through an e-mail contact list of 420 members in the WAFW
from various schools of study, and 100 volunteer facilitators in the WAFW. A team of five
young women in Zhengzhou, China assisted in the project by collecting the e-mail addresses and
sending them to the researchers. Additionally, a separate survey was sent to 100 facilitators. The
questions on the facilitator survey were all Likert scale as we had the demographic data
concerning this population. Five third-year Academy in Action members combed through
university data sources to find email addresses for current and past members.

Several challenges arose from this task, including obtaining up-to-date e-mail addresses,
overcoming the limited ability to send e-mail information about the survey from the United
States into China, compensating for the language barrier associated with working with a team
who spoke Mandarin when the researchers did not, overcoming the limited ability of the
participants to respond to the survey written in English, and compensating for the knowledge that
the participants lacked the physical presence of the researcher to answer any questions the young
people might have about the survey in person. With a team of 100 facilitators and two
researchers, email addresses also were a bit of a challenge. We started with 105 facilitator’s
emails only to find that the five people had left the facilitator body. After two attempts to solicit
responses to the survey, our final number of responses was 40.
Methods

Being in its fifth year of implementation, the board members agreed to survey the WAFW participants to determine the knowledge they held about the WAFW, as well as the perceptions and opinions they held about the leadership curriculum modules in which they participated. The surveys were developed with the WAFW Board of Directors over an eight-week period and were based upon the mission, vision, oath, and module content. Two surveys were conducted using Qualtrics on line software; one survey for the WAFW members and one for the WAFW facilitators.

The facilitator survey was based on the same mission, vision, goals and activities as the participant survey. The facilitators were asked to provide demographic information of gender, age, length of time s/he had been a facilitator, number of times s/he had facilitated a module, and if s/he had attended the Women’s Symposium at Sias University which is designed and hosted by the WAFW. The facilitator survey consisted of 21 statements in a Likert scale format and three open ended questions.

Four hundred twenty WAFW members between the ages of 18-25 and 100 facilitators between the ages of 31-79 were the population for the study. Researchers contacted all members using the email addresses supplied by the university. A second email was sent reminding members to complete the survey, followed by a phone call from the Sias University team members to the WAFW members whose telephone numbers. After making three attempts to contact all members, 335 of the 420 WAFW members (80%) access the survey through the Qualtrics link provided to them. Of the 335 who began the survey, 221 completed the survey showing a 66% completion rate. The facilitators were contacted via email through the use of
Qualtrics. While 100 facilitators were contacted, 40 completed the surveys, a 40% completion rate.

**Findings**

**Participants Results**

The average age of the respondents was 21 years old with 87% being female. When asked about graduation from the university 49% had graduated and 50% had not graduated. The participants surveyed were in freshman, sophomore, junior, senior year of college or had already graduated. While all were participants who had completed the WAFW, 50% were still actively enrolled in their undergraduate studies. The majority (93% of respondents) of the responses indicate knowledge of the vision, mission and goals of the WAFW. With the WAFW being focused on successful implementation of the United Nations Millennium Goals 2 and 3 – Achieve Universal Primary Education and Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women – only half of the responses indicated that the members knew that fact. The findings did tie directly to the questions of knowledge of the U.N Millennium Goals, as only half of the members were aware of the goals existence (http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)

The responses overall indicate value in continuing the WAFW. Ninety three percent of the respondents knew and believed in the oath they had taken. After completing the modules almost 88 % of the young women believed that they had inner strength would allow them to be global leaders and that WAFW was critical to being successful women. Similarly, 88% of the WAFW members understood how to utilize the problem solving skills they learned to generate new strategies and approaches to solve global problems.
Data from the qualitative results indicates that the WAFW has indeed succeeded in realizing its mission of empowering women through the discovery of their passion, purpose and path to success. The top three responses to the question "Why did you choose to get involved with the world Academy for the future of women?" were to discover my passion, purpose and path to success (90%), to be a leader (78%), and to empower women (73%). Additionally, the participants were asked to respond to the question, “Do you believe that the world Academy for the future of women is one of the reasons you continue to learn?” Seventy-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they felt they were in graduate school programs and were successful as a result of their involvement in the World Academy for the Future of Women

**Facilitator Results**

With a completion rate of 40% being typical of the population in age, gender, the response rate for the facilitator survey is deemed acceptable. All survey respondents were women. The average age of the respondents was 50-59 years old. A majority of the respondents (73%) were between 50-69 years of age. More than half of the facilitators began facilitating in the previous three months to one year, followed by one to two years (14%), two to three years (17%), eight percent of the facilitators reported volunteering for both three years to four years and four to five years.

The facilitator survey included four open ended questions. The intent was to probe to find ways to make the facilitator experience stronger for facilitators as well as participants. The four qualitative questions asked were:1. Please list three ideas that you believe would help you to be more / successful as a facilitator; 2. Please tell us how we can improve the facilitators training; 3. Please list two or three changes you believe would make to the facilitator process for
the WAFW more successful in developing women leaders; and, 4. The possibility of harness the power of the participation in the WAFW could move to solve global issues.

Seven main concepts emerged from question one. They were collaboration (18%), training (12%), curriculum (22%), infrastructure (11%), culture (8%) and financial (6%). The final concept was best titles as miscellaneous (12%) with remarks ranging from meeting personal need to fear of travel to length of stay on site.

Six themes emerged from the responses to question two, “Please tell us how we can improve the facilitator training”. Interestingly, Collaboration (27%) was the first theme as it was in question one. The comments were about collaboratively planning the curriculum to communication to collaborating with previous facilitators. The other themes centered on the length of training (10%), incorporating technology into the training (14%), organization of the training (6%), need for explicit directions in the modules (27%) and miscellaneous (16%).

Question three asked the facilitators to list two or three changes they believed would help the facilitation process for WAFW more successful at developing women leaders. Again, the first concept to emerge was collaboration (33%) followed by structure (33%), training (14%), evaluation (10%), cultural understanding (5%) and financial (5%). The collaboration theme was concerned about improving communication with previous facilitators as mentioned in question two.

The final question was an attempt to elicit ideas from facilitators on how to better harness the power of the WAFW program to change and solve global issues through the systematically proposing second year projects that would be matched to the global issues at stake. The overarching themes produced form this request were education (16%), economic opportunity
(22%), empowerment (18%), health care (10%) and other global issues such as water and energy needs, human trafficking and communication access (20%).

Discussion and Conclusion

The responses overall indicate value in continuing the WAFW. The majority of the respondents knew and believed the oath they had taken; they believed the WAFW was critical to their being successful women; they believed they had inner strength after completing the modules that would allow them to be global leaders; and, they understood how to utilize the problem solving skills they had learned to generate new strategies and approaches to solve global problems. As we work towards a sustainable program for the WAFW, we were pleased to find all but four respondents pledged to support the WAFW in the future to the best of their abilities. Our mandate as special education professionals is to provide all individuals with the opportunity for free and appropriate education. While cultural differences do play a role in how this mandate is achieved, it is gratifying to find a program such as the WAFW that has been providing young women (and now men) free and appropriate opportunities to become leaders in our global society. While the U.N. Millennium Goals are to be solved by the end of 2014, we are far from that goal. To provide opportunities to learn that gender equity is a key component of sustainable global development; for women to be empowered to be equal members in that developed society is a critical step forward for all. We are passionate believers in educated young women and look to the future when all girls and young women will have the opportunities for education as do the young women who participate in the WAFW.
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Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs grant opportunity


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Alfred A Knopf


Hunger PANGs: Poverty, Adolescents, Nutrition, and Gangs

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Abstract

Longitudinal data from a GA student health survey for students who self-identified as being in or having friends involved in gang activities were analyzed. Nine questions were asked related to nutrition using a four part Likert scale. Data from 2007 to 2013 from five schools in southern Georgia was obtained (N = 3309). Gender, ethnicity, and grade level variables were investigated.
Theoretical Framework

Nutritional balance is needed to satisfy the daily nutritional requirements recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture (2014). Mayo Clinic Staff indicated while information about dieting is always changing, there are daily recommended nutritional basics (2014). Healthy dietary habits should be taught early in life to have lasting effects on an individual. Schools need to provide food of appropriate nutritive value so students have access to healthier choices that meet these nutritional requirements regardless of their socioeconomic status (SES).

Research

Gender and ethnicity are variables often considered in nutritional research. Gender differences were found for dairy intake by Peters, Verly, Marchioni, Fisberg, and Martini (2012). Other researchers maintain nutrition research should be aimed at obtaining an understanding of the variability in the metabolic responses of subpopulations as influenced by genetic, epigenetic, and ethnic and/or racial differences (Ohlhorst et al., 2013). Some researchers have found links between race and poverty for nutrition related disorders such as diabetes (Gaskin, et al., 2014). It is not difficult to conclude gender, ethnicity, and school characteristics complicated by SES have made the need for nutrition discussions all the more important for students living in poverty.

Nutrition health education interventions have had a positive impact on individuals’ nutritional knowledge and eating habits (Allen et al., 2007; Watson, Kwon, Nichols, & Rew, 2009; Baskale & Bahar, 2011; Coleman, Shordon, Caparosa, Pomichowski, & Dzewalowski, 2012; Räihä, Tossacainen, Turunen, Enkenberg, & Kivinieni, 2012). Nonetheless, students living
in poverty experience an increased prevalence for major health problems, including nutritional diseases (Mansfield & Novick, 2012; Ventres & Fort, 2014). It is important for health care professionals and teachers to be aware of and sensitive to the difficulties and health issues of people in poverty including mental health issues (Muldoon, 2013; Tilleczak, Ferguson, Campbell, & Lezeu, 2014). Children living in low SES environments require additional nutritional mediations and support for making healthier nutritional choices (Gross & Cinelli, 2004).

Gosliner, Madsen, Woodward-Lopez, and Crawford (2011) assessed students in low income communities about their preferences for foods and beverages purchased at school. Martin et al. found that the student choices were inconsistent with those recommended for good nutrition (2010). Other groups have sought to determine how the urban poor have been disproportionately affected by food prices and financial crises due to deepening poverty and food insecurity (Ruel, Garrett, Hawkes, & Cohen, 2009; Gundersen & Ziliak, 2014). Tai-Seale and Chandler (2010) indicated there were some unique barriers for rural life populations maintaining healthy weights, while another study looked at school characteristics and resources associated with body mass index (Fournier et al., 2009; Richmond et al., 2014). Poverty has compounded what and how food choices were made in complex ways. One of the reasons for an increased interest in poverty and nutrition has been its impact on student academic achievement.

Children living in poverty commonly receive lower grades in school than children in higher SES groups with income level being one of the highest predictors for academic success (Blazer & Romanik, 2009). It is next to impossible for students to focus on academic learning when they are hungry. Schools implementing nutrition interventions have seen improved academic performances by their students (Tobin, 2011; Hipsky, Scigliano, & Parker, 2013;
Jensen, 2013). It has been shown that health issues have a cumulative effect on academic achievement (Ickoviks et al., 2014).

**Purpose**

While there has been a great deal written about adolescents, nutrition, and poverty, we decided to see how these attributes were effected for the subset of this population who were additionally involved in gang activities an area which has yet to be reported in the literature. Researchers at a regional university were interested in finding out what, if any, differences existed between nutritional choices by gender, ethnicity, and grade level for students in low SES schools in southern Georgia. Further the researchers wanted to explore a subgroup of those students who self-identified as being in or having friends involved in gang activities (SIGA). Permission from five selected schools and the university Institutional Review Board were obtained prior to the review of the data.

**Questions**

Nine questions on the *Georgia Student Health Survey II* (2011) were asked of students related to nutrition using a four part Likert scale (strongly agree = 4, somewhat agree = 3, somewhat disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1). The survey questions were as follows:

1. I eat at least three servings of dairy products each day (dairy includes cheese, yogurt, and milk).

2. I eat at least five servings of fruits or vegetables each day.

3. School meals in my school cafeteria are healthy.

4. Facts about nutrition are available in my school cafeteria.
5. I eat school lunch three or more times per week.

6. I make healthy food choices in my school cafeteria.

7. There are whole wheat and multigrain breads and cereals available in my school cafeteria.

8. If only healthy snacks and beverages were available in the vending machines during the school day, I would purchase them.

9. If breakfast were available at school, but outside the cafeteria, I would eat breakfast at school more often. (Georgia Department of Education (DOE), 2011, p. 7)

Research questions were identified as: 1) Was there a statistically significant difference between student nutrition survey responses for gender, ethnicity or grade level for students who have SIGA? 2) What were the nutritional implications from the survey for students who have SIGA?

Participants

Data from a longitudinal study from 2007 to 2013 included five low SES schools covering grades 6 – 12 in southern Georgia was obtained (N = 3309). Gender (females: n = 1627 and males: n = 1682), ethnicity (African American: n = 2662; Hispanic: n = 94; White: n = 306; Asian: n = 30; and other: n = 217), and grade level (grade 6: n = 587; grade 7: n = 310; grade 8: n = 976; grade 9: n = 438; grade 10: n = 455; grade 11: n = 214; and grade 12: n = 329) were reviewed with respect to the nutrition survey results for students who have SIGA.
Data Sources

Data was obtained from the Georgia Department of Education. Permission from the individual schools included in the analysis was additionally obtained. The names of schools were purposefully withheld as per the agreements made with the participating schools.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the nine nutrition questions for the gender (see Table 1), ethnicity (see Table 2), and grade level (see Table 3) variables.

Table 1

Gender Descriptive Statistics for Nutrition Questions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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Table 2

Ethnicity Descriptive Statistics for Nutrition Questions

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Table 3

Grade Level Descriptive Statistics for Nutrition Questions

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</table>

One-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) procedures were used to compare means between the different groups (see Tables 4, 5, and 7). Many of the ANOVA comparisons for the different variables were significant at the alpha less than .05 level of significance. Scheffe post hoc testing was used to better interpret the ANOVA findings as shown in Tables 6 and 8 for the ethnicity and grade level variables respectively.

Table 4

Gender One-Way ANOVA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Nutrition Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<tr>
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<td>24.92</td>
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<td>.09</td>
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<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td>.621</td>
<td>.769</td>
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</table>

Note. N = 3309; df = 1, 3307 for all values above.
Table 5

Ethnicity One-Way ANOVA

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Note. $p < .05$; $N = 3309$; $df = 4, 3304$ for all values above.

Table 6

Ethnicity Post Hoc Scheffe

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Note. $M_{dif} =$ Mean difference; $p < .05$; $N = 3309$ for all values above.

Table 7

Grade Level One-Way ANOVA

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<th>Nutrition Question</th>
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Note. $p < .05$; $N = 3309$; $df = 6, 3302$ for all values above.
Table 8

Grade Level Post Hoc Scheffe

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Note. M dif = Mean difference; p < .05; N = 3309 for all values above.

Findings

The mean scores were generally related to somewhat agree for all nine questions except for nutrition question three (“School meals in my school cafeteria are healthy,” Georgia DOE, 2011, p. 7), which received a mean score closer to somewhat disagree across all variables. All students somewhat agreed with question nine (“If breakfast were available at school, but outside the cafeteria, I would eat breakfast at school more often,” Georgia DOE, 2011, p. 7). Three subgroup categories were further explored: gender, ethnicity, and grade level.

There were statistically significant differences for six of the nine nutrition questions with respect to gender. Female students scored statistically significantly lower on the nutrition
questions one through six and agreed with males for questions seven through nine as shown in Table 4. Female students were even more likely than male students to somewhat disagree with question three.

Significant differences were obtained across all questions with respect to race, mostly due to differences between the means for African American and white students as seen in Table 6. African American students were more likely to statistically significantly score higher or equal to other ethnicities on each of the nutrition questions. These higher scores would indicate these students tend to be more likely to somewhat agree than other ethnicities.

All mean differences between grade levels were significant and there seemed to be a general trend from somewhat agree in the sixth grade to somewhat disagree in the twelfth grade for nutrition questions one through eight. Seniors average scores for all questions were less than or equal to all other grade levels. Grades six through eight scored significantly higher than grade twelve as shown in Table 8 except for grade seven for question five and grade eight for question seven. There seems to be a difference in the way middle grades (grades six through eight) students responded to the questionnaire and high school students (grades nine through twelve), especially with seniors (twelfth grade students).

**Discussion**

Results for dairy intake on the survey, question one, were statistically significantly different with respect to gender which was consistent with findings from Peters et al. (2012). In another study, Gosliner et al. reported students identified breakfast as an important meal of the day which was supported across all variables in the Georgia nutrition study (2011). Students did not perceive their school food choices as being healthy, question three, and this was again consistent with the findings of others (Gosliner et al., 2011).
One important issue regarding the data collected was noticed by the researchers almost immediately upon receipt of the data from the Georgia DOE, simply stated, there were no missing data points. The researchers found this to be improbable considering the sensitivity of some of the questions asked of students and the probability of some student inadvertently omitting a response.

Upon inquiry, the researchers were informed that all incomplete surveys were deleted from the data pool and that no record of the number of deleted surveys was maintained. While this eliminated the need for dealing with missing data issues, the researchers felt the data set received may have been skewed in unknown ways because of these omissions. Certainly the omission of all incomplete surveys should be considered a limiting factor of the study.

Conclusions

While there were statistically significant differences between student nutrition survey responses for gender, ethnicity and grade level for students who have SIGA, the results are in line with those obtained by others (Dubowitz et al., 2008; Gosliner et al., 2011; Peters et al., 2012; Räihä et al., 2012). The nutritional implications from the study are that these students, in general, do not perceive their school has provided them with healthy lunch choices. African American students and middle grades students rated the nutrition items on the questionnaire higher than other ethnicities and high school students potentially indicating a need for greater nutritional interventions and education at the middle grades level for these students. On a positive note, if breakfasts were available at school, these students believe they would choose to eat breakfast at school more often.
The subgroup population of students who have SIGA in this study appeared to not respond differently than other students in low SES schools as reported by other researchers. The literature available on this particular subgroup, students who self-identified as being in or having friends involved in gang activities, has not been well documented. The importance of separating out this subgroup without further investigation is unknown. Further research on students who self-identified as being in or having friends involved in gang activities is warranted to determine what types of nutrition interventions may be indicated specific to this group.
References


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Why We Should be Skeptical of Bandura’s Bobo Dolls

Andrea Pulido
The University of Central Florida

Abstract

In recent years, the media as well as people in academia have re-opened the debate on aggression. Scientists are once again taking a look at the root of aggression, whether it is learned or innate. These experts are taking it one step further and researching different stimuli that may teach or trigger aggression and how we can prevent or control aggression in order to decrease violence in our society. In this paper we will discuss one of the most prominent theories that deals with aggression and we will look at some of its flaws. It is important to look at the work that has been done before us and to use it to advance our knowledge in the field. We will be discussing the effects of selection bias, racial bias and demand characteristics, as they appear in the famous Albert Bandura Bobo Doll Study of 1961 and their effects on the generalizability and validity of the results. It is important to understand the generalizability of these results, especially when we attempt to use them as a foundation in the educational and legal systems.
Why We Should be Skeptical of Bandura’s Bobo Dolls

With the events that have been unfolding due to the decisions in the Zimmerman case and the case of Officer Wilson, many reporters and legal experts have begun to debate the root of aggression. We are once again presented with an interesting question: is aggression learned or innate? In this instance many people refer to the Bobo Doll Experiment conducted by Albert Bandura in 1961, and the subsequent replications that support his findings that aggression is learned from observing models. Individuals, on both sides, are using the findings from this study in order to demonstrate that African American children or Caucasian children who are exposed to aggression in the home are more likely to imitate that aggression somewhere else. Overall, many individuals are subscribing to Bandura’s Social Learning Theory when analyzing these cases, without challenging this theory and simply accepting it as scientific law.

With all these new allegations being made, it is important to look at the generalizability of the findings in order to decide whether this study is truly generalizable and ultimately valid. One major area of concern in using this study arises from the fact that the sample pool of participants was very limited. This phenomenon is typically referred to as selection bias. What we mean by this is that the only participants observed were individuals from the nursery at Stanford University in the 1960’s. This leads us to conclude that these individuals were of similar socioeconomic background, age and race. Other areas of concern arise from the fact that demand characteristics may have played a large role in the results of the study. As scientist we have to tread carefully when it comes to experimental findings, it is our job to question these results and as journalists it is their job to verify that their information is valid and applicable before they tie their names and professional titles to those results. In the subsequent paragraphs I will provide some background to the methods, procedures and results from the Bobo Doll study,
as well as a more in-depth view of my critique of this famous study with suggestions for future studies.

**The Story Behind the Bobo Dolls**

The famous Bobo Doll experiment was conducted in order to explore the connection between social learning and aggression. Until this point, people subscribed to the Freudian view that aggression was due to turmoil that existed in the unconscious mind. Psychologist that treated aggression often used methods that allowed the individual to express those repressed thoughts and ultimately experience catharsis. The idea was to allow the individual to use catharsis as a gateway to release the aggression drive and thus reduce aggressive behavior (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003).

At this point Bandura felt ready to challenge the pre-established theory and embarked on a scientific journey with the help of Dorrie and Sheila Ross. Bandura set out to prove that there was a connection between social learning and aggression. He believed that individuals learn by imitating models and thus aggression, just like any other behavior, could be learned by imitation. For his Bobo Doll experiment in 1961, this experiment would be one of many variations; he selected 36 boys and 36 girls that were currently enrolled in the Stanford University Nursery. These children ranged in ages from 37 months of age to 69 months of age with the average age being around 52 months. The children were then organized into one of five groups, which included a control group. Forty-eight children would be placed in the experimental group and twenty-four would be placed in the control group. Of the 48 that were placed in the experimental group, half would be exposed to the aggressive model and the other half would be exposed to the non-aggressive model. Finally, the experimental group observing the aggressive model, was
divided even further to expose half of the children to a same sex model and half of the children to an opposite sex model (Bandura et al., 1961).

For the experiment children in the aggressive model group were led into a room that contained highly appealing toys on one side and aggressive toys on the other side where the adult was located. The child was then instructed to only play with his/her toys and avoid the other toys. After a minute of play the adult would engage the Bobo doll with physical and verbal aggressive play patterns. After the time was completed, the experimenter would take the child to a different room filled with enticing toys and allows them to play freely. After a two minute mark the experimenter would prohibit the child from playing with these toys, but would explain that the child could play with toys in another room (aggressive and non-aggressive toys are present) for a period of twenty minutes. This tactic was used in order to cause frustration levels to rise in the child. During the next twenty minutes, the experimenters observed how the child interacted with the Bobo doll. They recorded all physical as well as verbal aggression that occurred during the play session (Bandura et al., 1961).

In short, the results revealed that children exposed to the aggressive model were more likely to exhibit and imitate physical and verbal aggression towards the Bobo doll. The data also supported Bandura’s prediction that children’s behavior tends to be more heavily influenced by models of the same sex rather than models of the opposite sex. Finally, the data also supports the idea that males tend to be more aggressive than females, which is evidenced by the total tallies of 270 aggressive instances for males compared to 128 aggressive instances for females (Hock, 2009).

These results can be interpreted in many ways, but Bandura used these findings to combat Freud and the strict behaviorist of his time. With this study and the subsequent variations
he performed, he found data to develop and support his social learning theory. This data allowed him to explore the principles of observational learning and social modeling and how they may interact with motivation. With this he concluded that individuals could learn with no need for reinforcement (punishment or reward). (Skinner, 1938) If his theory was correct then this meant that people were capable of learning at a much quicker pace than was predicted by the established behaviorists of the time (Bandura 1989).

**Skepticism of Bandura’s Bobo Dolls**

When wondering why would anyone critique the Bandura Bobo Doll study? There is a very simple answer: because we can and we should. We have all been taught about the famous Bobo doll study, and we may have used it as a reference for a different assignment before, but have you ever taken the time to question the great Albert Bandura? Yes, it is true that his study has been renowned as one of the most influential studies in psychology and that we will continue to use it as a guiding point when we discuss the root of aggression, but it is important to address some key flaws that have an impact on the generalizability and validity of the results.

If we take a moment to go back and listen to the reporters and experts that continue to debate the root of aggression one thing becomes clear, there are very few studies cited (if any at all) that have vastly generalizable results. This is true in the case of the Bobo doll studies. The individuals that participated in the studies were all from the Stanford University nursery in the 1960’s. Like it was previously mentioned, this led to a narrow sample pool of individuals who shared the same socioeconomic background, and race. This blatant example of selection bias gave us a group of individuals that were predominately white and that belonged to the upper-middle class. During this time period we also need to take into account all the racial biases that still existed and how that affected the racial variety at a prestigious institution such as Stanford
University (Hart, 2006). We also need to address limited characteristics that were available for a model. The individual personality characteristics and physical characteristics could have had an impact on how much that individual child related to the model and thus subsequently imitated the model. In an effort to be fair, this was addressed in the discussion area of Bandura’s published study.

Moreover, the findings from an earlier study (Baudura & Huston, 1961), in which children imitated to an equal degree aggression exhibited by a nurturant and a nonnurturant model, together with the results [p. 582] of the present experiment in which subjects readily imitated aggressive models who were more or less neutral figures suggest that mere observation of aggression, regardless of the quality of the model-subject relationship, is a sufficient condition for producing imitative aggression in children. A comparative study of the subjects' imitation of aggressive models who are feared, who are liked and esteemed, or who are essentially neutral figures would throw some light on whether or not a more parsimonious theory than the one involved in "identification with the aggressor" can explain the modeling process.

Even though the issue was addressed, we still need to be careful when generalizing the findings of this study. What we need to keep in mind is that not only does this flaw threaten the internal validity of the study, but also it makes it very difficult to generalize those results outside of the laboratory (Bandura el al., 1961).

Another major issue with this study stems from the possibility that demand characteristics may have affected the interpretation of the results. At the beginning of the study the child is shown a model that is engaging in either a non-aggressive play session or an aggressive play session. In this situation that child might interpret the model as a set of instructions and may be motivated to follow the instructions. In an effort to please the adult and/or the experimenter the
child would imitate the behaviors that s/he observed from the model. If this is the case then the study is not looking at aggression but instead it is studying the effects of motivation on following the instructions presented by the model (Gauntlett 2005; Ferguson 2010). Even though this may not have been the case for every child, we cannot be certain that this variable had no effect on the results, and thus the confound has an effect on the generalizability of the results and must be addressed in future replications of the study.

**Future Studies of Aggression**

After carefully looking at the results and reading the literature surrounding this study, I am sure that a study like the Bobo Doll study should not be accepted as scientific law. Even though this study was revolutionary and it continues to be included in all psychology textbooks, we must be careful of how we interpret and apply the findings to the general population. Aggression has been a hot topic in modern times and it has been discussed in instances such as: increasing violence in television and video games, mass shootings at schools, abuse of police authority and the effects of adverse childhood experiences among other things. As much as we would like to point fingers and say that Bandura was right, there are many key areas that affect the way in which someone could interpret the data. My recommendation is for future studies to address aggression in terms of the bio-psych-social approach and to make these studies more inclusive of modern characteristics that can exacerbate displays of aggression.


Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: A Holistic Approach

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of culturally responsive pedagogy in an introduction to university course developed for Aboriginal Access students. In keeping with requests that Aboriginal worldviews be incorporated into curriculum, this study aims to examine how the fusion of Aboriginal epistemology into a first year introduction to university course impact on the academic success of Access students. Using precepts from the Medicine Wheel of Learning, the course content of a University 101 course (Barefoot, 1993; Gardner, 1980; 1981) was adapted to incorporate indigenous traditions. For example, the presence of elders and peer mentoring from upper level aboriginal students were integral components of this curriculum. As opposed to lectures, instructors used circles of learning to introduce and apply new concepts. As part of a three year longitudinal mixed methods research, the first interviews with the research participants were conducted in December 2013 with second interviews to follow in December 2016. Towards the end of the research, statistical data relating to pass/fail rates will assist in determining the retention and degree completion of the participants. In keeping with this timeline, the results presented here reflect the content of the December 2013 interviews.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: A Holistic Approach

Acknowledging the need to conceptualize and to develop culturally responsive pedagogy for First Nations Peoples of Canada, this paper presents the preliminary results of a three year longitudinal study focusing on determining retention and degree completion of the first cohort of Aboriginal Access students enrolled in a culturally responsive University 101 course. In keeping with requests that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) worldviews be incorporated into content steeped in Eurocentric linear educational progression, this study aims to examine how a fusion of Aboriginal epistemology and non-Aboriginal traditions of learning impact the academic development of Access students (Anuik & Gillies, 2012; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Stuhldreier & Ford, 2009). Conceived as an opportunity for students to transition to higher education, Aboriginal Access Studies prepares students for degree studies by providing parameters to facilitate the social, emotional and cultural adaptation to university level courses. Potential university students attend core classes in Biology, Education, English and Math. Acknowledging the cultural responsive pedagogy in place, students are evaluated according to the same standards and earn the same university recognized credits. After completing the Access program with a minimum of 60% in each course, students can enroll in an undergraduate degree.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) is an approach that asserts the value of focusing classroom curricula and practice upon students’ cultural frames of reference (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). It is a pedagogy that recognizes students’ differences, validates students’ cultures, and asserts that cultural congruence of classroom practices increase students success in schools. However, in conventional Western school structure, Eurocentric approaches to school subjects focusing on individual disciplines where students are required to learn in a linear
fashion, abound - this to the detriment of those hidden, *othered* voices (Armstrong, 2005; Claypool & Preston, 2011). In keeping with this, research indicates that students who are culturally diverse have a tenuous relationship with schools whose educational practices emphasize traditional and normative approaches (Battiste, 2000; Claypool & Preston, 2011; Sharpe & Arsenault, 2009). These types of practices tend to exclude learners from non-dominant cultural backgrounds by ignoring their distinctive cultural habitus and cultural capital. This obfuscation culminates in a devaluation of identity and way of being (Egbo, 2009; 2011; Ogbu, 1986; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011).

*Academic Pedagogy: An Aboriginal Perspective*, based on the internationally recognized University 101 program (Barefoot, 1993; Gardner, 1980, 1981), attempts to redress the cultural discontinuities between contemporary education and the emergent diversity in school populations in North America. Infused with the holistic perspective of Indigenous epistemology, this course aims to “end the fragmentation Eurocentric educational systems imposed on First Nations students and facilitate the goal of wholeness to which Indigenous knowledge aspires” (Battiste, 2000, p.30). Working close with Aboriginal Programs and Services as well as community partners, the pedagogy has been conceptualized to reflect interconnectivity in a nested system, where all facets of learning link with each other on emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical levels. Teaching from this holistic perspective offers a very different outlook from conventional Western school structure, where school subjects are divided into individual disciplines and students are required to learn in a more linear fashion (Armstrong, 2005; Claypool & Preston, 2011).
Indigenizing Curriculum

By applying precepts of the Medicine Wheel as outlined in *The Sacred Tree* (Bopp et al., 2004) to the cycle of learning, this developmental course intends to provide an opportunity for Access students to gain academic skills necessary for admission to first year university courses in a culturally responsive manner. The teachings summarized in the book *The Sacred Tree* represent ethical concepts and teachings of Native societies throughout North America concerning the nature and possibilities of human existence. Composed of twelve teachings which focus on wholeness, change and self-volition, Bopp et al. (1985/2004) identify four dimensions of learning. These four aspects of every person’s nature are reflected in the four cardinal points of the medicine wheel. The self being situated in the nexus of the circle is central to the development of the four aspects of one’s being. Within this context, in order to learn in a whole and balanced manner, all four dimensions of an individual’s being have to be actively engaged and committed in the educational process. These four dimensions include wisdom and logic (mental); illumination and enlightenment (spiritual); trust and innocence (emotional); and introspection and insight (physical).

Recognizing that Aboriginal nations differ significantly in terms of language and cultural practices, the commonality in the Medicine Wheel is an overall worldview that embraces concepts of cyclical interdependency and equilibrium. A Medicine Wheel as a circle divided into four parts represents a wide variety of teaching practices emphasizing the centrality of a balanced position and focusing on volition to engage in a pedagogical experience.

As stated in *The Sacred Tree* (Bopp et al., 1985/2004), there exist numerous variations of the Medicine Wheel of Learning. Within the diverse representations of the Medicine Wheel, the various learning styles and types of intelligence are valued equally. This is similar to other
educational approaches which recognize individual learning styles, modify teaching and learning practices accordingly, and create different paradigms for teaching and learning. For example, the author’s previous work focused on Integral Education, a conceptual framework that examined how educational behaviours, educational cultures, educational experiences, and educational systems impacted on teaching and learning in primary education. More recently, Archibald, Pidgeon and Hawkey (2009) conceptualized the (W)holistic Indigenous Framework which emphasizes the interconnectedness of the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual elements of human development. Important consideration is given to the connections and relations of family and community as well as the impact of institutional and political influences on the individual’s well-being.

The Medicine Wheel of Learning: a conceptual framework

As indicated, the University 101 course developed by the University of South Carolina and fruit of 30 years of research by the National Resource Center, is a recognized national and international academic model whose mandate is to introduce freshmen students to first year university studies. In the same vein, Introduction to Academic Pedagogy: An Aboriginal Perspective, developed according to the founding principles of University 101 and infused with Aboriginal Learning Principles, aims to facilitate transition and to improve retention and degree completion of Indigenous Access students at The University of British Columbia’s Okanagan campus.

Acknowledging the importance of the physical environment in indigenous epistemology, Introduction to Academic Pedagogy was offered in a novel teaching and learning space, the Innovative Learning Center (Crichton, 2014) of the Faculty of Education. Housed in a regular classroom, rows of desks were replaced with jigsaw tables, stability stools and height adapted
chairs were integral components of the design. Along one perimeter of the classroom, comfortable sofas and chairs, positioned in front of bright, airy windows lined with greenery, provided a space for students to engage in small group collaborations. Writing walls, access to ipads, and computers on high tables allowed students to sit, stand and use diverse mediums to write on/in and to do research. Recognizing the diversity of learning styles, this educational space gave students the option to choose the physical and technological parameters of their learning environment.

In keeping with the Medicine’s wheel focus on wisdom and logic, the course content of a University 101 course (Barefoot, 1993; Gardner, 1980; 1981) was adapted to incorporate indigenous traditions. Ellis’ (2012) seminal text Becoming a Master Student 5th Canadian Edition provided the necessary parameters to teach the developmental skills in a centric, holistic manner. Developmental skills were identified using the table of contents of this well-established textbook. Interestingly, each of the learning objectives of the textbook chapters were positioned within an interconnected circle drawing parallels with the self, society and education. However, unlike the textbook, linear progressive stances were not used to teach developmental skills relating to reading, writing and oral communications. In keeping with the learning outcomes of the textbook being used, strategies relating to learning styles, time management, note-taking, critical reading and thinking, oral communications, health management and financial literacy, were introduced by the instructor, then experimented with in the Circles of learning. The author also developed an instructional guide detailing how to teach each development skill using the Wheel of Learning (Ragoonaden, 2013).

In keeping with the circular nature of the Medicine Wheel, enrollment in this course was limited to 24 students allowing the instructor to divide the class into six circles of learning. Each
month during the 13 week semester, students would be organized into a different learning circle made up of four participants. In keeping with the positioning of the self in the Medicine Wheel’s center, each individual was made aware of his/her own responsibility in the learning process. As they rotated through the semester, first year students got a chance to meet and to learn with a new cohort on a monthly basis. Since new developmental skills were introduced weekly via the learning circles, participants were encouraged to talk about, to deconstruct the concepts and to re-negotiate their understandings of the skill being developed. Then, through experiential activities, participants in each circle of learning applied the concepts to readings and other didactic materials to their own individual program of study.

In the Access program which is a transition program, students were in school full-time, taking mandatory developmental courses in English, Biology and Math. In keeping with the interconnectedness of Aboriginal pedagogy, emphasis was placed on the interrelationship of the new knowledge to various contexts. Acknowledging the importance of illumination and enlightenment embedded in the various representations of the Medicine Wheel, the regular presence of elders, guest speakers from local First Nations bands and active peer mentoring from upper level Aboriginal students were integral components of this highly supportive educational environment. Understanding the physical and social needs of first year students, Aboriginal Programs and Services provided regular workshops, lunch gatherings, as well as socio-cultural events, like participation in Sweat Lodges and Salmon Feasts to first year students as well as upper year students. Encouraging criticality and intellectual debate, transmission style teaching by virtue of lectures and Powerpoint presentations were kept to a minimum. For example, in order to establish parameters for the learning environment, at the beginning of each class, the instructor would formally introduce new concepts in the developmental continuum within the
scope of a 20 minute lecture and/or interactive discussions. Then a series of experiential activities which often included a guest speaker would take up the remainder of the class time.

**Methods**

This three year longitudinal mixed methods study began in December 2013 and will end in December 2016. It adheres to research mandates established by the University’s Ethics committee as well as acknowledgement and support from Aboriginal Programs and Services. In order to ensure the objectivity of each participant’s response, a research assistant introduced the study, underscored the confidential nature of the work, reiterated the withdrawal policy, asked for informed consent, conducted the interview and collected the initial data. The author, also the course instructor, did not have access to the data till the last day of grade appeal as dictated by university-wide policy. Once ethical permission was granted, ten students agreed to sit for a semi-structured interview. Preliminary data inquiring into the impact of the skills acquisition and the ensuing application in other courses has been collected during the 2013 interviews.

Based on the grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987), the semi-structured 2013 interviews provided the data from which new information was generated. The ten question interviews were divided into three sections. Questions 1-3 inquire into the type of skills acquired and how these are applied to other courses. Questions 4-6 examine the impact of the course content on Access students’ university experiences. The last series of questions interrogate the benefits of this course in the short term and the long term (See appendix A). During the interview, participants also responded to a five point Likert scale relating to the acquisition of specific academic skills as dictated by the table of contents of the textbook. Data collected from the Likert scale in the questionnaire was tabulated and considered during analysis. After the second interview in 2016, information about retention and degree
completion will provide data to support previous and emergent results and will fully inform study: to determine if a culturally responsive introduction to university course impacts on Aboriginal Access students’ retention and degree completion.

Transcription of the 2013 interviews is complete and thematic coding of the responses has resulted in identifiable themes. Measures taken to determine categories include using the constant comparative method (CCM) to identify and to analyze the data collected from the interviews. Preliminary results are presented during the video-conference *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: A Holistic Approach* at [http://youtu.be/xVc63pkbEkk](http://youtu.be/xVc63pkbEkk).
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Teaching Poverty towards the Pupil of Developed Countries

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Abstract

The study embarked on to explore the philosophical approach on teaching children those who are residing in the opportunistic world. Based on the extensive literature/documentary review this study proposes a framework to instill understanding of poverty to the segmented group of children. It is believed, following such framework would assist the children to shape up their personal priority in setting owns future trail.
Contextual Background

A boy walked through a muddy street for five kilometers at midnight just to get an advice from the doctor for his bed laid ill mother and returned with empty hand. A farmer had to sell his products to an intermediary at loss of fifty percent with despair future. A mother jumped under the speedy train with children to escape from hunger. These are some common scenarios of least developed and developing countries, which many of our children living in the developed countries may not even imagine. However, ironically these are the familiar reasons and consequences of poverty.

Simply to put from the economic viewpoint, poverty is the lack or deprivation of basic human needs such as: food, nutrition, clean water, health, shelter, clothing, and education due to inability to afford them (Blocker et al., 2013; Chambers, 1995). When people swathe by poverty usually get stuck in a multifaceted cycle despite searching for better livelihood, better existence. According to the The World Bank (2014), poverty is distinct deprivation in well-being and wellbeing primarily links to command over commodities, so the poor are those who do not have enough income or consumption to put them above some adequate minimum threshold. However, scholars have argued that the meaning of poverty differs across individuals, cultures, periods, ideologies and finally circumstances (Guttmann & Cohen, 1992). Poverty has been defined by Alkire and Santos (2009) as a “measures to focus on the part of the population that falls short of some minimum level, often called a poverty line (in one or several indicators) and provide a value that summarizes deprivation in that society” (p.124). The poverty as conceptualized by the citizens of developed country would be obviously different from those who are in the developing or least developed countries. Globally 9 out of 10 people face at least one deprivation, either from health, education, or income (Human Development Report, 2011). It
has been put forwarded by the scholars that three-fourths of the population live in countries with least idealistic situation (Martin & Hill, 2012) and around one billion of people living on only USD 2 per day (The World Bank, 2014). This however, gives the scenario of misery and indignity (Rahman, Amran, Ahmad, & Taghizadeh, 2014).

**Problem statement**

Despite of industrialization, globalization, technological boom, and economic progress through various activities, poverty remains obstinate problem across much of the world. The study of poverty dynamic has widely subjugated by the quantitative analysis of panel data set (Kothari & Hulme, 2004). However, there have been domains of research which conceptualized the philosophical aspects of poverty such as capability approach theory coined by Amrtya Sen (Sen, 1987, 2004). Even, due to the geo-economic-social polarization, the understanding of poverty has deemed to be variegated, levitating to different school of thoughts. It is of interest that till date scholars have been strolling around to explore the factors of poverty (Blocker et al., 2013) and how to familiarize the experience and understanding of poverty. The consequences of poverty have not been presented at micro-level in many educational institutions. It has been put forward that very less attention has been made towards the conception of poverty among the children’s those who are in the developed countries (Chafel, 1997). Thus, scholars have argued that due to the lack of understanding on real poverty and systematic knowledge about poverty, pupils at the educational institutions in the developed countries often develop unrealistic ideas and expectation about the poor people and poverty consequence (Guttmann & Cohen, 1992).
**Purpose**

Understanding the contextual background and the problems underlies with the issue of poverty, this study mainly embarked on the techniques that would influence individuals to participate in the poverty reduction effort. In doing so, an integrated approach has been proposed which contains specific facets of the philosophical purview.

**Methods**

This study embraced extensive literature review, documentary elements, and personal interviews to come up with a framework, which directs to understand the influential factors that would teach the children in the school about the consequences poverty.

**Outcomes**

The research has indicated that motivation, responsibility, and interaction of learning on the poverty situation as part of philosophical aspect would facilitate the teaching poverty among the pupil. The outcome of the study would benefit to influence and make pupil understand about poverty and plausibly influence to take part in the poverty reduction efforts. Even though, the extant research already have endorsed that many of the poverty alleviation techniques have become obsolete (Murdie & Davis, 2012). The framework would be a guideline for the educators while schooling about poverty. The policy makers might take on this approach while formulating and setting up the poverty reduction framework in the society. Nevertheless, understanding the poverty and poverty reduction effort from the Alma matter, certainly would have a long term impact to shape up the view on such global undesirable phenomenon. Further, understanding the poverty and the poor would optimistically facilitate the students in targeting their own professional aspirations and ordering social obligatory priorities.
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Educational systems theory: A perspective for real reform.

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At least since Counts’ (Counts, 1978) *Dare the schools build a new social order?* in 1938, progressives have seen education as a vector for addressing social inequality. Throughout the 20th Century and into the 21st, a wide range of efforts have been made to use education to help alleviate social inequality (Tyack, 1995) & (Ravitch, 2013). A chief problem with most of these approaches is that they tend to focus on single factors, rather than attempting to understand the myriad interrelated elements that combine to create schools and education in American society. The failure to grasp this complexity goes a long way toward explaining why changes in U.S. education repeatedly disappoint: Schools and education are complex systems. They are characterized by what McMahon (McMahon, 2011) calls ‘wicked problems.’ The term ‘wicked problem’ was originally developed by urban planners to help describe problems that are difficult to define, understand, or reach consensus about. Both problems of schooling and urban planning have these characteristics in common. It is easy to point to any number of contemporary debates about education to show how incompletely defined they are, how poorly understood they are, and the resulting lack of consensus. This is because these problems are entangled with other social problems. Teaching children to read, for example, seems like a fairly straightforward task, and in some contexts it is, but in other cases, issues of ethnicity, philosophy, social class, and gender, to name a but a few, have an impact on a particular child’s ability to learn to read, and these factors do not play out the same way for every child.

To really get a handle on the complexities of schooling and education, it is necessary to adopt a systems theory perspective. The shift in orientation must include factors that influence education and schools, but it must also include the relationships between those factors. School and education are both dynamic systems. Generally, approaches to reforming education take a reductionist perspective, in that the emphasis tends to be on fixing a single factor at a time. The
problem with this in a dynamic system is that whatever change happens is overwhelmed by other aspects of the system. Further, there are often unintended consequences that subvert the intended improvements (Capra, 1983).

One such unintended consequence in schools is ‘teaching to the test’ that has come about as a result of the widespread emphasis upon and use of high-stakes standardized testing as a means of assessing educational quality in schools. The idea behind the tests is democratic: All students, no matter their circumstances will be held to the same standards embodied in these tests, with the result that (in theory, at least) everyone receives the same education. The result, of course is that teachers now teach to the test, as their livelihoods are often tied to test results. The result is dull, uninspiring classrooms, a narrowing of the curriculum, and a high degree of teacher and student frustration. A more holistic or systemic analysis of this situation might have predicted such an outcome; at the very least, these outcomes need to be dealt with in a fashion that takes systemic principles into account, lest American schools experience yet another unsuccessful ‘reform.’

An often overlooked aspect of teaching reforms represented by the use of standardized testing overlooks the effects context can have on schools. Local factors, including race, class, politics, economics, religion, and other factors all interact to produce local contexts for schools that, while they may have characteristics shared by similar schools, nevertheless are sufficiently variable from other contexts to make the assumptions underlying standardization untenable.

Other elements of complex systems make analysis and change challenging. Complex systems have emergent properties, which means that you find things in a system that aren’t necessarily predictable based upon observations of parts of that system. The characteristics of individual children don’t give one much insight into what a class composed of those children
might be like, in terms of behavior, academic performance, sociability, etc. Further, complex systems exhibit disproportionate effects, which means that a small change could produce a large-scale effect. In our classroom example, one disruptive child could create a situation in which class order rapidly breaks down. Complex systems can rapidly shift from one state to another. In a class, things can go from disorderly and wild to calm and focused (or vice versa) over a very short period of time. (*Complexity Theory*, 2014).

One result of this reductionist orientation is that the American educational system often contributes to the reproduction of inequality. This contribution of the educational system to inequality is by no means restricted to the U.S.; this phenomenon has been documented in other countries as well (Vesel, 2012) and (Klasen, 2002). A systems theory perspective allows educators to not only understand the intersection of social statuses such as gender, race, and class in their own context, a clearer understanding of these issues creates the possibility of implementing effective strategic and short term changes. Additionally, systemic thinking can inform curriculum in a number of useful ways. An inherent aspect of systems thinking is its emphasis on connections. From a curricular standpoint, systems thinking makes it imperative that teachers draw connections between subjects, as such connections are important for students in gaining a greater understanding of the things they are supposed to learn in school. A frequent criticism of the curriculum is it lack of cohesion, and this lack of cohesion makes it difficult for students to draw useable insights from lessons in school. In short, they are not really empowered by what they learn, largely because a great deal of what they learn depends upon rote memorization, rather than problem solving, analysis and creativity (Loewen, 2008).

In terms of social justice in education, a systemic framework reduces easy, one-shot analyses for social problems faced by students. Victims of oppression sometimes buy into the
ideologically that justifies their situation. Providing students with a systemic framework for understanding their lives creates the possibility for them to begin to understand the myriad factors that affect their lives. It is important for students to understand their own position in the world (Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004); thinking systemically provides a way to do that, while at the same time making subjects in school more useful and empowering.

A major insight of system theory is that in addition to the unintended consequences mentioned above, systems tend to resist change. As I have argued elsewhere, people who want to bring about lasting and meaningful change in education are going to have to adopt effective, non-violent political tactics (Rayle, 2012). An important insight from both systems theory and the political change theorist Gene Sharp (Sharp, 2012) is that systems tend to resist change. Attempts to improve conditions do not have immediate effects, and educational reformers have to understand this, as it affects tactics either in the curriculum or in the political arena, and it helps establish realistic expectations for reforms. Some reformers promise nostrums that will provide immediate and dramatic changes in the educational system, only to see these reforms thrown out because the hoped-for changes did not occur quickly enough. Systems maintain their coherence because of this tendency to resist change, which is usually desirable, but it also makes introducing new dynamics, however good they may be, a process that will not have immediate results. Bureaucracies, particularly educational bureaucracies, are notoriously difficult to change (Gatto, 2009), and an understanding of this can be an important part of strategizing to make education better for all students.

Another insight from systems theory is that systems have emergent qualities, which means that as a result of their dynamism, new things emerge (Meadows, 2008). A grasp of these effects makes it more likely that reformers can adapt to changes as they occur, thereby bringing about
meaningful change to schools that actually do something to ameliorate inequality for students. The highly bureaucratized nature of schools makes them hard to change, but they are complex systems, and as such, are subject to emergence. The phenomenon of emergence is an inherent property of complex systems: New things are created as a result of the interactions of the elements comprising that system.

A systemic perspective can break up the cycle of school reform, in which a new reform is tried, found wanting, and done away with, only to replaced by a new reform. A switch from a mechanistic perspective to a systems perspective makes worthwhile and meaningful change more likely (Capra, 1983). Accounting for factors such as emergence, resistance to change, and dynamism make it possible to address the ‘wicked problems’ schools face to bring about reforms that result in higher quality education for all children. This is especially important in the case of students from impoverished backgrounds; there are many practices in schools that exacerbate rather than alleviate poverty.

A systems theory approach is useful in the college classroom in teaching senior‐level teacher education candidates, many of whom are from the typical demographic from which teachers are drawn (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). It is often difficult to help students understand the effects of social variables on people’s lives, especially when the students in question enjoy a position of privilege. Indeed, it is this author’s experience that work such as McIntosh’s ‘invisible knapsack’ (McIntosh, 1990) tends to heighten white, middle‐class students’ resistance to understanding and addressing inequality in the schools. Many of the students in the author’s classes subscribe to the notion of ‘reverse discrimination,’ or at the very least, believe that issues of inequality are not particularly important in understanding inequality in contemporary society. A systems approach to issues of inequality changes the nature of
classroom interactions around oppression into a situation in which students begin to develop an understanding of their own stake in the amelioration of inequality. In class, the author demonstrates, through class exercises and other means, the highly interconnected nature of contemporary society. For example, the “Small World Problem” (Travers & Milgram, 1969) gives students some insight into the ways individuals are connected through social networks, and naturally, some discussion of social media further drives this point home. In another exercise, students are introduced to historical examples of minority inventors who had an impact on the students’ everyday lives, despite the fact these inventors lived in the United States at a time during which they were by and large barred from receiving much in the way of education. All of these connections, both historical and social are essential for their own personal understanding of what is at stake. They come to realize that discrimination results in a tremendous waste of human potential. They are invited to consider where we might be as a society if everyone were allowed to realize their potential, and make their contribution, however or large or small that contribution may be. They slowly come to realize that even though they might have little day-to-day contact with those who are oppressed, they nevertheless have a very real personal interest in doing something to alleviate these problems. This framework represents an attempt to shift the usual approach to inequality that focuses on who is or is not biased (an individual problem) to the systemic properties involved. This is not to leave out the importance of individual attitudes, but as discussed above, white students have been socialized to resist discussions of white privilege, and their fear of being labeled ‘biased,’ prevents them from considering how they or their profession could be involved in the continuation of oppressive practices. By contrast, a systems oriented approach helps students locate themselves in the
context of various social statuses, and understand their own connections to and personal stakes in the project of educational liberation. (Rayle, 2008)

From a theoretical standpoint, systems theory has the advantage of combining a number of perspectives in understanding a problem. It is common in the social sciences for competition between perspectives to interfere with actually getting much done in the way of solving problems (Rayle, 2010). Clearly, if, say, functionalism had all the answers, we’d all be functionalists. As it happens, particular perspectives have insights to share on problems of poverty and inequality. Systems theory allows us to combine the insights of these perspectives in a way that provides a more comprehensive picture, and one that creates the possibility of bringing about lasting, positive educational change.

Similarly, from a political standpoint, systems theory allows the inclusion of certain critical perspectives without setting off alarm bells for those of one political persuasion or another. It is a truism that liberals blame the system, while conservatives blame the individual for such social problems as poverty, oppression and inequality. From a systemic perspective, it becomes possible to scale the analysis from the macro---level to the micro---level, making it possible to understand effects at a number of levels, including the individual, school, community, and societal levels. It holds out the possibility for an analysis that allows for the sort of coalition building required to create positive change in our school and educational system.
Citations


A Comparative Study of the American and Iranian Higher Education Systems

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Abstract

Autoethnographic data, based on author's perceptions and observations from American higher education system are collected. The data is categorized, based on different aspects of an educational system such as instructions, student life, administrative procedures, facilities, and cultural values. Finally, outstanding characteristics of both American and Iranian higher education systems are compared.

Keywords: Higher education system, United States of America, Islamic Republic of Iran
Description

A Narrative Inquiry based on the author’s perception of the American higher education system, compared with his experience in Iranian academic settings.

Proposal

A Comparative Study of the American and Iranian Higher Education Systems

Thousands of Iranian students cross the borders of their home country, in search for broader educational opportunities at post-secondary level. In 2011, more than 51 thousand Iranian students were studying abroad (UNESCO, 2014). Most majority of these folks, are highly-talented students, with brilliant academic backgrounds, who achieve admissions in top-ranked institutions around the globe. United States is one of the most attractive academic destinations for Iranian students. Only in the academic year 2013-2014, more than 10 thousand Iranian students have been studying in United States (Statista, 2014). More than 80% of them, enrolled in STEM fields (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2014).

These young talents, spend considerable energy, time, and money because they are looking for ideas and ideals that they believe can be sought in their destination academic environment. These expectations, however, are not necessarily identical to realities. After being enrolled, they begin to realize both advantages, and disadvantages of the new situation. On one hand, they may experience qualities, services, or facilities that they could not even imagine. On the other hand, they face unexpected difficulties, barriers, and shortages that they did not expect.

This paper is a Narrative Inquiry based on the author’s perception of the American higher education system. Autoethnographic data have been gathered during two phases: During the application process, and after enrollment in a graduate-level program in United States. Perceptions of an applicant about the American university, and his expectations are described. Then, the observations during a semester of enrollment in a graduate program are narrated. Data
are extracted from the narrations, and categorized based on different aspects of an educational system such as instructions, student life, administrative procedures, facilities, and cultural values.

A scientifically documented record of observations, experienced by such students can be useful for both students who are planning to study abroad, and for university administrators who plan to diversify their student population, by understanding concerns of international students. This will also provide valuable information for higher education policy makers, as they analyze the outcomes of their decisions, in the viewpoint of scholars coming from diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds.
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Not Available
Black Preschool Children and Suspension (*It was that other boy?):

Can we talk?

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Black Preschool Children and Suspension (*It was that other boy?): Can we talk?

*Ships in port are safe, but that's not what ships are built for*—Shedd, 1928

Once a month, a small group of faculty, staff, and community partners, gather in a conference room at this southeastern university, as a part of an urban initiatives Special Interest Group to address topics aligned with urban education. As part of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (*Coalition of Urban Serving Universities*, 2014), often at the top of the lists are examples of partnerships between the university and surrounding school districts that work. This small, but dedicated group, continues to serve as a voice for those groups often considered without a voice. As shared in its mission statement,

> ...to further promote inclusivity and diversity throughout the university and community by serving the needs of students and families in urban settings, specifically those who have been historically underserved and marginalized.

At a nearby local partnership elementary school, the school’s Guidance Counselor has convened the weekly meeting of its Multi-Tier/ positive behavior support team (*Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support*, 2014). This team meets weekly to discuss academic and behavior concerns of students. Observing, *if students have 3 or more referrals they are on a tier 3; Tier 1, there are concerns; Tier 2 more aggressive, tier 3 definitely a problem.*

The Guidance Counselor, along with the Learning Resource Specialist, serves as the leads who plan the meetings and schedules. Also attending are the Principal, Reading Math, Science Coach for academic data and the School Psychologist.
In a small meeting room of an Event Center/ Fellowship Hall of a local faith based organization, committee leads of three youth initiatives from a public service organization are anxiously developing criteria for youth participants to qualify for an alternative Spring Break, a weeklong educational and history tour to Topeka, KS; Memphis, TN, and Little Rock, ARK. The Mentoring programs are designed to work with middle and high school students, many of whom may be considered “at risk” for academic and social-emotional failure.

**Introduction**

The Special Interest Group (SIG) at the university, the local neighborhood elementary partnership school, and the public service organization, are all critical stakeholders/partners in addressing issues related to social justice and equity, accountability, and education in our nation’s schools. Conversations across the nation are taking place through policy conferences, grassroots and faith based organizations, public and private schools, foundations, as to how to best educate all of our children in a more inclusive and equitable environment. This comes on the heels of increased reporting of perceived antisocial behavior displayed by today's youths-ranging from preschool to high school. These behaviors have become serious concerns for parents, educators, and community members in discipline policies enacted in school districts that reflect zero tolerance policies that are in place to protect the safety of all of our children while at the same time maintaining a healthy environment that is conducive to learning (NASP Resources, 2014).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of discipline related policies and other well-meaning policies on a specific group of students, African American preschool males (Powell, 2014). Further, through informed engagement, our goal is to seek continued dialogue to
offer consistent and sustained solutions to ensure success for all of our students. Let’s begin the conversation:

**What we know**

From various resources/perspectives, we have learned that:

- Black students, specifically boys, face much harsher discipline in public schools than other students;
- Black students represent 16% of student enrollment; they represent 27% of students referred to law enforcement and 31% of students subjected to a school related arrest;
- Black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times as greater than white students;
- With similar or same infractions, students of color are more likely to be suspended or expelled than white students;
- Students that are suspended or expelled from school are more likely to drop out; dropouts are more likely to end up with criminal records, which may push students further into the juvenile justice system;
- With the exception of Latino and Asian-American students, more than one out of four boys of color with disabilities receives an out-of-school suspension;
- While 55% of the high schools with low black and Hispanic enrollment offered calculus, only 29 percent of the high-minority high schools did so — and even in schools offering calculus, Hispanics made up 20 percent of the student body but only 10 percent of those enrolled in calculus;
• While black and Hispanic students made up 44 percent of the students in a recent survey, they were only 26 percent of the students enrolled in gifted and talented programs;
• Many students of color have higher incidences of asthma, diabetes, and other illnesses which affect everything from school attendance to employment;
• Particularly detrimental to their academic and professional achievement, they are less likely to be diagnosed or treated early for intellectual, learning or emotional disabilities and are more likely to be enrolled in special education;
• Schools with a lot of black and Hispanic students are likely to have relatively inexperienced, and low-paid, teachers;
• While Black children in our nation represent 18% preschool enrollment, they represent 48% of children receiving more than one out of school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

Opportunities: Education, the great equalizer

The ability to obtain a quality education is the great equalizer. Education itself, as Secretary of Education Arne Duncan reminds us, is the civil rights issue of our generation. Administrators and teachers are charged with the daunting responsibility of maintaining safety, while at the same time of providing the most effective learning environments possible for all of our students. At the same time, there remains a direct correlation to in-school on-task behaviors and learning gains (academic achievement). Out of school suspensions are the most widely used form of discipline in our nation (Toldson, McGee and Lemmons, 2013). Sometimes called the ‘discipline gap,’ (Gregory and Weinstein, 2008), the cause of suspensions may vary across school districts, Vavrus and Cole (2002) found that many suspensions resulted from a build-up of nonviolent events, where one student often carries the brunt of many students' misbehaviors.
Other factors frequently reported included attitudinal, versus aggressive delinquent behaviors, students with lower reading skills, cultural expressions of certain behaviors, including movement and speech (Day Vines and Day-Hairston, 2005). According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, K-12 suspension rates have at least doubled since the 1970s for all nonwhites (Losen and Skiba, 2010).

What can we do to improve the learning opportunities for all of our nation’s students, especially our youngest learners, ensuring a healthy and safe environment? Let’s begin with some considerations and tough questions. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it is a continuation of a necessary conversation:

1. Dealing with children with behavioral problems of any age clearly diverts much needed attention from the other children in the classroom, no matter the instructional model;
2. In the mecca of high stakes testing and accountability and “No Child Left Behind,” teachers are experiencing a high degree of stress in meeting district, state, and national expectations;
3. Expulsion is the most severe disciplinary sanction that an educational institution can impose. Gilliam (2005) found that these rates are lowest in public classrooms and Head Start; they are highest in faith-affiliated centers and for-profit child care;
4. Parents/caregivers must assume a pivotal role and work to do their part, to the extent possible, to ensure that their children are academically and emotionally prepared for school;
5. While it is true that no one segment of the community has all the answers, however, throughout the corridors of our nation, communities have adopted, researched, and published innovative approaches. These approaches opening doors, strengthening
supports, and build ladders of opportunity for young people, including boys and young men of color

6. The President’s Task Force, “My Brother’s Keeper,” (The White House, 2014) recommends for children:
   a. Entering school ready to learn
   b. Reading at grade level by third grade
   c. Graduating from high school ready for college and career
   d. Completing postsecondary education or training
   e. Successfully entering the workforce
   f. Reducing violence and providing a second chance

7. Examine school disciplinary statistics. Is out of class discipline meted out proportionally among student demographics groups? ;

8. Continue to provide candid and age appropriate conversations on assumptions and cultural backgrounds, to the extent appropriate;

9. More coursework in preparing our teachers, course work) in Urban Education, or mentorship programs sponsored by 100 Black Men of America at local high schools.

   There is room for each of us;

10. For children suspected of having learning, emotional, or other types of challenges, providing them the support they need in the early years;

11. Coordinated and collaborative efforts throughout the realm of society that will work to improve the outcomes for all of our children, including preschoolers and boys of color; intervening through mentoring and out of school complementary supports, using evidenced based practices is merely a start;
12. We must continue to address the roots of social and educational inequities (Thomas, 2014); Similarly,

13. Are we giving up on Black children by expelling those considered not ready to learn? (Perry, 2014). Perry (2014) further outlines the need for wrap-around services, restructured in-school suspensions, conflict mediation, restorative justice programs, parenting courses, out-of-school behavioral services or a host of other interventions that address the problem;

14. Bringing together all of the adults in the child’s life. Gilliam's research noted that expulsions had more to do with a teacher's perceived capacity to handle the problem than a child's behavior. Consultation models are recommended.

15. How this can possibly work is shared through research-based evidenced practice partnership models: Connecticut (Early Childhood Consultation Partnership; https://www.ucfs.org/Services/Community_Behavioral_Hlth/eccp.shtml); Chicago (Chicago School Readiness Program (CSRP; http://www.childtrends.org/?programs=chicago-school-readiness-program-csrp); and Arkansas (Better Chance for School Success Program; http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/education/prek/ARBetterChancePrgDocLib are highlighted in addition to others, in /ABC%20Program%20Manual.pdf). These programs the “My Brother’s Keeper Task Force. Report to the President (Johnson & Shelton, 2014).

The Effects of Poverty on Emotional Development and Behavior

The attachment formed at birth between parent and child is a predictor of relationships with teachers and peers and defines development of social and emotional skills (Szewczyk-Sokolowski, Bost, and Wainwright, 2005). Children under the age of 3 need key components in
their environment in order to grow up emotionally healthy. Some of these components include
safe and predictable environments, a reliable caregiver who provides unconditional love and
support, attunement, and strong attachments (Jensen, 2009). Children raised in poverty are less
likely to have these needs met than their more affluent peers. This gap in healthy developmental
opportunities undermine the growth of new brain cells and change the path of emotional
development. Research shows that children who are raised in low socio-economic environments
with stress as part of this world, are reported to have social conduct problems to a greater degree
than those raised in a less stressful setting (Dodge, Pettit, and Bates, 1994).

Although it is understandable that teachers might perceive children’s behaviors as lacking
in respect and caring, it is important for teachers of children growing up in poverty to understand
that these social and emotional deficits mean a child does not have the necessary repertoire of
emotional responses. Rather than being frustrated and angry at these behaviors, teachers need to
be trained in understanding the possible reasons for these limitations. Once this understanding is
in place, then the teacher (and parent) can begin the process of teaching appropriate emotional
responses (Jensen, 2009).

**From a Head Start Perspective: Challenging Behaviors**

Relationships between peer social competence and behavior problems is an important
area to include in the discussion. When young children demonstrate behavioral and emotional
challenges in the preschool classroom, this lack of skill acquisition impacts school success
(Bulotsky-Shearer, Dominguez, Bell, Rouse, and Fantuzzo, 2010). Research indicates that the
number, nature, and severity of disruptive behavior problems are increasing. By three years of
age, children are capable of inflicting great bodily harm on themselves and others. In the last
three years the number of children diagnosed with behavior problems has grown so much that
many of the Head Start classrooms are overwhelmed with three to eight children per classroom. Last year a total of 196 children received behavior therapy. However, many more children were referred, but due to policy, lack of parent involvement and time constraints, many children did not receive the needed services. As of October 31, 2014 there were 45 preschool students with treatment plans and 36 new plans were pending. There were several plans initiated during November 2014. The aforementioned numbers are only for children with behavior problems this does not include children with diagnosed disabilities that at times put a strain on the classroom as well. The common behaviors that are being exhibited include but not limited to aggression, tantrums, not participating in group activities and excessive crying. In a classroom with a total of 20 children between the ages of 3 to 5 years old, these types of behaviors make it extremely difficult to provide a high quality preschool classroom environment. Often times the teacher and or assistant spend a substantial amount of time addressing the behavioral concerns of some children and are not able to provide the attention to other students. The Federal regulations referred to as the Performance Standards states that removal of children with mental health issues from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the mental health/disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Even in this case, Head Start is required to offer home-based services to the child. **Home-based program option** means Head Start services provided to children, primarily in the child’s home, through intensive work with the child’s parents and family as the primary factor in the growth and development of the child.

Due to the funding of the program, removing a child from a Head Start classroom is nearly impossible. Performance Standards states in **1305.7 Enrollment and re-enrollment**. (a) Each child enrolled in a Head Start program, except those enrolled in a migrant program, must be
allowed to remain in Head Start until kindergarten or first grade is available for the child in the child’s community. An exception to this is if the Head Start program chooses not to enroll a child when there are compelling reasons for the child not to remain in Head Start. An example of this might be a change in the child’s family income where there is a child from a different family with a greater need for Head Start services.

Over the years Head Start has implemented more parent trainings for the at home support, as well as creating plans that include the parent volunteering in the classroom as well as other family members to support the teachers. The use of the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) has been key as Head Start teachers are able to pair the children with challenging behaviors with the FGP for one on one interaction time. The teachers have all been trained in numerous strategies for dealing with difficult behaviors. The Positive Behavior Intervention Support/Pyramid Model. (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2014). This model addresses the needs of children with social/emotional and behavioral concerns.

This system allows the program to address:

1. The universal need of all children to have their social/emotional needs meet and their skills in this area strengthened.

2. The necessity for systems to be in place to focus on the prevention and reduction of “typical” childhood behaviors.

3. Meet the needs of individual children who have the most challenging needs.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support and The Pyramid Model work to establish a hierarchy of strategies to be implemented at successive levels to address the social/emotional and behavioral problems experienced in the classroom setting:
Tier I – the establishment of systems and policies that the workforce is trained and able to implement the evidence based practices to address social/emotional and behavioral concerns.

Tier II – implementation of universal supports for all children through nurturing and responsive relationships and high quality environments.

Tier III – implementation of prevention strategies to prevent the development or continuation of social/emotional and behavioral concerns.

Tier IV – intervention practices related to individualized intensive intervention.

Although this process is research based and Head Start has seen some success when effectively used in the classroom, working with children with challenging behaviors is often overwhelming for teachers and parents. It is imperative that teachers are trained in implementing culturally-relevant practices and have a clear understanding of supporting children from diverse backgrounds. Then, and only then, will we be able to truly shift the responses of teachers to children who display challenging behavior.

We began our critical dialogue by citing a quote from John Shedd (1928) regarding ships. It was later popularized by U S Navy Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper who added (1984):

*A ship in port is set. That’s not what ships are built for. If you’ve got a good idea, and you know it’s going to work, go ahead and do it.*

Finally, collectively we all know what to do. What is needed is the will to do. Can we talk?
References


Teaching For Global Awareness, As Praxis

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Abstract

Framed by thinking of global awareness as a complicated process of experience and practice (praxis) this position paper is a culmination of initial self-study work and experiences teaching social studies in a public high school. To encourage global awareness as praxis can students’ own experiences, or world making, be sensibly challenged or decoded and “shocked” through teaching/learning, cultural experiences, action research, media/technology, study abroad, service learning, etc., ultimately recoding their world making to include global awareness?
“By looking at ourselves in the lens of the other, we come to see what in our practices is local and non-necessary, what more broadly or deeply shared.” – Martha Nussbaum (1994)

**Introduction**

As many histories, cultures, and human experiences collide in a rapidly globalizing world, our core understandings are challenged, confronted, and contradicted. As globally focused educators, we teach and learn inside of these numerous collisions, hoping for an awakening, for a look at “ourselves in the lens of the other.” We hope for a “shock” into new ways of thinking about the world and our place in it. Teaching and learning through these “shocks” and, in effect, decoding then recoding the worlds our students bring to class with them could provide safe and constructive experiences within which students’ understandings of their world are challenged, and new challenges are sought after. As a public high school teacher focused on teaching and learning for global awareness, my goals have changed from basic information transmission and activities aimed at “attaining” global citizenship to emphasizing students’ lived experiences as foundational to honing global awareness. Uncomfortable with “becoming complete” and the discourse of global citizens or actors, the questions of my teaching have become more about encouraging students’ personal journeys as a means to challenge their embedded ways of thinking. Today I aim to teach and learn with my students to welcome “shocks” to habit, “shocks” to our comfortable ways of being.

**Historical Context**

The origins of my focus on teaching for global awareness emerged from the conclusion of a social studies-centered teaching self-study conducted during the fall of 2013 (unpublished). Throughout my teaching career, I viewed globalization and global issues as a “meta-topic” that
could drive instruction and historic connections (Eckersley, 2007). Despite this personal view I was unsure if, in a standardized management educational environment, I was teaching this “meta-topic, successfully challenging our ways of thinking and being.

In the self-study I wanted to know if I was teaching effectively for global awareness in my classroom. As I began to break down the various data sources of the study consisting of journaling, activities, lesson plans, syllabi, and student interviews, it became apparent concepts of global awareness and understanding had a minimal, if not superficial, presence in my teaching. Through this early analysis I discovered that the demands of teaching within the standardized management environment, district professional requirements, lack of globally centered professional development, and incomplete textbooks and resources with global themes all hindered teaching for global awareness. Like many other teachers I was wholly unprepared to effectively teach for global awareness (Merryfield, 2000).

However disjointed global awareness was in my formal teaching, through the self-study I realized my “informal” curriculum contained a much greater global presence often centered on in-class discussions of current events and controversial global issues. It was through the recognition of these strengths and limitations, and my own struggles with defining global awareness, that I collected, analyzed, and interpreted my self-study data to construct my realities of teaching and learning about global awareness. Understanding my own teaching as praxis, and applying this understanding to teaching and learning for global awareness became the linchpin of my argument for this paper.

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7 Henderson and Gornik (2007) describe this as curriculum work designed to set goals and make decisions towards standardized testing.

8 For example, in my world history course, global themes in formal curriculum (state and local) were often only visible in three to four units throughout the year and limited to mostly economic or national political frameworks (Ohio Department of Education, 2011).
Additionally, the self-study work and further journaling showed that I needed to reevaluate my students’ encoded experiences and worldviews, work to create a firmer grasp on understanding global awareness, and continue to seek insight into my own teaching practices. To this end I am interested in thinking and teaching that combines an interrogation of a student’s own life experiences through personal action research and intercultural interactions (via technology and media, study abroad, service learning, etc.). In short, can a student’s previous method or praxis of world (encoded way of being) making be knocked “off-kilter” (decoded) in order to form a larger horizon within the world being made?

With this new direction in teaching and learning for global awareness as praxis, new questions emerged: 1) How can teacher disposition, ways of teaching, educational, and intercultural experiences and understandings first decode then recode our world making process to challenge existing ways of being, ways of understanding self, community, and “others?” 2) What educational methods, practices, ways of teaching and exploring, can “shock” our embedded truths to create a new awareness, or world making? 3) In what way can the praxis of global awareness be positively created and nurtured for each student and class, to the point of expectation and embrace of these “shocks?”

**Global Awareness as Praxis**

Synthesizing scholarly work from fields such as philosophy, postcolonial studies, action research, and intercultural communication the foundation for global awareness as praxis emerges from my desire to avoid selecting one objective or way of being globally aware. When studying global or international education and teaching for global citizenship, global understanding, global awareness, cosmopolitanism, neo-liberal economic rationales, or internationalization the field can seem murky. I believe the global education and citizenship definitions, “universal”
values, and hegemonic political structures will dynamically change and reform through time and can never truly be set as realistic, achievable educational goals. Constructs such as being globally minded, global citizenship, patriotism, or cosmopolitanism are often written about in legal terminology and presented as something “attainable,” with legal/functional benefits claimed over the others (Killick, 2012). Instead, I prefer to ask not how we can reach these endpoints, but how can we flexibly teach our students to approach their world making as it truly is, uneven and dynamic, while actively seeking out and recognizing other cultures, peoples and ways of being?

In order to successfully argue for educational decoding/recoding with goals of global awareness and understanding, a definition of global awareness is needed. The concepts of global awareness and world making offer an alternative to the fractured, contested versions of global citizenship, nation-state based citizenship, patriotism, “virtual states,” and far reaching yet contested values.

General social studies scholarly discourse has identified key educational goals that must be accomplished in the face of this new global age, per Agbaria (2009):

"In this discourse, social studies educators and practitioners often debate the theme of ‘the role of education in a global age.’ This theme primarily concerns the prescribed roles educators should assume to be able to prepare their students for globalization. Here, globalization is commonly conceived as a threat that a “different” and “improved” education will help the students cope better with its complicated problems.” (p. 61)
Specifically regarding citizenship and globalization scholars have historically focused on a variety of definitions. Varied works have been published on multiculturalism and global education (Banks, 2004), challenges to nation-state sovereignty and the rise of “virtual states” (Rosencrance, 1996), nation-states and patriotism (Tate, 2011; Rorty, 1994), historical meanings and understandings of citizenship (Heater, 2004), and peace building and democratic agency (UNESCO, 1974; Osler and Vincent, 2002).

Outside of citizenship, scholars moved past political borders to include more dynamic characteristics of global ways of being. Nel Noddings (2005) expands on contested definitions of global citizenship to include characteristics such as wisdom, courage, and empathy as fundamental requirements for global awareness and understanding. Robert Hanvey’s (1976/1982) scholarship on global perspectives and perspective consciousness also incorporates ecological, cultural, ethical, and moral considerations into being a global actor. Edward Said (2004) writes that we must incorporate a non-Western dominated critical humanism, utilize beliefs in its greatness and opportunity, but remain critical and aware of self, community, and teaching/learning in order to gain better understanding of ourselves, our world, and the oppressed/oppressor discourses interwoven into our language and texts.

These vastly different perspectives of global citizenship and global awareness/consciousness, though incredibly informative to the field and current global education discourse, could be divisive and problematic when deciding how to teach for global awareness; job or skills-based economic education, citizenship teaching and learning, legal/nation-state frameworks compete for educational spaces within a typical classroom. As a teacher and learner with my students, limited visions of specific sects of global awareness and education could hinder or block students’ own visions of themselves and their community making which exists as
it happens to us (Nancy, 1991). A broader and more malleable understanding of our students learning and their place in the world should be adopted in order to create “shocks” in a nurturing environment, while supporting our teachers and students in actively seeking new cultural experiences through their scholastic pursuits and in their personal lives. Once again, Agbaria (2009):

"Promulgating a global education with a broader prospect than just improving cross-cultural understanding and problem-solving skills is imperative if social studies educators seek to prepare their students for a more “real” version of globalization—a version they can influence the course of and realize that it is interpreted and encountered in different ways around the world." (p. 71)

The flexibility and ambiguity of teaching for global awareness as praxis can provide spaces for various personal meanings, experiences, and understandings within our own world making. If we focus continually and hermeneutically to make/remake our world or community, can we develop a more nuanced understanding of global awareness, one that offers experiences designed to challenge, contradict, decode/recode, and knock “off-kilter?” Personal educational experiences, the concept of world making, and an active postcolonial lens could provide ample theoretical framework for globalization as praxis while maintain flexibility and ambiguity students to explore their own journeys of global awareness.

Taking inspiration from John Dewey’s (1916/2001, 1938/1998) writings on experience and education and William Pinar’s (1975) concept of currere\(^9\) in curriculum studies I wanted to reframe my classroom’s focus on global awareness as praxis, a hermeneutic journey through

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\(^9\) The continued reflection on life experiences towards curriculum theorizing in education, a “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2012)
personal life experiences in the world, as students’ worlds are shocked, decoded, and then recoded through their own personal worldviews. Specifically, Pinar’s concept of currere is at once regressive (looking back through your personal educational journey), progressive (looking forward to an imagined future), analytical (study of past, present, and future), and synthetical (pieces of your experiences, in relation to larger cultural/political contexts. This concept articulates an infinite engagement with our educational lives, one that can be helpful in critiquing static concepts of citizenship, instead framing the fluid educational being of our global awareness.

In addition to Dewey’s experiential writings and Pinar’s work on currere, understanding how our students/selves gain and encounter experiences in the world can be articulate through the work of philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy. As students enter our classrooms in the United States, their many “truths” and histories have been, in effect, “encoded” into their way of being through experience, language, and their own personal contexts. This awareness of self and their place within the world, or what Nancy calls “world making,” is created not only through active individual experiences and thinking (the singular), but also through others interpretations of our being, our activities, words, and community/place (the plural) (Nancy, 2000; Nancy, 2007). Multiple interactions of a history, community (local and global), and self and the encoded experienced truths these interactions create form a spiraling, messy, conflicting, partial, and ambiguous milieu. Within this context, education through individual experience and practice (praxis) could direct and create awareness, critical thought, encouraging the awareness of self and community, as community is made (Dewey, 1938/1998, Nancy 1991). Teaching and learning global awareness as praxis could provide the experiences and spaces necessary to re/form, in essence to decode (deconstruct) and recode (gain awareness).
Embedded ways of thinking and being can be challenged and reformed through careful deconstruction of the embedded codes as well as new intercultural experiences with culturally diverse people and practices in new environments. To achieve global awareness and understanding, we can use powerful teaching and learning to bridge the intercultural gaps as well as create common launching points for interactions and curriculum planning focused on global and local tensions (Merryfield, 1998). Teaching critically, through postcolonial theory, action research, and intercultural experiences could function as tools for first decoding then recoding our made worlds to further pursue these “launching points” into global awareness as praxis and understanding.

Flexible Teaching and Learning

Aiming to look at “ourselves in the lens of another” my scholarship and teaching goals have led me to consider three initial possibilities for creating “shocks” to my students’ habits. Service-learning, study abroad, and action research have the power to decode and recode our learning while flexibly engaging our students in world and community making.

Service-learning programs often pair students from privileged schools and backgrounds with communities and students from underprivileged areas and schools. Service-learning programs aim to disrupt service student experiences by thrusting them into projects and interactions with people of different backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. In recent service-learning program scholarship students have reported greater awareness of their own culture, privileges, and the cultural backgrounds of others (Smith et al, 2012). Service-learning also improves student-learning outcomes and engenders social responsibility among participants (Warren, 2012). Despite successes, service-learning programs often focus on problems that are too narrow or superficial as well as ignoring racist or classist overtones during program
implementation (Abowitz, 1999). With caution and careful planning, service-learning programs could provide fertile experience for disjointing student learning and moving awareness to multicultural and global arenas.

Moving further into global education, study abroad programs offer international experience during short or long term sojourns. Most colleges and universities in the United States feature either study abroad opportunities or foreign campuses (or both) and often encourage students to travel for varied experiences. For example, study abroad programs are available in fields such as education (Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching), economics, chemistry, and disease research (Florida Atlantic University), or Architecture and Art History (Kent State University’s Florence, Italy campus). Though not overly common in high schools, there are various international travel programs or global service programs available, though often at a prohibitive expense (i.e. Explorica, AFS). Scholarship shows that study abroad programs can offer wide ranging global intercultural experiences. In college study abroad sojourns including intercultural pedagogy can lead to a more ethno-relative worldview (Pederson, 2010) as well as rich opportunities to “personalize” foreign people and spaces as students experience and “see themselves” in cultures outside of their own (Killick, 2012). Even further, study abroad and service learning offer possible synergies and could become a powerful combination (Parker and Dautoff, 2007) and could enable long-term global engagement, long after the sojourn has ended (Paige, et al, 2009). Despite these exciting possibilities, study abroad programs by and large fail to show intercultural growth and often provide a “frontier”-style experience in which students never actually engage with the host culture (Vand Berg et al, 2012; Grunzweig and Rhinehart, 2002). Study abroad programs could offer another vehicle for further engagement in student self and community. Aiming to place students in safe environments to decode preconceived notions
of diverse regions of the world, study abroad can provide amazing cultural experiences, shrinking the world and at the same time enabling new perceptions and expanding awareness.

Finally, and perhaps most realistic for most educators and their students, action research engages reflexive practices and hermeneutical inquiry as teachers and students engage their daily lives and selves to improve individual and communal conditions and function. Action research (and its offshoots participatory action research, and community-based research) could offer varying degrees of student problem solving experience, community involvement, and personal growth.

Beginning in the early 20th century under the John Collier’s (1945) work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1930s on Native American reservations and continuing to Kurt Lewin’s (1946, 1947) work on social interactions and Jacob Moreno’s (1946) psycho/socio-analysis methods, action research aims to incorporate locally situated knowledge into problem-solving, social justice, and emancipatory scholarship to reframe power dynamics within research communities while enabling critical action and opposition to structural and hegemonic domination through praxis (Carr and Kemmis, 2003). Action research could enable student involvement in community and school activities, as well as increase understandings of roles and responsibilities as citizens, while simultaneously show a growing sensitivity to diverse cultures (Blozis et al, 2002). Diniz-Pereira (2002) surveys the action research field to determine whether modern world events and globalization have led to an emerging global teacher research movement, which “has the potential to become a counter-hegemonic strategy to construct critical teacher education approaches in a globalised world.” Although claiming this critical mass has not yet been reached, Diniz-Pereira (2002) is hopeful that local-level action research orientations (like the Landless Workers Movement Schools in Brazil) will enable greater teacher and student
voice within a global context. Despite these promising inquiries, some globally centered action research projects call for a greater focus on global awareness and warn of lack of world knowledge in both teachers and students, hindering the aims of action research projects (Demovsky and Niemuth, 1999). Action research can offer a myriad of oppositional spaces for teachers and students to challenge assumptions and move forward in global awareness and understanding while at the same time incorporating hermeneutics and structure as praxis is refined and the journey of self and community is experienced through collaborative research.

Conclusion

As a position paper submission I hope that my work and thinking can contribute further to the debate about teaching and learning within our place in the world. My own work in a high school classroom and graduate school is focused now on refining and approaching my conceptions of teaching and learning for global awareness as praxis. I believe that if we maintain a fluid conception of global awareness while focusing on world making, self, and decoding/recoding through action research, study abroad, and service learning experiences, that students and teachers not only gain understanding, but form new habits and proclivities that encourage future engagement and acceptance of diversity and difference in a rapidly changing world.
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Cultural Competency and Poverty: Making the Connections in Second Language Acquisition
In an ideal classroom students can exceed academic expectations. The reality is many of us teach in impoverished communities. We must address the poverty and inequality within the university system and the needs of culturally and economically diverse students. This paper explores the results of a 2 year study in the restructuring of a traditional language class designed to address those needs.

I teach in Valdosta, the third poorest area in the United States. (http://www.nbcnews.com/business/economy/americas-richest-poorest-cities-flC6454601). We pool about one third of our students from the region. Our mission is to be a regional university. What exactly does that mean? How do we ‘serve’ our region? How even in our classes do we address issues of poverty and cultural disadvantage?

For years I have had an average of 25% failure rate in lower division Spanish courses. However, the true average is closer to 40% D’s and F’s but because of a large curve I say it is 25%. My classes run a clear division between A/B and D/F depending on income, cultural background and High School prep and how long since they last took a Spanish course. The ideal or traditional bell curve is non-existent. There are the have and the have-nots. Some students left with little confidence that they could even ask or answer a simple yes/no question after the semester. Two years ago I took an opportunity to address this concern and also that of the general problem of area poverty. My paper looks at the redesign of my classroom and the connection from the classroom to the community as means of addressing income inequality and cultural and linguistic proficiency.

The redesign used research from my own experience, observation of local K-12 teachers, and the work of Robert Marzano and Harry Wong. I developed center work and individualized conversation building in my newly designed classroom. I used native Spanish speaking students
as classroom tutors. I used best practices like comparison and contrasting and highly motivational games which built confidence and team spirit. I also designed a series of interviews which culminate in a trip the farms where we do client intake for our last final. The results have shown a marked decrease in failing rates (average 5%). This has also led to increased community involvement and understanding of our region.
Living-educational-theories of holistic approaches to poverty, globalisation and schooling:

A Living Theory approach

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A virtual presentation to the ‘International Conference on Poverty Globalisation and Schooling: A holistic approach’ at the University of Central Florida on the 26-28th February 2015.

The PowerPoint slides with video-clip to support this virtual presentation can be accessed at: http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwufc0215.pptx

Abstract

The unique, living-theory methodologies of practitioner-researchers, have established the academic legitimacy of living-educational-theories as original contributions to knowledge in Universities around the world. These living-theories are analysed in terms of, and responses to, abstract concepts of holistic approaches to poverty, globalisation and schooling. These abstract concepts are transformed by Living Theory research with multi-media narratives into embodied expressions of humanistic values, in living-theories that are created in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

The unit of appraisal, standards of judgement and living logics of living- theories are distinguished in an epistemology of educational knowledge. The living-theories are generated and embodied within an evolving, living-culture-of-inquiry that is enhancing the flow of values, including living-global-citizenship, that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.
Contexts and introduction to the Study

Wherever we are in the world we cannot help being influenced by issues of poverty, globalization and schooling. These influences will be different and related to our sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts as well as our experiences of schooling and education. I want to take care to communicate clearly and carefully my meanings, through the words and images I use, as many arguments can be avoided when it becomes clear that the same words are being used to communicate different meanings by different people.

I want to be as clear as I can about my meanings of poverty, globalization, schooling and a holistic approach, using both lexical and ostensive expressions of meaning. By a lexical expression of meaning I am referring to the ways the meanings of words are defined and shared solely in terms of other words. By an ostensive expression of meaning I am referring to the ways embodied expressions of meaning are clarified and communicated with both visual data from practice, and words, in a process of ‘show and tell’.

In addressing issues of poverty I am developing ideas presented at the 2013 Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association:

The presentation accepts and responds to the purpose of the theme of AERA 2013 to signal that ‘we must engage and examine the complexities of poverty, as well as challenge oversimplifications (eg) in how we study and address poverty and its consequences.’ (Tierney & Renn, 2012, p.2). It also demonstrates how both halves of the AERA mission can be fulfilled through educational research: “to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.” (Ball and Tyson, 2011). The presentation attempts to address the question, how can living educational theory in a culture of inquiry address the negative effect of impoverished
educational environments to improve educational practice, educational research and the social/public good? (Delong, et.al, 2013)

In addressing issues of globalization I accept Stigliz’s economic analysis of the dangers of inequalities:

Some of the causes of inequality may be largely beyond our control, others we can affect only gradually, in the long run, but there are still others that we address immediately, some of the key elements of which I lay out below.

**Curbing the excesses at the top.**

Chapter 2 showed how so much of the wealth at the top is derived, in one way or another, from rent seeking and rules of the game that are tilted to advantage those at the top. The distortions and perversions of our economic system are pervasive, but the following seven reforms would make a big difference.

**Curbing the financial sector.**

… Here are six further reforms that are urgent:

(a) Curb excessive risk taking and the too-big-to-fail and too-interconnected-to-fail financial institutions; they’re a lethal combination that has led to the repeated bailouts that have marked the last thirty years….

(b) Make banks more transparent, especially in their treatment of over-the-counter derivatives…

(c) Make the banks and credit card companies more competitive and ensure that they act competitively…
(d) Make it more difficult for banks to engage in predatory lending and abusive credit card practices, including by putting stricter limits on usury (excessively high interest rates).

(e) Curb the bonuses that encourage excessive risk taking and shortsighted behavior.

(f) Close down the offshore banking centers (and their onshore counterparts) that have been so successful both at circumventing regulations and at promoting tax evasion and avoidance.

I also use the way McTaggart, draws on Broudy’s ideas of the effects of economic rationality in globalisation on de-valuation and de-moralisation.

Nevertheless, the new ‘economic rationalism’ is a worldwide phenomena which ‘guides’ not only the conduct of transnational corporations, but governments and their agencies as well. It does so with increasing efficacy and pervasiveness. I use the term ‘guides’ here in quotes to make a particular point. Economic rationalism is not merely a term which suggests the primacy of economic values. It expresses commitment to those values in order to serve particular sets of interests ahead of others. Furthermore, it disguises that commitment in a discourse of ‘economic necessity’ defined by its economic models. We have moved beyond the reductionism which leads all questions to be discussed as if they were economic ones (de-valuation) to a situation where moral questions are denied completely (de-moralisation) in a cult of economic inevitability (as if greed had nothing to do with it). Broudy (1981) has described ‘de-valuation’ and de-moralization’ in the following way:

De-valuation refers to diminishing or denying the relevance of all but one type of value to an issue; de-moralization denies the relevance of moral questions. The reduction of all values – intellectual, civic, health, among others – to a money value would be an example of de-valuation; the slogan ‘business’ is business’ is an example of de-moralization (Broudy, 1981: 99) (McTaggart, 1992, p. 50).
I draw a clear distinction between schooling and education in relation to poverty and
globalisation. I associate schooling with the learning in schools that serves the interests of the
economic rationality of globalisation. My early introduction to this idea of schooling was from
Bowles’ and Gintis’ (1976) text on Schooling in Capitalist America. I think of education, as
distinct from schooling, as involving learning that carries hope for the flourishing of humanity.
This notion of education, seeks to transcend the constraints of de-valuation and de-moralisation
implicit in the economic rationality of schooling.

In developing a holistic approach to poverty, globalization and school, through Living
Theory research I shall focus on the ways in which individuals are generating and sharing their
own living-educational-theories with values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

I shall first distinguish Living Theory research and living-educational-theories, before
outlining my self-study into improving my own practice and generating a living-educational
theory. This includes aims and questions, issues of methodology and methods and outcomes that
I believe will resonate with your own interests and may be useful to you in the creation of your
own living-educational-theories and contributions to Living Theory research.

**Distinguishing Living Theory research from a living-educational-theory.**

I have spent most of my working life in education (1967- present) bringing the embodied
knowledges of educators into a publically communicable form that can be accredited for higher
degrees and shared with others as a contribution to the educational knowledge-base. In the 1980s
I coined the idea of a living-educational-theory as an individual’s explanation of their
educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the
social formations within which the practice could be located in enquiries of the kind, ‘How do I
improve what I am doing?’ (Whitehead, 1989) I believe that it is now beyond reasonable doubt,
given the numbers of living-theory doctorates that have been legitimated in different universities around the world as original contributions to knowledge, that it is possible to make public the embodied knowledges of educators and other practitioner-researchers, in their living-educational-theories, as publically communicable contributions to the professional knowledge-base of education.

Having contributed to this accomplishment my research programme has moved on to clarifying and communicating the idea of Living Theory research as a paradigm for educational enquiry. By this I mean that Living Theory research can be understood in terms of concepts, or general principles, that can identity Living Theory research as a paradigm. In saying this I do not want to imply that an individual’s living-theory can be defined within the general concepts. An individual’s living-theory is always beyond a definition with general concepts because it is a unique and original contribution to educational knowledge. I hope that this is clear. Where it can be useful to define a Living Theory research paradigm is in encouraging individuals to understand what might be involved in the creation of their own living-educational-theory and for them to see that there contributions to knowledge can be understood in relation to the living-educational-theories of others.

At the heart of Living Theory research is a relationally dynamic understanding of self that draws on the African notion of Ubuntu as ‘I am because we are’ and includes ‘we are because I am’. I use the shorthand ‘i~we’ to represent this relationally dynamic awareness of self. It is grounded in the creation of unique, living-educational-theories of practitioner-researchers in enquiries of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ in which the values of ‘improvement’ carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. The living-theories draw insight from a wide range of theoretical frameworks from different forms and fields of knowledge. The global
significance is that the living-theories are being created and academically legitimated in international contexts including, Europe, North and South America, Australia, India, the Republic of Ireland, China, Japan and New Zealand.

There is still much to do in generating social movements of living-theory researchers to transform social contexts and organisations. This can be related to the following aim and questions.

**Aim and Questions**

The main aim is to provide evidence-based and academically legitimated, explanations of the living-theories of individuals in which they engage with conceptual issues of poverty, globalisation and schooling through living as fully as they can, the values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, in enquiries of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ A related aim is to explain how the use of digital, multi-screen SKYPE conversations can transform perceptions and understandings of the meanings of embodied expressions of relationally dynamic and ontological values. These meanings include contributing to a pooling, by individuals, of their life-affirming and enhancing energies, values and understandings that are enhancing the flow of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

I’ll see if I can communicate what I am meaning by the embodied expressions of energy-flowing, relationally dynamic ontological values, by pointing to their expression in the following visual data from a conversation on the 18th January 2015 in which I ask members of a research support group, that have multi-screen SKYPE conversations on Sunday evenings, to introduce themselves to Jacqueline Delong:
2:01 minute video extract https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ0-pMaISJc

This two minute clip is an extract from a longer conversation. You can download this clip to your desktop using download helper in the Firefox Browser, drag and drop it into quicktime and move the cursor backwards and forward to get a sense of embodied expressions of meaning. The image above shows Teri Young on the left, Jacqueline Delong on the right and myself in the middle. Teri introduces herself and mentions a project on poverty. Then Arianna Briganti introduces herself. Arianna, a developmental economist, has just started a two year project in Albania that is focused on economic development and improving the quality of life. What I experience as I view the clip includes the relational dynamic of mutual influence as individuals introduce themselves to each other within living boundaries (Huxtable, Abstract, 2012) and reveal something of their activities which are related to their ontological values. By ontological values I am meaning the values they use to give meaning and purpose to their lives.
What I want to focus on in my experience of this 2 minute clip are the reasons why I am doing what I am doing in spreading the influence of Living Theory research. As I move the cursor backwards and forwards I feel the expression of the life-affirming and life-enhancing energy of Teri, Arianna and Jackie as they meet each other for the first time and introduce themselves to each other. I am experiencing this pooling of energy, together with their introductions as expressing values and understandings that both express their ontological values and carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

In fulfilling my main aim I shall draw attention to the relationships represented in the still images from video of weekly research support group meetings and planning meetings from the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) in Canada for presentations at the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) conference 7-9 May 2015 at the University of Toronto:

**Research Support Group**
Planning meetings of BARN for ARNA

From the ground of these i−we relationships I am raising the following questions:

i) How can i−we contribute to overcoming the poverty of traditional academic texts that omit embodied expressions of energy and values in explanations of educational influence that draw on East Asian Epistemologies (Inoue, 2012; 2015)?

ii) How can i−we include a recognition of the significance of emotion in explanations of educational influence.

iii) How can i−we engage with issues of objectivity, generalisability and the logics of rationality in the explanations of educational influence?

iv) How can i−we contribute to transforming schooling into education (Whitehead, 2014)?
v) How can i–we engage with embodied expressions of living-global-citizenship in explanations of educational with other values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity?

vi) How can i–we demonstrate the educational influence of digital multi-screen and multi-media narratives in contributing to a globally influential movement of living-theory practitioners and researchers?

vii) How can i–we engage with the power relations that both support and constrain the use of multi-media narratives in academic texts?

Here are some ideas about Living Theory methodology and methods that might be useful in addressing these questions and in creating your own living-educational-theory. I should like you to bear in mind that each individual generates their unique living-theory methodology in the creation of their living-theor

**A Living Theory methodology, Method(s) and Data Sources**

Each unique, living-theory methodology emerges from the expression of the methodological inventiveness (Dadds and Hart, 2001, p.166) of the practitioner-researcher. In establishing the academic legitimacy of a living-theory it is important to address issues of trustworthiness/vality.

These issues are responded to with the use of validation groups of between 3-8 peers who respond to the researchers’ explanations and questions:

a) How could I improve the comprehensibility of my explanation?

b) How could I strengthen the evidence I use to justify the assertions I make?

c) How could I deepen and extend my sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings of influences in my practice and explanations?
d) How could I enhance the authenticity of my explanation in showing that I am truly committed to living as fully as I can the values I claim to hold.

The data sources include some 40 living-theory doctoral theses, most of which can be accessed from [http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml](http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml)

The data analyses includes the unique explanations produced by practitioner-researchers in explaining their educational influences as they explore the implications of asking, researching and answering their questions, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’

The methods include the use of ‘empathetic resonance’ with digital video of practice to clarify the meanings of the embodied expressions of energy-flowing values in explanations of educational influence that engage with issues of poverty, globalisation and schooling.

**Outcomes**

The outcomes include an understanding of a Living Theory research paradigm that has emerged from over 40 living-theory doctorates that have legitimated in different universities around the world. Each of these doctorates has been legitimated by the Academy as having made an original contribution to knowledge. They include a living-theory of undergraduate medical education in South Africa; a life-skills programme in India; a curriculum for the healing nurse in Japan; passion for compassion in the health service in the UK; a new epistemology of educational knowledge; a living culture of inquiry in Canada; the living-theories of practitioner-researchers from around the world published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2008-present), accessible from [http://ejolts.net](http://ejolts.net); a living theory of caring; a living theory of counselling.
Each living-theory makes an original contribution to Living Theory research and contributes to an engagement with issues of poverty, globalization and schooling through enhancing the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.
References


The Deceptive Nature of English Language Policies for Competitiveness:
The Case of Medellín, Colombia

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Abstract

This presentation critically examines current language and education policies associated with English as a foreign language in Colombia. Along the presentation, the author elaborates on the official discourses of innovation, education quality and bilingualism being emphasized, the breach that these types of reforms nourish within the educational system and society, and the active role that is played by local policy actors, educational actors and teachers as they appropriate and reconstruct policy discourses according to their own needs, experiences and readings of their communities.
The Deceptive Nature of English Language Policies for Competitiveness:
The Case of Medellín, Colombia

With the increasing interest to appear more competitive and attractive to worldwide investment, different countries are moving towards education reforms and foreign language policies that reinforce traveling standards and accountability models and emphasize on English as an international language in the so called “knowledge economy” (Guadarrama, 2006; Hargreaves, 2003; Kaufman & Nelson, 2004; Lauder et al., 2006; Lipman, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Stromquist, 2002; Tato, 2007). In the case of Colombia, the national government has introduced an overarching reform called “National Bilingual Program 2004-2019”, and more recently the new “National English Program, 2015-2025”( Colombia, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2002; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2014). These policies, in connection with recent agendas determined by the OECD and applied in the whole educational system (OECD, 2013), have included the promotion of English across the K-11 school system, the introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) in this Latin American country, and the adaptation of the national standards and exams to fit the imported model (Usma, 2009).

Observing this situation, this presentation reports on a vertical case study (Bray & Thomas, 1995; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006) that examines the way these policies are being formulated in Colombia in the context of economic globalization and transnational educational reform, and how these agendas are being interpreted and appropriated in the city of Medellín, where issues of social exclusion, poverty, and violence are combined with official discourses of innovation, education for all, and entrepreneurship. Along the presentation, the author reinforces on the dynamic nature of policymaking processes, the breach that these types of reforms nourish
within the educational system and society, and the active role that is played by local policy actors, educational actors and teachers as they reinterpret, appropriate, and reconstruct policy discourses, imaginaries and texts according to their own needs, experiences and readings of their communities.

To carry out this study, the author drew on comparative, critical and socio-cultural lens to policy analysis that examines the multiple layers and levels in which policies are formulated, interpreted and appropriated (Bray & Thomas, 1995; Menken & García, 2010; Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009; Steiner-Khamisi, 2000, 2004; Sutton & Levinson, 2001). Data included a variety of policy documents and reports produced by national and local authorities in the last decade, and a total of thirty six semi-structured interviews carried out with national and local state officials, university scholars across the country, foreign and local consultants, and school teachers in public school across the different neighborhoods, communes and rural areas in Medellín. Acknowledging the limitations of forcing imported analytical frameworks and theories to understand what happens in Colombia, these data were analyzed following Glaser and Strauss’ principles of grounded theory (Glaser, 1978, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and observed principles of trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004) and ethics (AERA, 2011), based on the recognition of different perspectives and voices, the incorporation of multiple data sources and perspectives, the continuous triangulation of data, and the protection of participants’ anonymity and wellbeing.

Findings from this study confirm that the complete package of North American and European discourses, frameworks, scales, standards, tests, scores, certification models, and timelines adopted by the national government in Colombia do not respond to the actual needs, conditions and possibilities of the local stakeholders. Under this model, English as an
international language was taken as a synonym of quality and development, whereas
transnational organizations such as the British Council acted as policy lenders and guarantors of
success and credibility. In the meanwhile, local actors were expected to implement these
imported reforms, thus generating different reactions and resistances. While at the city level local
state officials continued to implement their own agendas according to what they consider was
more appropriate and reflected their interests and concerns, at the school level teachers
appropriated the stated reform depending on their school communities’ traditions and actual
needs. As a result, little effect was perceived at the ground level, thus feeding the existing breach
in terms of education quality and English learning as we compare students in the lower and upper
socioeconomic strata. Under these conditions, the bilingual policy was reduced to a slogan
associated with the official discourse of innovation and competitiveness, and became another
failed attempt of improvement that did not represent a real benefit for the majority of students,
families, and school actors in general.

Additionally, and in terms of the active role played by teachers in policymaking
processes, the analysis of data confirmed that teachers are not passive actors limited to observing
the problematic conditions in their schools and the negative results obtained by their lower strata
students attending public schools. In fact, data confirmed the active posture adopted by teachers,
as they appropriate policies and innovate in their schools and classrooms according to their
schools and students’ needs, while focusing their attention on those critical areas that need to be
addressed in each community. As evidenced in this study, teachers in this particular case adopted
either a nurturing approach in order to attend to students’ emotional, behavioral and social needs,
or an academic approach, trying to improve their communicative competence and academic
skills and prepare them for their future academic experiences in higher education. In this manner,
teachers exercised their autonomy and agency (Menken & Garcia, 2010; Shohamy, 2009), and used the slogans around bilingualism and English as an opportunity to engage students in formal schooling, while supporting their personal needs, and opening doors they could hardly explore out in their neighborhoods, let alone in their own homes. As the researcher could corroborate in this study, education and language policies are played at multiple levels and depend on the understanding and action of different stakeholders, all of them with multiple agendas, interpretations, priorities, backgrounds, strengths, weaknesses, and roles in society, which confirms the dynamic and unpredictable nature of policymaking processes at times of economic globalization, even when these reforms are accompanied with frameworks, standards, scales, tests and timelines acting as “patrons” of successful implementation.
References


Non-stigmatized images of immigrant students during and post-research period: Challenges for the beginning researcher

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Context of the Study

In recent decades, Iceland has been experiencing a rapid shift in demographics. In the year 2000, 2.6% of population had a foreign citizenship, while in 2013 there were already 6.7% foreign citizens residing in Iceland. If second generation immigrants are counted, the total percentage of immigrants in 2013 raises to 9.1% of population (Jónsson, 2013). At the same time, the number of children with a foreign mother tongue in Icelandic preschools and primary schools has increased significantly. Today they account for 11% of preschool children and 6% of primary school children (Jónsson, 2013).

Together with the growth of immigration to Iceland the schools are becoming more diverse in terms of students’ mother tongues, home language practices, ethnicity, religions, and socio-cultural resources. This leads to a growing interest in the area of educational research in multiculturalism, multilingualism and inclusion.

The idea for the paper emerged as a result of authors’ participation in a Nordic research project Learning spaces for inclusion and social justice that aims at mapping, describing and analyzing successful stories of immigrant students and good practices in several schools of different levels in Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Finland.

While majority of educational research abroad has revealed the common marginalization of students with immigrant background, some studies have presented positive examples, including individual students and/or particular schools that have succeeded, often in spite of what could be expected of them (see e.g. Brooker, 2002; Coard, 2005; Gundara, 2000; Hernandez, 2004). The Learning spaces project is one of the first of this kind in Iceland, because it aims at
mapping positive examples and practices rather than focusing on the problems of marginalization of immigrant students.

The project is now in its final stage of analysis of data and dissemination of preliminary findings. As researchers, we were intrigued how the entire team was concerned about the image of participants, particularly immigrant students, and their well-being at all phases of research process, from preparing it, through conducting to presenting first results. This phenomenon has been observed before, for example in research with indigenous people (see e.g. Martin, 2010). A study by Martin (2010) shows that a qualitative inquiry requires from a researcher to constantly deal with the knowledge of self and the others and with the power as an important ethical issue. This is especially crucial in research with children (Einarsdóttir, 2007). Through the act of researching children a researcher can, rather than empowering them, present them in a way that reproduces “suffering and stigmatisation” (Te Riele & Brooks, 2013, p. 185). There is also “a dangerous tendency to under-estimate or pre-judge the abilities and concerns of the participants”, especially in the context that a researcher is unexperienced in (Coady, 2010, p. 79).

Postmodern perspective argues that children should be considered as knowledgeable, competent, strong and powerful members of society (Bruner, 1996). Moreover, children are to be seen as social actors and thus, active participants in the research process, capable of providing information, perspectives and views on their own lives (Christensen & James, 2000; O’Kane, 2000). Finally, research with children should be seen as “a pedagogy and a way of researching life, a culture and an ethic, a continuous process and a relationship” (Clark, Kjorholt & Moss, 2005, p. 13). These ideas are supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

One way of empowering children, not only through education, but also through educational research, is by noticing and making use of their resources. Rodriguez (2007)
characterises resources as personal strengths and qualities, which emerge from and shape life experiences. Similarly, Wertch (1998) considers cultural resources as mediational tools for people to make meaning and act in the world. Further, culture is seen by Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) as ‘funds of knowledge’ or in other words, a resource to draw upon in the process of learning and empowering of students.

**Objectives**

This paper attempts to answer the question of how to empower children in and through educational research in a twofold way. Firstly, it focuses on key issues that a researcher should bear in mind while preparing, doing and presenting a research with immigrant students in order to empower them. Secondly, it describes several strategies used by a particular beginning researcher from the *Learning spaces for inclusion and social justice* research team and challenges that she has been experiencing throughout the process.

The main objective of the paper is to locate and discuss sensitive issues that may hinder, jeopardize or distort the research and to find practical solutions that may help in empowering participants of the research rather than stigmatizing them.

**Methods**

Qualitative methods were applied throughout the *Learning spaces* project, as they are said to be a convenient tool when the purpose of the research is to gain a profound comprehension of one’s reality (see e.g. Esterberg, 2002; Lichtman, 2010; O’Reilly, 2005). However, in order to obtain rich, first-hand information and increase understanding, it is crucial to combine several methods of collecting data and consider them as complementary (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The data collection described in the paper spans observations, formal interviews
and informal conversations with students with a foreign background of age 6-16 in three grammar schools in different areas of Iceland, as well as analysis of various artefacts, including students’ projects and drawings.

Morgan (2005) suggests that whenever the researcher and participants are members of different cultures or have experiences in different contexts, the research should be based on principles of cultural validity. Such validity “entails an appreciation of the cultural values of those being researched […] and being aware of one’s own cultural filters as a researcher” (Morgan, 2005, personal communication, as cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 194). This applies to all stages of the research, including planning, recruitment of participants, data analysis, and interpretation of findings.

Eva’s story

In this particular project, the beginning researcher, whom we will call Eva and whose story will be presented in the paper, joined an already established research team. This meant that the study plan together with the research questions and objectives, as well as methodology had already been decided and initial literature review performed. By the time Eva began her work, the study had already been reported to the Data Committee and permission obtained from gatekeepers. Therefore, the actual path of Eva started rather unusually, that is by preparation of study visits and interviews.

At the beginning of the process, Eva re-established a contact with the gatekeepers and thoroughly explained to them the aims of the research. Later, the participants were chosen bearing in mind the objectives of the project. Finally, an informed consent, translated into several languages was signed by all participants’ parents or caretakers and throughout the study the
anonymity and confidentiality of the immigrant children, their families and schools were ensured. Eva did not know much about participants before meeting them, other than their age, nationality, number of years in the Icelandic school system and the fact that they were chosen by gatekeepers or teachers purposefully.

The first challenge that Eva encountered while interviewing students was their different level of understanding of questions previously prepared by the research team. Thus, Eva decided to adjust the questions not only to the age of students, but also to their ability of speaking the language and to their background. At this point, it was very useful that Eva was herself an immigrant that had a considerably broad practical knowledge of immigrant issues in Iceland, including patterns of migration, situation of refugees and home language environments of immigrants. In one particular case, a good insight into local news helped Eva to associate the participant with a sensitive story and, in result, to avoid questions that could have been harmful to the participant.

Soon, Eva noticed that some of the children had difficulties with opening up, even though they could understand questions and the aim of the interview. Therefore, she decided to introduce a strategy called ‘story-crafting’, which was developed in Finland and is used especially with younger children or those immigrant students who are still insecure in Icelandic, in order to create a friendly atmosphere, motivate children to open up and tell their own stories in an informal way (Lulle & Assmuth, 2013). Students, working in pairs, were encouraged to think up and draw/write/tell a story of a girl or a boy of a certain age who moved to Iceland a while ago. Children were asked open questions, including: How does the person like living in Iceland? What does she/he think of school? How would her/his perfect day look like? What does she/he like to do in a free time? Eva wrote down the stories exactly the way they were told and then the
authors-immigrant children had a chance to reflect on them and make any changes they wanted. As a result, children could see Eva’s interest in listening to their stories, therefore they opened up and used their own ways of communication to provide information about the imaginary person, and at the same time, revealed their perspectives and views on their own lives.

During the process of data analysis Eva, in order to culturally validate this phase, decided to work with other members of the research team, with various background and experience. Sessions, usually in a group up to four people, included reading over interviews, looking into photos and artwork of students, and watching video recordings. The meetings lasted sometimes for several hours, but it was time well invested. Eva and the team were able to discuss particular situations, as well as clarify and explain language and cultural nuances, which otherwise could have been left unnoticed. Performing both individual and group analysis helped Eva to locate and make use of students’ resources and reflect on the gathered data.

The dissemination of multiple findings from the project has just begun and it is the aim of Eva and the entire research team to present the participants as knowledgeable and powerful members of society and whose stories can help in shaping future successful practices and in continuous empowering of immigrant students.

Outcomes

The project proved that neither a non-stigmatizing research question, nor a thorough preparation and reflection prior to the study are sufficient to provide non-stigmatized images of immigrant children in and post-research. During the entire research process and dissemination of findings Eva still encountered challenges related to own identity, knowledge-power relations and ethics, therefore she had to constantly reflect upon and negotiate her role.
The study showed that one way to empower immigrant children through educational research is to make use of their resources, that is to develop a strategy of ‘ethical symmetry’, which suggests that “the rights, feelings and interests of children should be given as much consideration as those of adults” (Christensen & Prout, 2002, p. 493). In Eva’s case, this was possible through focusing on listening to and observing what each participant has to share, rather than judging how she/he does it. The ‘story-crafting’ strategy that can be tailored to the needs of a particular research area and/or participants enabled Eva to gain a deeper understanding of immigrant students’ perspectives. However, in implementing particular strategies, Eva needed to make sure not to under-estimate or judge the abilities of the participants beforehand, by making assumptions based on their age, knowledge of Icelandic and mother tongue, years of schooling or the information received from gatekeepers and/or teachers. Rather, she decided to get to know the students better and help them open up, and even discuss the most convenient research instruments with them. This required repeated visits to the educational settings, patience and flexibility.

In order not to position participants according to researcher’s experience, Eva needed to be able to reflect on own identity as well. Being an immigrant, Eva considered herself to be well informed and equipped to research immigrant children. On the one hand, similar experiences of migration helped her to prevent harming or re-traumatizing several participants. On the other hand, it was challenging when Eva, rather understandably, tended to negotiate and compare in mind her own experiences and perceptions and the stories of immigrant children. The study helped Eva to realize that no immigrant story is the same. Therefore, she avoided any categorization of immigrant children or perceiving and interacting with them through the prism of immigration alone. In this way, Eva was able to see the wide spectrum of different resources
that lie in each child, but participation in the study was for her an inevitable self-study as well, a process of reexamining her own story through new lenses, enriched with this revelation.

In case of this particular research, the possibility to work in a diverse, multicultural and multidisciplinary team was a clearly helpful tool to discuss and renegotiate researchers’ role in the project. Eva was not afraid to ask questions, use suggestions of others, learn from mistakes and share her experience with the rest of the team. She discovered that even much more experienced team members encountered similar challenges and therefore had to be ever conscious about sensitivity of research with immigrant children.

In conclusion, the project showed that in order to empower children through educational research it is not enough to have a broad knowledge of research and ethical guidelines. Neither are excellent personal skills nor strong sense of responsibility adequate on their own. It is the interplay of these three qualities and the ability of the researcher to constantly renegotiate and reflect on her/his role in different contexts that could possibly be the key to success.
References


A Holistic Approach to Narrow Achievement Gaps for Inner City Students: Paper

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A Holistic Approach to Narrow Achievement Gaps for Inner City Students: Paper

Background and Objectives

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is the largest school system in Canada, serving over 246,000 students in nearly 600 schools across the city of Toronto. Aside from its size, the TDSB has the world’s most multicultural and multilingual population with over three quarters of students who are of immigrant and/or visible minority background (Yau & O’Reilly, 2007). Besides being culturally diverse, over the past three decades Toronto has witnessed growing geographically bound economic disparities with the middle-income area of the city shrinking dramatically between 1970 and 2005, while the high-income area increased slightly and the low-income area expanded substantially (Hulchanski, 2006). In fact, according to the TDSB’s first Parent Census study (Author, 2009), at least half of its elementary school students come from the two lowest income bracket groups. Another internal study further indicates that, “some of the biggest discrepancies in students’ educational outcomes and school engagement are among different racial groups and family socio-economic status (SES)” (Sinay, Zheng, & Anastaskos, 2012). In light of rising poverty and the widening achievement gap, in 2006 the TDSB launched a system-wide initiative, known as Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC), beginning with four elementary schools to now 150 schools serving nearly 55,000 students in the neediest communities across the city.

To mitigate the negative effects of poverty on students’ academic outcomes, MSIC adopts a holistic approach under the premises that inequitable educational outcomes cannot be resolved without addressing the opportunity gap issue for socio-economically disadvantaged students.
These include, for example, helping to meet students’ basic physical needs, fostering their social and emotional well-being, enriching their out-of-school learning experiences, engaging marginalized families, and partnering with the community. This study, based on several years of data collection and research, examines the following questions.

a) Was the MSIC initiative effective in reducing students’ opportunity gap in the inner-city model schools?

b) Did the model schools show improvement in their students’ learning outcomes?

c) What were the program elements and conditions that made MSIC effective in producing sustainable change for the model schools?

Perspectives

The underlying philosophy behind MSIC is equity of outcomes for all children and levelling the playing field for all students regardless of socio-economic or cultural background (TDSB, 2005). The MSIC project itself consists of five Essential Components (TDSB, 2005).

1. Innovation in teaching/learning practice and in school structure – For example, through enriched and experiential learning opportunities to engage students, nurture their creativity and critical thinking skills, and support improved academic performance. A social justice curriculum and culturally responsive practices are aimed to increase relevance and rigour for students.

2. Support services to meet the social, emotional and physical well-being of students – This is based on the recognition that “hungry children cannot learn, that children whose mental or physical health is precarious will not thrive, and those who cannot see or hear properly are unfairly situated to succeed like their more affluent peers.” A multi-disciplinary approach is called for to address students’ physical, social and emotional needs.
3. **School as the heart of the community** – For example, through active school parent councils, school representation on external groups that advocate for children and their families, community groups and external agencies involved in school-based programs. Other examples include strong parental involvement, and safe, welcoming school environments.

4. **Research, review and evaluation of students and programs** – See below for further details.

5. **Commitment to share successful practice** – As educational lighthouses, Model Schools are expected to share innovative practices, program initiatives, and school structures through professional development opportunities within and outside the school board.

**Methods and Data Sources**

As one of the five MSIC Essential Components, a comprehensive annual school research and review framework was developed with a two-fold purpose:

1. **Formative evaluation** - providing regular feedback for school administrators and staff to monitor students' performance and school progress, to identify needs, and to focus school efforts and directions. The aim is for **continuous school improvement**.

2. **Summative evaluation** - providing all stakeholders with an assessment of the overall long-term impact of the school efforts on student performance and the school community as a whole. This serves the function of **accountability**.

In light of the multidimensionality and the holistic nature of MSIC, a mixed approach design or multi-methodology was deployed. To answer the three research questions, the following mixed methods were employed.
a) Was the MSIC initiative effective in reducing students’ opportunity gap in model schools?

Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used – including the Child/Youth Resiliency questionnaire (Donnon & Hammond, 2007); the Early Development Instrument (EDI, Janus & Offord, 2007); MSIC school surveys for students, parents and staff; vision and auditory screening records; findings from ongoing evaluation studies of programs such as the Beyond 3:30 After-School Program, and the Model Schools Paediatric Health Initiative.

b) Did model schools show improvement in their students’ learning outcomes?

Multiple data sources and measures were utilized - including the Canadian Achievement Tests (CAT4, Canadian Test Centre, 2010); Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) provincial test results; TDSB centrally available student information data on students’ progress report cards, absenteeism, truancy, and suspension. Longitudinal tracking and value-added assessments were conducted to determine growth trajectories over time.

c) What were the program elements and conditions that made MSIC effective in producing sustainable change in model schools?

Again both quantitative and qualitative measures were employed – including information on funding and resource allocations; program registration and attendance records; program evaluation findings; site observations; and individual and focus group interviews with different stakeholder groups including the board’s senior officials, central support staff, school administrators, teachers, students, parents and community partners.
Results

The answers to the three research questions above were informed by analyses of the vast amount of longitudinal quantitative and qualitative data collected since 2006. The findings are highlighted below.

a) Reduction of the opportunity gap over time – in terms of meeting students’ physical needs (e.g., basic nutrition, vision and hearing conditions, physical ailments); enhancing their social and emotional well-being (e.g., resiliency, mental health and developmental well-being); enriching their out-of-school learning experiences (e.g., field trips, and extended after-school programs); increasing family involvement; and expanding community partnerships (e.g., with local agencies, and the health sector).

b) Gradual narrowing of the achievement gap – moving from below the CAT4 norm in reading, writing and math basic skills at baseline, to at or above the expected level and thus building important foundations for continuous learning. In addition, the EDI results have indicated increased readiness for schooling among young children attending the model schools. Furthermore, data have shown reduced school absenteeism and lateness, and improved school atmosphere for learning.

c) While the current study does not delineate which specific project components could have contributed to the overall positive results, it is evident from some of the ongoing MSIC program evaluation findings that no single initiative could make a sustainable difference. According to stakeholder focus group interviews, it was the collective and integrated efforts that made consolidated changes. Some of the combined MSIC initiatives that produced beneficial impacts for the MSIC students included the following centrally supported strategies.
- **Hearing and Visioning screening** – In 2011-2012, approximately 16,400 children were screened for vision issues, one third of whom were referred for follow-up, and over 2,300 children were provided with free glasses.

- **In-school health clinics** were opened in several MSIC schools serving students and their siblings in the host as well as feeder schools – addressing physical as well as mental and developmental health needs.

- **A strength-based learning program** was introduced to middle-school classes to help students develop self-awareness and resiliency.

- **Parent engagement** – The MSIC office organized yearly parent conferences and established Parent Academies by parents for parents to provide support to local school communities; individual MSIC schools also offered parent workshops, after school programs and training to help parents understand the education system and engage more in their children’s learning.

- **Community partnerships** were forged to ensure access for students and their families to community events and resources.

- **Nutrition and meal programs** were offered to meet students’ basic needs.

- **Concentrated curriculum** with a social justice lens was adopted in model schools.

- **MSIC Office and funds** offered school staff with greater opportunities for professional development and involvement in school planning and decision-making.

- **Extended and multi-faceted after-school programs (e.g., Beyond 3:30)** were offered for inner-city adolescents to have a safe place to learn, play and develop social, emotional and leadership skills during after-school hours.
• MSIC specialized staff – e.g., Teaching/Learning Coaches, Community Support Workers, Social Workers, and Lead Teachers - were assigned to individual schools to offer extended support.

This multi-year research on MSIC schools further demonstrates that high needs schools - no matter how challenging – can help bring about positive change for students, and can narrow, if not completely close, the opportunity and subsequently the achievement gap *so long as* the school has or is provided with the following:

• Solid support and resources to level the playing field
• Extra efforts and innovative pedagogies to make up the initial achievement gaps
• Ongoing research and feedback to help monitor progress for program or curricular adjustments where necessary
• Sufficient time to demonstrate growth – the more challenging the school the longer the time is needed
• Sustained leadership which is fair, open, collaborative, forward thinking and visionary
• School staff who are committed and share the vision

Research thus far suggests that it is imperative to maintain the above conditions not only for the purpose of closing the gap, but also for preventing the gap from widening again in inner-city communities where adverse social circumstances persist.

As well, it should be noted that while Model Schools as a whole manifested positive outcomes in various domains over time, there were variations among the different schools in terms of the degree of progress made, the rate of growth, and the main areas of improvement. Further investigation indicates that the varying degrees of gain were associated with the level of
and the unique set of external challenges (e.g., SES) faced by each school community, the initial academic standing (baseline) of the students in individual schools, and the school’s internal organizational structure (e.g., leadership and staff). For instance, according to a longitudinal and comparative analysis of CAT4 test results of the model schools, the schools from the most impoverished neighbourhoods seemed to require more time (e.g., one to two more school years) to catch up than their counterparts from poor but less impoverished communities.

**Scholarly Significance**

The findings presented in this study are of significance as they illustrate how a school system can be an effective change agent to improve the academic outcome and success potential for inner-city children. This innovative MSIC project, which started off with a few schools, has evolved into a system-wide response to poverty, gradually expanding to 150 elementary schools in the city’s neediest communities. By continuing to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations within the context of their community and using the school as a "hub" for services, MSIC is leading the way for a 21st century integration model. In fact, this educational model to combat child poverty has been presented and recognized internationally. As a result of this and related initiatives, the TDSB was awarded the prestigious Carl Bertelsmann Prize in Germany under the theme of “Integration through Education – Fairness for All”.

Finally, it cannot be overemphasized enough that research has played an instrumental role in the MSIC journey. Since its inception, ongoing data collection and regular feedback have become part of the essential ingredients to help individual model schools as well as the school system identify student and community needs, monitor progress, inform practices, and guide directions along the way. The summative findings provide evidence for the school board, government agencies and community partners to make informed decisions about funding and
resource allocation. This MSIC initiative offers a viable model of how theories, policies, practices and research can work hand-in-hand to become an agent for educational change toward closing the persistent achievement gap due to poverty.
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