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Critical Praxis Círculos: The Impact of Culturally Responsive Teacher Development

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CRITICAL PRAXIS CÍRCULOS: THE
IMPACT OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Educational Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctorate of Education

by

Raúl S. Lomelí

August, 2018

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CRITICAL PRAXIS CÍRCULOS: THE
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by

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ABSTRACT

CRITICAL PRAXIS CÍRCULOS: THE IMPACT OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

by Raúl S. Lomelí

Building positive relationships with students and employing relevant pedagogy informed by Community Cultural Wealth will undoubtedly contribute to a more engaged community of learners that are vested in their community and academics. Aronson and Laughter (2015) amongst many others, studied and analyzed over 200 studies on the topic of culturally relevant education (CRE), and found convincing results that speak to the academic outcomes that are consistently reached whenever teachers employ CRE in the classroom (Cammarota, 2014; Covarrubias, 2017; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). Even though such practices and approaches have demonstrated success, they are not being practiced and replicated in many parts of the state and country (evidenced by the persistent achievement gap), and it is not clear as to how administrators and teachers can work together to ensure that CRE practices are discussed, learned, and employed in school settings (Covarrubias, 2017). This mixed methods study will explore ways in which a school can impact teacher ideology and disposition toward prioritizing and supporting culturally responsive practices; using Participatory Action Research methodologies. Research that explores these topics is important, being that educators need to do a better job addressing success (or lack thereof) for students of color in California and in the entire United States.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The significant changes in school demographics across the nation indicating the rapid growth of the Latino population in the United States should alert school leaders to make sure that our education system is ready to engage and support Latinx students (Glass, 2008). This is increasingly important not only to communities of color, but also to our society as a whole when we acknowledge the current population trends that will inevitably produce a “majority minority (Glass, 2008).” The Latinx community will soon be larger than the white community in many states in the United States [already a fact in California] (Glass, 2008). Representation of students of color in higher education is substantially lower when compared to their white counterparts, and even lower for students of color that move on to a graduate level and or professional degrees (Ladson-Billings, 2006; KewalRamani, 2007; Kohler, 2007; Santiago, 2015). This is to be expected if the high school data continues to show the disproportionately low numbers of Latinx students in college preparatory courses and in AP/GATE type programs and classes. Kohler and Lazarin’s statistical brief in 2007 clearly depicts the problem of access to higher education, especially for the Latinx community. The brief demonstrates clear differences in the percentages of Black and Latinx students that move on to and graduate from a four-year university, “In 2005, 12% of Hispanics age 25 years and older had received a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 17.7% of Blacks and 30.5% of comparable Whites (Kohler, 2007 p 11; also see Covarrubias, 2017).” Elementary and middle school achievement data in California and in Texas, as measured by NAEP

(National Assessment of Educational Progress) and TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skill), also show a consistent gap in achievement when comparing students of Hispanic origin to their white peers (Valencia, 2011; Hemphill, 2011). More specifically, Valencia (2011) notes the 19-point gap in the *all tests indicator* on the TAKS. Similarly, the NAEP demonstrates that although both the White and Hispanic overall scores in Math at the 8th grade level have increased, the gap has stayed the same and even increased as of late, to a score gap of 27 in 2009; up from 26 in 2007 (Hemphill, 2011; Valencia, 2011). In 4th grade, the score gap is 21 in Math and 25 in Reading; both of these score gaps have had no significant change since the earliest years that the NAEP collected data (Hemphill, 2011).

The trends in United States population shifts are increasingly significant because many students of color are not being engaged in schools, as evidenced by previously mentioned data spanning from 4th grade to college. As a result, they are also dropping out at rates much higher than their white counterparts (Greene, 2001). Pierre Bourdieu (1986) introduced and named the types of capital that heavily influence one's success or lack thereof in society, including school. Applying Bourdieu's forms of capital to schooling in the US helps to explain why the achievement gap for students of color continues to persist throughout the history of the country up through today. Many times, students of color do not embody the forms of capital (*habitus*) held and valued by society and the education system, since they have not been exposed to life experiences that would develop cultural capital in them. Some examples include not living with wealth and therefore not being able to afford vacations, not being able to afford going to the

opera or symphony halls, etc. As a result of not being exposed to certain life experiences due to poverty, language barriers, and or cultural practices, students of color are often not able to access the content and curriculum that was created by those who live white, middle to upper class lifestyles and therefore have obtained the cultural capital described by Bourdieu (1986). Moreover, most schools mirror society's favorability toward the cultural capital of the white upper and middle classes (Anyon, 1980). Some of the reasons for this evident lack of engagement that is affecting achievement and academic attainment are brought up by scholars like Anzaldua (1990), Solorzano (1997), Ladson-Billings (2006), and Yosso (2005), who contend that the cultural wealth of students of color is not valued, nor is it rewarded in the current education system. For this reason, students of color in general do not engage with or excel in school settings. This is further supported by research that critiques and brings to light the societal constructs in place (including schooling) that continue to perpetuate a system that mostly benefits the wealthy and white through hegemonic ideology and institutional racism (Anyon, 1980; Kantor, 1991; Solorzano, 1997). Kantor (1991), clearly demonstrates how most of the policy in education that was created in the 1960's was based on the notions of the *culture of poverty*, thus laying the foundation for curriculum, intervention programs, pedagogy, and overall approach to underachieving students, all of which continue to deeply impact our educational approaches and policies.

Many of the policies that inhibit true school engagement for students of color are racialized in nature and in practice. Deficit thinking, for instance, is prevalent in our educational system, as evidenced by the access gaps that demonstrate substantially lower

college access rates for students of color, higher dropout rates, lower college completion rates, and undeniable barriers to innovative and responsive approaches (Cammarota, 2014; Covarrubias, 2017). Many of these access and achievement gaps are due to our inequitable funding system, as well as a political system that blatantly rejects culturally responsive and informed approaches such as the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program in Arizona, and other asset-based community/culturally responsive programs that demonstrate obvious benefits and or positive outcomes for students of color (Cammarota, 2014; Covarrubias, 2017; Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). The way that we standardize education for all students without considering ways to make the content relevant and appealing to students and communities of color is yet another example of how our education system fails to acknowledge different forms of capital and wealth (Solorzano, 1997). Racialized assumptions about Communities of Color most often lead schools to default to the banking method of education critiqued by Paulo Freire (1973), whereby teachers and educators have all of the knowledge and students are mere objects that acquire knowledge from them. Moreover, the education system in the U.S. works from the aforementioned deficit assumptions and structures ways to help disadvantaged or at-risk students (all assumptions that blame students of color for their own lack of achievement are rooted in deficit thinking), since their background, culture, language, and class has left them without the needed knowledge, social skills, abilities, and cultural capital (Valenzuela, 1999). Our system of education continues to marginalize students of color in order to (or as a byproduct of ideologies held by those currently or historically in power) replicate the maintenance of power and wealth with the already wealthy,

privileged, and mainly all white, as is demonstrated by Anyon's seminal research (1980, 1981), whereby she demonstrates how schools operate differently based on the makeup of the social class of the student body. Students that were more affluent engaged in critical thinking, critiquing society, and in developing skills that would ensure their success in careers that would render higher prominence and wealth. This compared to schools where the majority of students came from poor households and where the education granted revolved around developing basic rote skills required for lower paying jobs (Anyon, 1980; Anyon, 1981). Anyon's study made it clear just how different schools were in curriculum, setup, and conception of knowledge, depending on the social class of the group of students that attended, thus reproducing the social tensions and conflicts of the larger society. This study suggests that there are class conflicts in educational knowledge and its distribution. Class conflict can be seen in the struggle to impose the knowledge of powerful groups on the working class, in student resistance, and in the contradictions within and between school knowledge and its economic and personal values (Anyon, 1980). In addition to Anyon's study, Loewen (2008) also demonstrates how our school curriculum is often filled with lies or half-truths regarding historical events and or figures. Loewen (2008) demonstrates how the history books published in the US often omit documented facts about how many historical figures were racist, yet still revered by our society. This is due in part to the way that we have chosen to document history and then teach it in our public schools. Both the acknowledgement of schooling being a process that has and continues to marginalize and maintain the status quo, as well as the acknowledgement of how curriculum in the United States has

historically omitted the contribution of people of color and has failed to incorporate and value the linguistic and cultural assets of students of color as a way to engage them, leads me to further examining other pedagogical approaches and efforts by teachers and scholars that are working to provide educational opportunities to students of color.

I focused this study on exploring how I (the principal of a school), along with teachers, can develop collective critical consciousness and develop teacher competencies regarding culturally responsive pedagogy, by engaging in monthly praxis circles as a way to develop teachers' disposition for implementing Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) informed pedagogy.

The research questions guiding the study are:

RQ1: What is the impact of engaging teachers in Culturally Responsive Teacher Development?

RQ2: How does Culturally Responsive Teacher Development impact teacher pedagogy?

The study followed a participatory action methodological approach, as the teachers and I focused on co-constructing meaning and knowledge, and decided on areas of study and actions that we took using Freire's praxis principles (Freire, 1973). I used qualitative methods in studying the effects of the praxis meetings on teachers' shifts toward building collective critical consciousness, and on the impact that this had on teacher pedagogy. I was a participant observer (Anderson, 2007) and kept a reflexive journal to capture, document, and reflect on process, collective decisions, and narrative description of participants' engagement and development of critical consciousness. Additionally, I interviewed all participants during the beginning and towards the end of the study, as

well as tracked the shifts in their critical consciousness and the impact that this has on their dispositions toward CCW informed pedagogy. This study sheds light on the process of engaging educators (teachers and administrators) in praxis efforts, using dialogue as a conduit to develop collective critical consciousness that can impact teachers' dispositions toward CCW informed pedagogy that has been shown to lead to greater academic engagement and success for Latino students.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

As indicated previously, the issues and inequities that directly affect students of color in our educational system are many. Furthermore, they deeply impede engagement, access, and success in school. Civil rights data on education in the U.S. (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2014) indicates the following in terms of access to advanced courses:

- More than half of all high schools do not offer calculus, four in ten do not offer physics, more than one in four do not offer chemistry, and more than one in five do not offer Algebra II, which is considered a gateway class for success in college.
- By many measures, some student groups are more likely than others to miss out on these opportunities:
 - Only a third of high schools with high black and Latino enrollments offer calculus, compared to 56 percent of those that serve low numbers of black and Latino students.
 - Less than half the high schools with high black and Latino enrollments offer physics, while two in three high schools that have low numbers of black and Latino student offer physics.
 - English learners have disproportionately low participation rates in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs. While English learners are 11% of all students in schools offering GATE programs, fewer than 3% of GATE students nationwide are English learners.

- Black and Latino students also participate at lower rates in GATE programs. Although Black and Latino students make up 42 percent of students enrolled in schools that offer GATE programs, they are only 28 percent of the students who participate in those programs.

One of the proposed solutions to engaging students of color is to employ culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) brings in the notion that all communities (including communities of color) have their own cultural wealth that should be acknowledged as such, and that this cultural wealth should also be used as a starting point for teaching and learning (Yosso, 2005). Before exploring and analyzing CRP as an approach that ensures student engagement, learning through critical thinking, and development in social justice issues through questioning the status quo and thinking of ways to organize and contend institutionalized approaches that minoritize [individuals from racially oppressed communities that have been marginalized both legally and discursively] (Billings, 1995; Khalifa, 2016), teachers and educators need to develop a critical consciousness as to the social, institutional, educational, and political ideologies, policies, and practices that silence, invalidate, minoritize, and dehumanize students of color, particularly immigrant origin Latinx students in the United States. Research in developing critical consciousness with teachers is mostly limited to teacher education programs and rarely depicts the way that an administrator can facilitate a process by which to do this. The following section will cover some of the ideologies, theories, practices, and other barriers that stifle the overall success of Latinx students, all of which are deeply entrenched in the current schooling system in the United States.

Deficit Thinking

Students of color are often marginalized, subjected to institutional racism, and for the most part, are underachieving when it comes to state tests, graduation rates, and college acceptance and completion rates (Gonzales, 2011; KewalRamani, 2007; Kohler, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Valdes, 1997). As previously mentioned, in 2005 only 12% of Hispanics age 25 years and older had received a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 17.7% of Blacks and 30.5% of comparable Whites (Kohler, 2007). The cohort outcome data for California (2016), also demonstrates that a lot of Latinx students are being pushed out of high school and not graduating. For instance, more than 48,000 students Latinx students in 2010 and over 29,000 in 2016 did not graduate high school (although marked improvement is evident, the rates for Latinx students continue to be higher than most other races). Notwithstanding the clear difference in achievement for students of color, many educators and scholars (as well as most current teachers and educators) have traditionally blamed the students, families, and communities for these realities, a term and theory known as *deficit thinking* (Valencia, 1997). Deficit thinking plagues our education system because it portrays students and families of color as being at fault for poor academic performance, this being based on the notion that communities of color do not value nor support students in education, and on the notion that students of color do not have the competencies or capital/knowledge base required to be successful in schools. Blaming students and communities of color has not led to any improvement for students of color in the United States. Many examples of the way deficit thinking impacts students of color can be seen in the year-to-year data that is gathered at the local,

state, and national levels. Previously cited are many data points that demonstrate the persisting achievement gaps for elementary through high school students (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2016; Hemphill, 2011; Valencia, 1997), yet deficit thinking is also evident in the data through the suspension and expulsion rates in California, which clearly shows Latinos being suspended and expelled at substantially higher rates than any other race or ethnicity. The latest California civil rights data from 2014 indicates that Latinos (53.3% of total school-aged population) made up 56.3% of all one-time suspensions, 53.5% of students with more than one suspension, and 52.1% of general education students that are expelled (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2016). On the other hand, white students made up 25% of the student population and accounted for 22% or lower on all three metrics of suspensions and expulsion (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2016). Although the aforementioned data points are close to population totals, I do believe they are significant (in terms of the amount of students being affected) to consider, and data on suspensions due to willful defiance continues to disproportionately affect Latinx students; 54% of suspensions for Latinx students were for willful defiance during the 2012-13 school year (Frey, 2015). White and Black populations had 20% and 19% suspension rates, respectively, for willful defiance during the same 2012-13 school year (Frey, 2015). These data points and comparisons demonstrate that Latinx students are more likely to be suspended for willful defiance actions or attitudes, a label or attitude (willful defiance) that has been scrutinized due to its vagueness and difficulty to identify and since it has disproportionately affected students of color (Frey, 2015).

Examples of the way that the system blames students include labels that are used to describe minoritized populations including ELL English language learners (rather than bilingual students), LEP limited English proficient, LTELs long term English language learners (Martinez, 2018). Rather than blame students and families, other more progressive educators have critiqued the educational system and society to provide the necessary contextual insight into the institutionalized practices that have negatively impacted the educational system and society as a whole for so many years (Anyon, 1980; Yosso, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Solorzano, 1997; Berliner, 2014).

Institutionalized and Societal Barriers that Minoritize

The term minoritized is used to describe “individuals from racially oppressed communities that have been marginalized both legally and discursively because of their non-dominant race, ethnicity, religion, language, or citizenship (Khalifa, 2016, p.4).” As the term implies, institutional practices and societal paradigms have a significant marginalization effect on the overall achievement for students of color and other groups in the United States. This effect is clearly seen in the lack of achievement data in elementary and high schools that I have already cited, as well as in college-going and completion rates that demonstrate how students of color are not reaching BA/BS degrees, all of which contribute to under-qualified communities for the workforce (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2016; Kohler, 2007; Valencia, 1997). Roberto G. Gonzales’ (2011) work further supports this claim by depicting many of the issues plaguing our school systems as it perpetuates opportunity and promise for some, yet almost the opposite for others. Gonzales found that Latinx 1.5 generation undocumented youth in US schools

transition from protected status to having to navigate and or learn to be “Illegal,” and depicts the many real and difficult challenges that students must face as they transition to losing rights or protection as a result of leaving school and becoming adults.

Furthermore, he shows the lack of educational attainment experienced by undocumented students and provides actual accounts of the way that undocumented immigrants must navigate spaces without much protection and/or rights after they finish or leave school.

Bourdieu helps to shed light on some of the reasons behind our societal structure by interrogating the notion of capital. This notion explains how one is granted opportunities, power, and social mobility, amongst many other forms of capital. Reflecting on historical practices that have highly favored white men and women, Bourdieu analyzes the types of capital that are most recognized and useful in society, as well as most likely to be passed on from one generation to the next (Bourdieu, 2011; Anyon, 1980).

Bourdieu describes the forms of capital that render influence, prominence, and wealth in a western society, all of which contribute to one’s ability to succeed in school, succeed in college, and then attain a good career. Although Bourdieu accurately provides us with reasons why some are successful and clearly depicts what western society values, he fails to acknowledge that there are other forms of capital that exist (Bourdieu, 2011). Yosso, on the other hand, contributes to the field while also challenging deficit thinking by positing that there are other types of capital that should be acknowledged and valued in society and in education in order to truly engage all students and members of our diverse society (Yosso, 2005). Before further exploring Yosso’s theory on community cultural wealth, in addition to the work by Gonzalez, it is imperative to explore Critical Race

Theory as it is used by Yosso, since it acts as a starting point in developing the need and framework for community cultural wealth. Furthermore, the tenets of critical race theory are aligned with the process of developing critical consciousness, especially with regard to problematizing racial inequality in schools in the US.

Critical Race Theory

Yosso (2005) defines Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education as, “a framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses.” She also reminds us of Freire’s comments on the contradictory nature of education, since it has the potential to emancipate and empower, yet more often than not contributes to oppressing and marginalizing people of color (Freire, 1973).

Acknowledging this, CRT in education shifts the focus and goal back to the liberatory potential of schooling (Freire, 1973; Hooks, 2014). Daniel Solorzano (2001) identified the following five tenets of CRT in education, all of which serve as a theoretical foundation that informs CRP, while also shedding light on other inequities in our society and schooling system in order to critique, problematize, and engage in praxis (Freire, 1999).

1. *The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination.* CRT acknowledges that race and racism are central, endemic, permanent and are fundamental to defining how US society functions. CRT also acknowledges the racial subordination that is based on gender, class, immigration status, phenotype, accent and sexuality (Yosso, 2005).
2. *The challenge to dominant ideology.* CRT acknowledges and challenges White privilege in order to refute the claims that the education system makes toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity. CRT challenges the notions of ‘neutral’ and or ‘objective’ research or researchers and calls out deficit-informed research that ignores the stories and accounts of People of Color (Yosso, 2005; Delgado Bernal, 1998). CRT challenges that these

biased claims camouflage self-interest, power and the privilege of the dominant group in the US (Yosso, 2005; Solórzano, 1997).

3. *The commitment to social justice.* CRT is committed to social justice and the elimination of racism. The critical race theorist acknowledges the struggle toward the abolition of racism is also connected to the broader goal of ending all forms of subordination including, gender, class, and sexual orientation (Solorzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005).
4. *The centrality of experiential knowledge.* CRT draws on the lived experiences of People of Color by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, *cuentos*, *testimonios*, chronicles and narratives (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005). Including such methods is essential to CRT, being that including the lived experiential knowledge of People of Color is central and critical to understanding and teaching about racial subordination (Yosso, 2005).
5. *The transdisciplinary perspective.* CRT spans to other fields of study with the purpose of analyzing race and racism from historical and contemporary contexts. CRT draws on scholarship from ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, psychology, film theatre, and others (Yosso, 2005).

Tara Yosso (2005) applies CRT to the field of education as a framework that can be used to critically analyze how race and racism permeate social structures and the schooling system, both of which have the effect of minoritizing students of color and ensuring that the status quo is maintained. Yosso reminds us that while the schooling system has the potential to emancipate and empower, it often serves to perpetuate an inequitable system that replicates social structures and ideologies. Others like Freire (2000) and Hooks (2014), further assert that education has the potential for liberation when coupled with CRT and/or problem posing pedagogy; pedagogy that requires critical consciousness. Yosso (2005) goes on to explain how CRT exposes deficit thinking as a contemporary form of racism in US schools. Deficit thinking and deficit ideologies take the position that students of color and their families are at fault for poor academic performance, being that students enter schools without the normative cultural knowledge and skills required, while also having parents that neither value, nor support their child's

education (Yosso, 2005). Furthering her points, Yosso uses CRT to validate other forms of cultural wealth that should be acknowledged and present in classrooms all over California, where the majority of school-aged children are students of color.

Community Cultural Wealth

One of the main theoretical contributions to the educational field connected to CRT is the notion of community cultural wealth, as can be gathered from the fourth tenant listed above. This tenant speaks to the importance of experiential knowledge, which is also foundational to CRP, as it helps practitioners to more deeply understand why there is a need to recognize and include students' culture and community knowledge and strengths. Community cultural wealth is imperative to CRP because it brings forth, identifies, and emphasizes the many aspects of wealth found in communities of color; an essential factor in an educator's pedagogical outlook especially in the context of communities of color (Burciaga 2012; Yosso, 2005). Community cultural wealth also directly negates and contends deficit thinking by focusing on the capital accumulated by people of color as a starting point for education, rather than on the assumption that the education system is fair and works, while also blaming those that are not succeeding (Yosso, 2005). Aspects of community and cultural wealth can be described as other forms of capital that are not traditionally included in Bourdieuean cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 2011). They can also be conceptualized as additional aspects of wealth within cultural capital as defined by Bourdieu. Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital is inextricably connected with having the ability to convert these forms of capital to economic capital. Yosso's work in bringing forward the notion and importance of community cultural wealth takes

Bourdieu's theory and calls for a new interpretation of cultural wealth that encompasses communities of color, while also valuing their culture and community knowledge to the extent that it can be considered essential and valuable and thus, convertible to economic and social capital. Yosso identifies six forms of capital that are dynamic and built on one another. All of these come together to form Community Cultural Wealth for people of color (Yosso, 2005). The six forms of capital include:

1. Aspirational capital: the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the midst of real or perceived barriers
2. Linguistic capital: the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style
3. Familial capital: cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition
4. Social capital: networks of people and community resources
5. Navigational capital: skills of maneuvering through social institutions
6. Resistant capital: knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality

Having a thorough understanding of community cultural wealth as an extension of CRT is especially important in the public school setting and is essential if teachers are to be effective at transitioning to CRP, since they will have to find ways to recognize and incorporate the richness and wealth of students' own culture, family, language, and experiences into the classroom, in order to engage them deeply. This all being foundational to this study and research that revolves around teachers engaging students through relevant curriculum and through building relationships, both of which cannot be achieved at high levels if the teacher doesn't first develop the critical consciousness to understand student experiences and opportunity gaps that they have encountered, and believe that students already possess community and cultural wealth that should be used to validate and engage students in learning. Some examples of this include teachers that

intentionally bring other languages into the classroom as a way to validate linguistic capital in students and families (Yosso, 2005). Teachers sometimes bring in parents that speak a second language to not only validate other languages, but also to validate the linguistic wealth in otherwise marginalized populations. Teachers can also validate students' familial capital by having them engage in positive family depictions and values that students have learned from parents as well as *primos/as* (cousins) and *tio/as* (uncles and aunts). It is also worth noting that the concept of community cultural wealth draws a parallel with Luis Moll and Norma Gonzalez's work on Funds of Knowledge that also alludes to very similar pedagogical implications.

Funds of Knowledge

The overall premise behind Funds of Knowledge is that every learner has knowledge, is competent as a result of their knowledge, and that their knowledge comes from their life experiences in community and/or with family (Gonzalez, 2013). It is clearly evident through this description that both Funds of Knowledge and Community Cultural Wealth are based on the belief that students of color carry with them valuable assets, and both directly influence the notions and pedagogical practices behind CRP. Gonzalez and Moll (2013) go on to describe how teachers and anthropologists teamed up in order to conduct home visits with the intent of discovering Funds of Knowledge within the household (i.e. parents care for children through dinner dynamics, uncles and aunts participating in child rearing and in mentor roles, and student interests stemming from said household funds of knowledge). Once the teachers and anthropologists discovered these funds, they were able to work together in teams in order to build curricular units that were based on them.

The research in terms of Funds of Knowledge provides a possible approach to put CRP into practice and, by effect, to act on the premises behind community cultural wealth.

The Funds of Knowledge research directly informs this study since it points to ways that teachers can learn from students and their families' knowledge as a way to inform curricular units and decisions that teachers can make in order to make student learning relevant.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy can be described as “a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement, but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools perpetuate” (Ladson-Billings, 1995 p. 469). Ladson-Billings (1995) proposes that CRP:

1. Produces students that achieve academically
2. Produces students who demonstrate cultural competence
3. Develops students who understand and can critique the existing social order

An aspect of CRP is the importance for students to understand social inequities and to critique the existing social order, so that they can become positive agents of change for their community. To reiterate, CRP brings in this aspect directly from tenet two, the challenge to dominant ideology, and tenet three, commitment for social justice, in the CRT educational framework (Yosso, 2005). There is a well-established need in CRT to challenge the status quo in order to bring about the social changes that will make society more equitable. In CRP, the teacher is tasked with bringing this type of awareness to students through curricular units, while also helping them understand and critique inequities. The teacher also helps students to think critically about potential solutions or

changes that must be put into place. An example of a CRP unit is well described in Ladson-Billings' *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* (1995). The unit encourages students to explore zoning laws in their city in order to identify the problem of “dry,” as opposed to “wet” zones. In this particular city, dry zones had ordinances against liquor stores, whereas wet zones allowed for them. Students were able to understand how these zoning laws negatively affected their community and then plan a strategy for exposing the inequity to the community and to city officials (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students that engaged in this unit were clearly able to relate to the content at hand since it had to do with their own city. Not only did students relate to the content, but they were also able to acknowledge an inequity and critique it at a deep level, while at the same time developing ways to expose the inequity and propose ways to bring about change. Such units bring forth another form of deep relevance that can be implemented and developed by teachers if the teachers themselves are open to exploring inequities that are present within the community that they serve and teach. Students also benefit greatly from developing academic skills in critiquing, collaborating, creativity, and writing, as well as designing, and from developing skills that will help them advocate for themselves and their communities; skills that are definitely valued in college campuses that can also transfer to professional careers. Skills addressed in CRP are also closely aligned to many of the foundational and integral skills identified within the Common Core state standards that are known as the 4 Cs: communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking (Roekel, 2010). Not only is CRP engaging for students of color, it also ensures that students are engaging in developing Common Core

aligned skills and competencies that are based on ensuring readiness for college and careers of the future (Roekel, 2010).

Student Engagement and Performance as it Relates to CRP

Although the notion of ranking states, schools, and students based on a one time summative yearly test is not supported by current relevant research (Berliner, 1995; Glass, 2008) as being a good representation of school quality due to the many exogenous variables that affect student performance (Berliner, 2014), policies and funding are and will continue to be tied to student achievement as represented by assessments. Amidst the many factors that affect student performance on tests, I will highlight and reference a few different studies that have indicated positive correlations between CRP and student achievement. Ladson-Billings (1995) conducted a study following eight inner-city teachers, which found that teachers utilizing CRP were able to make sure students performed at higher levels than their district counterparts. Additionally, and equally as important, she mentions that through classroom observations, she was able to identify many other student achievements in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, computing, and problem solving (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Even though Ladson-Billings' study focused on a small sample of teachers and students, her conclusions on student achievement are significant because she clearly engaged in an in depth look at pedagogy, teacher characteristics, and provided a qualitative analysis in terms of student achievement. A second example of CRP that analyzes the impacts on student success in a quantitative manner is in the research on the Mexican American studies (MAS) program in Arizona.

Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) engaged in an effort to make curriculum more culturally relevant by engaging in MAS. MAS attempts to produce students that achieve academically, are culturally competent, and understand and critique the social order. MAS customized CRP for the large Mexican-American community in Arizona, and achieved the goal of being culturally relevant and abiding by the major tenets or aspects of CRP and critical pedagogy (Camarrota, 2014). In 2012, TUSD engaged in an empirical study in order to identify and quantify student success for the 1,587 students that participated in at least one year of MAS. The results of this empirical study showed (for the most part), a significant correlation between students taking one year of MAS and student academic achievement; as compared to other peers not participating in MAS within the same school. The following are some of the data points that were statistically significant:

For the 2011 cohort, MAS students were 101 percent more likely to pass their AIMS Reading test, and 2008 MAS students were 168 percent more likely to pass than were non-MAS students. In the 2008 and 2009 cohorts, MAS students were 144 percent and 96 percent more likely to pass the AIMS Math than non-MAS students. (Hawley, 2012, p. 5)

The impact on graduation rates was even more significant:

MAS participation was a significant, positive predictor of graduation for three of the four cohorts, and ranged from MAS students being 46 percent more likely to graduate (2011) to 150 percent more likely than non-MAS students to graduate (2008). MAS students in 2011 were 46 percent more likely to graduate from high school. (Hawley, 2012, p. 6)

Both examples here demonstrate how CRP and related approaches like MAS can clearly have a positive impact on student achievement. This is particularly well documented for students of color that have been underserved in the traditional schooling

system. The examples here provide compelling student performance data that shows how students of color engaged by CRP out-performed district counterparts in many areas including: summative tests, development of writing and critical thinking skills, graduation rates, speaking skills, and computing skills. Although context, teachers, and many other variables were different in both examples, students demonstrated elevated levels of skill attainment and performance on tests and grades. The only real similarity in both cases was the culturally relevant and affirming pedagogy that was employed by teachers, which included a focus on: producing students that achieve academically, producing students who demonstrate cultural competence, and developing students who understand and can critique the existing social order.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP)

More recently the work in CRP has led to a new conception of relevant pedagogy termed Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) (Paris, 2012). Paris questions if the research and practices that are being produced under the umbrella of cultural relevance and responsiveness are indeed ensuring maintenance of the language and cultures of African-American, Latinx, Indigenous Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islander Americans, or other long standing and newcomer communities in our classrooms. He also asks the question if the very term “relevant” is descriptive of what we are after in teaching and learning in a pluralistic society. Furthermore, Paris argues that policies and practices that push a monocultural and monolingual society are based on white, middle-class norms of language and cultural bias, and that such climate has created the need for equally explicit resistances that embrace cultural pluralistic and cultural equality

(Paris, 2012). Though Paris does not offer a specific curriculum that embodies the specifics of his work, he does provide key ideas that may help the field develop its understanding of how culture might be sustained, extended, and viewed as richness in a pluralistic society. Ladson-Billings (2014), further acknowledged the importance of continuing to grow in the conception of theory and practice as well as pedagogy. She explains, “If we stop growing, we will die, and, more importantly, our students will wither and die in our presence” (Ladson-Billings, pp 76, 2014). Her stance here is a commendation to furthering the work that she initiated with CRP and extending it toward CSP, as described by Paris (2012). As she engages in supporting CSP, she reminds the field of the elements in CRP that have often fallen by the wayside in teacher practice, as observed by her and others. She emphasizes how central it is for teacher conception to include an understanding that students must be viewed as subjects in their classrooms, rather than mere objects. She also views CSP as the CRP remix that continues to promote historically marginalized students as subjects in the instructional process, so that they may be “repositioned into a place of normativity” (Ladson-Billings, pp 76, 2014). Additionally, she applauds CSP since it also keeps sociopolitical consciousness at the forefront, and includes the importance of engaging students in critiquing policies and practices (the status quo) that may have an impact on them and/or on their community. Both of these elements are often left out of CRP (as it is being promoted by districts and or practiced across the nation), yet these elements are foundational to the conception of CRP, and CSP reminds and further challenges the field as to their importance (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012).

Pedagogy of Caring

Another important element of this study is one of the aspects of CRP for Ethnic Studies, which focuses on building relationships and creating caring academic environments where student experiences, community cultural wealth, and funds of knowledge are used as a starting point for learning (Kohl, 1994; Tintiangco-Cubales, 2014). Similarly, Valenzuela (2010) draws a distinction between aesthetic caring that focuses solely on an instructional relationship between pupil and teacher (a superficial or standardized approach to caring), and authentic caring that includes the notion of fully accepting a student as a whole person including culture, language, and family values. This calls for educators to embrace what is referred to as *educación* in the Latinx community and involves elements of pedagogy and academics, yet is founded on principles as to how one should live in the world including moral, social and personal values that serve as a foundation for all learning (Valenzuela, 2010). Valenzuela goes on to describe in detail how this type of a caring relationship can help ensure that students (especially of immigrant origin and English language learners) feel validated and welcomed into a school community (Valenzuela, 2010). Valenzuela (2010) also challenges educators to think about authentic caring as an approach that ceases to subtract students' cultural identity and instead, works to reverse the effects of subtractive or deficit ideologies and pedagogy. This type of caring pedagogy that underlies the research and literature in CRP and Yosso's work on community cultural wealth is necessary for setting the right type of environment for student learning. Moreover, Tintiangco-Cubales (2014) provides further clarity regarding CRP, and not only acknowledges the importance

of the CRP and CSP tenets of critiquing systems of oppression, as well as centering students' culture and experiences in teaching, but also emphasizes and includes the importance of building caring classroom communities that support students' development in learning and in healing when acknowledging oppressive systems that have minoritized their communities. This study not only focused on relevant pedagogy and instruction, but also looked at and explored the ways that teachers build relationships with students, as being integral to CRP and ethnic studies pedagogy (Tintiango-Cubales, 2014).

Barriers to CRP

Funding barriers. Many barriers exist that make implementing CRP very difficult. One clear barrier is the limited funding available for educating poor communities of color (Yinger, 2004). States use various funding models with the intent to bring about equity in funding, yet most (if not all) fail at actually doing this effectively. In most states, amidst lawsuits, political movements, and or parent protests, communities and districts made up of middle to upper class populations end up with higher funding allocations (per pupil) than do poor communities (Kirst, 2009; Yinger, 2004). This is due to many political and socially constructed methods including property taxes, bond measures, and interest groups that consistently end up benefiting middle to upper class communities, even when theories of wealth neutrality and/or access equality are guiding legislation (Yinger, 2004). This is a significant impediment to CRP being that another challenge to implementing such pedagogy is teacher training, and development, both of which require funding and resource allocation. Teacher training and development is a costly effort that is in direct competition with other state and federal initiatives and mandates such as

value-added assessments, standardized curriculum, and or standardized tests; all of which combined with assessment and curriculum companies take up most of the time and attention away from authentically addressing engagement and responsiveness for students of color (Berliner, 2014). Some teachers may be exposed to training on being culturally sensitive and/or inclusive, yet the training is superficial in nature and lacks the potential to authentically engage students of color (Bartolome, 1993; Brown, 2013; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This type of superficial training moves teachers to celebrate cultural holidays, decorate classrooms with posters or realia from diverse cultures, and or include Spanish names in books, yet is only one small step toward employing CRP (Bartolome, 1993; Brown, 2013; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The outcome is a teaching force that is ill prepared to effectively and authentically engage Latinx students.

Political barriers. Although the MAS data seems to thoroughly support the claim that CRP (in this case represented by MAS), if implemented at a high level, can be correlated to student success in terms of graduation rates and performance on standardized tests; politicians in the state proposed and made sure House Bill 2281 was passed, thereby banning MAS in the Tucson Unified School District (Bill, A. H. 2281 (2010)). The biggest and most absurd obstacle to CRP, as clearly demonstrated by House Bill 2281 in Arizona, is the blatant political schemes intended to blockade efforts that can translate into better schooling and higher success for poor, historically marginalized, students of color. In Arizona, the state-sponsored bill (2281) ensured that CRP, in the form of MAS, was against the law. The bill made statements that are in direct opposition to the previously mentioned goals of CRP, and specifically refuted any form of cultural

relevance from being used in a school setting. Additionally, the bill was culturally insensitive as it refuted and outlawed some of the elements of Moll's Funds of Knowledge, and Yosso's 6 forms of capital (community cultural wealth), which emphasize notions of team, family, and culture; notions that cannot be separated from the lived experiences of people in the U.S. (Gonzalez, 2013; Yosso, 2005). Essentially, the white conservative politicians in Arizona found a way to make sure, by law, that the only cultural capital that is valued in schools will continue to be the capital dictated by the upper and middle white classes of society. This bill ensures that the status quo in terms of academic achievement and then economic opportunity remain intact. The barrier of political power is the most difficult to overcome because the system (in this case, Arizona), does not allow (is against the law) for most (if not all) of the elements proposed by CRP. Contending with limited funding and/or teacher training when implementing CRP is not even an option in Arizona due to state laws. Although the MAS data seems to thoroughly support the claim that CRP (in this case represented by MAS), if implemented at a high level, it can be correlated to student success in terms of graduation rates, and performance on standardized tests; however, politicians in the state made sure Bill 2281 was passed in order to ban MAS in the Tucson Unified School District (Bill, A. H. 2281 (2010)).

Although this type of political intrusion is not the case in most other states, it is important to depict how politicians can continue to promote the traditional modes of education that exclude other forms of capital and cultures. In California, there are pockets where ethnic studies is promoted and offered to some students, yet many of those

programs are also the first to be threatened or dropped whenever funding cuts are necessary, as was recently demonstrated at San Francisco State University, the first university to offer an ethnic studies major (Flaherty, 2016).

Aspects of Critical Leadership

For Freire, dialogue constitutes a way of knowing and being rather than a tactic or skill to be used to persuade others. Our dialogical engagements, then, must be understood not merely as individual exchanges but collective processes from whence we are able to both know and act upon our world in order to change it. (Darder, 2016, p. 61)

The prior quote brings forward Freire's notion of dialogue as a conduit for true education that calls for collectively making meaning of the world and society, in order to then act upon it with equity and social justice as a goal. I use this as a way to frame the following section on critical leadership in education.

Conscientization

Amidst the real barriers to CRP, Funds of Knowledge, Community Cultural Wealth, and other efforts and theories that have proven to promote success for students of color, many educators are still committed to bringing about equity and positive change for the students of color who are becoming the majority of students in our public education system. As explored in the previous sections, CRP and similar pedagogical approaches call for teachers to have certain qualities and ideologies that are anti-deficit thinking (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Freire brings forward the notion of critical consciousness as a precursor to true teaching and learning. He defined critical consciousness as an educational and sociopolitical tool that engages learners in questioning the nature of their historical and social situation (Freire, 2000). His call was to develop this consciousness

in students so that they could become subjects in the world (and in the classroom), rather than mere objects of the world (Freire, 2005). As Freire posits, subjects work collectively to read the world and to change aspects of it through focused and collaborative efforts (Freire, 1973, p.7). In order to develop a skill or ability, as well as ideology in someone, we know that one (the teacher or leader) must have acquired that skill or ability beforehand. For this reason, it is important as an educational leader to also engage in work to develop critical consciousness with teachers as an imperative first step on the path to critically engaging students of color through culturally relevant or culturally sustaining pedagogy in the United States (Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Freire and Bartolomé remind us that focusing on methods in teaching alone, in order to engage students of color or marginalized communities will not work since these methods are based on ideologies (ideological errors) that often did not have particular communities and/or students in mind (Bartolome, 1994; Freire, 1973). Bartolome clearly provides evidence of the “methods fetish,” that is often detrimental to the teaching profession as it moves teachers to become a conduit for learning, similar to the banking method described by Freire, rather than empowering teachers to use their ideologies, skills, pedagogy to engage students (Bartolome, 1994). Furthermore, focusing on methods instead of teacher pedagogy and ideology, negates the fact that schooling and teaching are both political acts whereby one is either perpetuating societal, racial, gendered, inequalities, or working to dismantle one or some of these (Anyon, 1981; Bartolome, 1994; Freire, 1973).

Education, as Freire and Bartolome explain, is a political act and educators cannot be silent, or bystanders in the process (Bartolome, 1994; Freire, 2005). Educators that are

silent, as previously stated in this review of the literature, often perpetuate societal and schooling issues in inequity by acting on deficit ideologies about students of color; ideologies that must be challenged and changed especially in the case of teachers that will be engaging with predominantly minoritized students of color. For this reason, it is important to listen to Freire's notion of developing critical consciousness, first and foremost in educators and teachers in order to ensure that education is being seen as a liberatory process by which the educators and the students learn together in order to reflect critically and enact change within the person and in communities (Freire, 2005). This process begins, however, with the teachers and educators who set the example and tone for the school climate and classrooms. School leaders and administrators are charged with creating and maintaining school climates that are inclusive and responsive to all students and therefore should be central in finding ways to develop spaces that will help promote critical consciousness in order to bring about true social justice change in schools. As such, teachers must be helped and engaged to understand the need behind a social justice-oriented school climate, in order to promote a sense of urgency that can spark and sustain social justice efforts.

Dialogue as a Conduit Toward Praxis

Dialogue aims at making sure all people involved authentically listen to one another and build trust in organizations and or community meetings. The task of developing a critical consciousness through exploration of critical literature and through the exploration of lived experiences is best accomplished through dialogue among teachers, administrators, and school staff. Using dialogue as a means to engage in this effort

ensures that all voices are heard and that power dynamics are minimized since all participants have equal time to share during dialogue and praxis meetings. Dialogue helps to make sure all people involved authentically listen to one another and build trust in organizations and/or community meetings (Schein, 1993). This type of convening and communicating is not traditionally found in organizations and schools, yet it has the potential to transform the meaning-making and decision-making process, and the way that leaders hold power, in order to truly create spaces whereby critical praxis is at the center and whereby teachers have authentic say as to how to further engage students of color in order to ensure vested learning (Freire, 1973; Schein, 1993). The dialogue approach ensures that all participants have equal voice, and that no one participant has power over another. It also focuses on authentically listening to one another. Such an approach was used in this study so that the time together would be fruitful in listening to one another and in co-constructing meaning and action steps through praxis. Dialogue calls for building trust, understanding each other's stories or situations, thereby appeasing fears and it is a viable path to building empathy and trust, and is even more powerful when teams and groups engage in this manner as a means to address issues via praxis (Darder, 2016; Freire, 1973, Ladson-Billings, 1995). Schein (1993) further supports the notion of dialogue by describing organizations that are not adept at engaging staff and are in turn not effective in moving initiatives forward and/or capitalizing on the collective knowledge and ideas of staff. Druskat (2001) amplifies the importance of dialogue through his model of team effectiveness, whereby he asserts that a group's emotional intelligence will promote trust, identity, and efficacy, which will in turn promote

participation, cooperation, and collaboration, all of which will equate to better decisions, more creative solutions, and higher productivity. Schein (1993) explains that the practices of dialogue provide space for participants to truly listen to each other without debating or arguing, with the ultimate goal of finding common ground and agreement. Ultimately, the idea here is to develop a culture of trust where all of the staff members are contributing members of the team, all of whom are vested and interested in the betterment of the organization and the people that are served through it. Dialogue in critical leadership should not only bring teams together, promote trust and collective communication, but also lead to praxis so as not to merely create a “feel good” space for sharing (Freire, 2005). In praxis, we are called to engage in “a political project with the objective of dismantling oppressive structures and mechanisms prevalent both in education and society” (Freire, 1995, p. 380). These notions of critical dialogue and praxis are also supported by more recent research by Gay (2003), where she works with preservice teachers in an effort to develop their Cultural Critical Consciousness through self-reflection and reflection with others. Bartolome (2004), further supports the importance of engaging teachers in developing their critical consciousness or “political and ideological clarity,” and sees this as foundational toward engaging Mexican and/or immigrant origin students, while also moving toward, “denouncing discriminatory school and social conditions and practices” (Bartolome, 2004 p.119). Essentially, the development of critical consciousness is foundational to the ways in which teachers will enact asset-based culturally affirming pedagogy with students and the community. This can be best done by engaging teachers through dialogue so that they can reflect

individually and with one another as to the sociopolitical aspects that affect them and their school community. They can also co-develop actions informed by the newfound collective understanding.

Conclusion

CRT research demonstrates that many of the policies that inhibit true relevance and engagement for students of color are racialized in nature and in practice. Deficit thinking is prevalent in our educational system, as evidenced by the access and achievement gaps that demonstrate substantially lower college access rates for students of color, along with higher dropout rates, lower college completion rates, and undeniable barriers to innovative and responsive approaches due to our inequitable funding system, and due to a political system that is able to blatantly reject CRP informed new approaches (like MAS in Arizona) that demonstrate obvious benefits and results for students of color (Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). Additionally, these persistent gaps are maintained by our systemic schooling approaches in curriculum and instruction which have failed to shift in order to include the experiences of people of color and in doing so, have also alienated students of color and/or have produced a lack of academic and school engagement for students of color (Loewen, 2008; Valencia, 2011). Another negative effect of deficit thinking and our hyper focus on methods in education is the way that we standardize education for all communities without considering ways to make the content relevant and engaging to students and communities of color (Bartolome, 1994; Solorzano, 1997). Racialized assumptions about communities of color most often lead schools to default to the banking method of education critiqued by Paulo Freire (1973).

Moreover, the education system in the United States works from the aforementioned assumptions and structures to help disadvantaged or at-risk students, since their background, culture, language, and class has left them without the needed knowledge, social skills, abilities, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2011; Gonzalez, 2013; Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2005). Our system in education, as evidenced by the persistent achievement gaps and by the high percentages of students of color that are being suspended and not graduating high school or finishing college, is working to continue to marginalize students of color in order to replicate the maintenance of power and wealth with the already wealthy, privileged, and mainly all white. Although this is the case in most states, school districts, and schools, CCW informed pedagogy provides an alternative that has already proven to be effective with communities of color in different parts of the country. Even though success with students of color has been reported for those employing CRP and/or culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Tintiagco-Cubales, 2014) and/or culturally sustaining pedagogy (Aronson and Laughter, 2015; Paris, 2012), there is very limited research that explores how such a disposition toward CRP can be developed in teachers, especially once teachers are already working directly with students.

In order to develop the dispositions necessary for engaging students in CCW informed pedagogy, teachers need to engage in collective dialogue and deep reflection as a way to develop CCW informed ideologies and to develop their pedagogical outlook. Freire (1973) posits that educators should become co-creators of knowledge through dialogue on theory and one's epistemology (ways of knowing, or experiential knowledge); this dialogue should cause educators to problem-pose and then to find

tangible solutions for the problems and or issues that are recognized through the dialogue process. This leads us to the way that dialogue can be used in critical leadership to bring teams together, promote trust, and also to develop collective praxis steps (Freire, 2005). Bartolome (2004) further supports the importance of engaging teachers in developing their critical consciousness or “political and ideological clarity,” and sees this as foundational toward engaging Mexican and or immigrant origin students and “denouncing discriminatory school and social conditions and practices” (Bartolome, 2004 p.119). Lastly, one cannot expect teachers to engage students in culturally responsive pedagogy if they are not exposed to these ways of learning. As such, the literature around CRP, CSP, and culturally responsive pedagogy calls for engaging students in critiquing forces of oppression, in centering and accessing community cultural wealth in curriculum and instruction, and responsive pedagogy that also speaks to the importance of developing a caring community to support transformative learning that not only attends to academics but also includes social emotional and personal application for students (Aronson and Laughter, 2015; Cammarota, 2014; Covarrubias, 2017; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Tintiagco-Cubales, 2014; Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). Moreover, the development of critical consciousness through a dialogic círculo process is foundational to the ways in which teachers will enact asset-based culturally affirming pedagogy with students and the community.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

The primary focus of this qualitative study lies in understanding how teachers and a school leader can develop what I call collective critical consciousness through dialogue on critical theories and pedagogy, and through engaging in praxis steps that impact pedagogy. Developing collective critical consciousness, accessing and valuing community cultural wealth (CCW), and being intentional as to development of a caring teacher community are all essential components to Culturally Responsive Teacher Development. As demonstrated in the literature review, Culturally Responsive Teacher Development can be accomplished when a group of teachers: 1. Come together and critique the status quo or institutional forces of oppression and apply the critiques to their own context, 2. Access community cultural wealth to find ways to counter the status quo or institutional forces of oppression, and 3. Develop a caring teacher community. In order to study the co-creation of collective critical consciousness and the effects of both building shared understanding through dialogue and the way that this new consciousness may impact teacher practice, it is imperative to identify the methods that are best aligned to the focus of this study. The two guiding questions for the study are:

RQ1: What is the impact of engaging teachers in Culturally Responsive Teacher Development?

RQ2: How does Culturally Responsive Teacher Development impact teacher pedagogy?

Background of the Study

The main problem that this study intended to solve or to learn more about in order to address, has to do with the deficit ideologies exhibited by teachers and demonstrated in many school structures or practices, in this particular school community (school site of the study). This is a particular problematic issue since deficit ideologies and lack of critical consciousness lead educators to adhere to traditional educational and social ideologies that are inherently deficit oriented and racially violent toward students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2013). As the principal of the school for one year, I found that the teachers who subscribe to dominant (and as a result deficit) ideologies, often judge parents for not being interested in their child's education. They also find it difficult to engage students of color and are many times resistant to asset-based and inclusive approaches such as restorative practices/justice, authentically listening to students' perspectives, community cultural wealth, and culturally relevant pedagogy; all of these being ideologies and actions that have been well documented by various researchers committed to racial and social justice (Delgado Bernal, 2007; Duncan Andrade, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Yosso, 2005). Moreover, it is my responsibility to provide an embracing school culture and climate that promotes equity, and it is therefore my responsibility to work collaboratively with existing teachers in their own development of critical consciousness in order to embrace and engage all students, with a particular focus on students of color, being that many have already been marginalized through their schooling experiences (Solórzano, 1997), and since students of color are the majority in this school community (86% Latinx). This study focused on how a principal can work in

a dialogic and collaborative manner with teachers in order to co-create knowledge by exploring issues and developing collective critical consciousness, thereby developing a disposition to think outside of the box when engaging in teaching and learning with students of color. This study sheds light on alternative and non-dominant methods that can be employed by school leaders to promote shifts in ideology and methodology for teachers as they engage students of color.

Setting of Study

Salinas Community Charter School serves approximately 550 students, from Preschool to 6th grade, and is home to the Spanish-English dual language immersion program. All students learn subjects in English and Spanish. One-third of each class is made up of the students with English as their primary language, one-third of the students with Spanish as their primary language, and one-third of the students are bilingual. The students' language abilities are determined on a pre-assessment. The school community is made up of 473 Latino students, 33 White, 11 Black, 11 Asian, close to 6 American Indian, and the rest declined to state. Close to 65% of our population qualifies for free or reduced lunch and more than 40% of the students are English language learners. Eight of the twenty five classroom teachers at Salinas Charter are new to the field of education (first or second year) and are committed to the district's Professional Learning Community (PLC) approach that calls for data-driven inquiry cycles intended to ensure that teacher teams are reflective and responsive to students' diverse needs and academic attainment or lack thereof. Another five veteran teachers (tenured; at least three years teaching) are also committed to both the PLC approach and to innovative strategies to

support student learning. The district has provided training to teachers and administrators on the PLC process over the last two years and has emphasized teachers' creation of common goals and common formative assessments that can be used within various cycles of inquiry based on essential common core standards. This district approach to professional learning communities calls for administrators to fully engage in the various collaborative cycles of inquiry that are in place at each grade level and in PLCs that focus on relevancy of instruction, differentiation, inclusion, or other specific areas of teacher and administrator interest.

Participants were recruited to participate via an email that explained the research topic and process. This email informed participants of my role as a participant observer. Participation in the Critical Praxis Círculo and study was voluntary and participants were given plenty of time to pose questions or gain clarification as to the process before the interviews (group or individual) took place. Since the study took place in a school setting, it is important to note that other staff members that did not elect to be a part of this PLC that was studied had other PLCs to participate in. It was essential that I was the primary investigator as a participant observer, since this study had the potential to shed light on alternative and participant-led methods that can be employed by school leaders to promote a team approach for teachers. Documenting a principal's efforts to center teachers as drivers of change in this study provides the field with evidence and data on how teacher-led inquiry can be implemented to impact teachers and students in a positive way. The following section describes how dialogue was used as the primary

method when convening participating teachers in this study. The subsequent section will also cover other methodological approaches that were employed in the study.

Positionality

As the principal of the elementary school where the research was conducted, I engaged with teachers as a participant/observer of a teacher-led PLC; for purposes of this study and due to the content explored, the PLC was referred to as a Critical Praxis Círculo (CPC). This role as a PLC participant was separate and distinct from the hat that I wear as principal of the school. I recognize that my role as principal presents a potential bias for the research, in that people will participate in ways that are less natural because their principal is a partner in the room. However, the challenges to the validity and potential bias were addressed by providing other opportunities for participants to provide anonymous feedback; it was also clearly stated that once the PLC was set up and modeled, I would take a participant role and would only facilitate the first PLC being that a sub goal for this study was to explore the impact that a school leader would have on a PLC when engaging as a participant rather than a top-down manager. During the initial CPC, I made clear that our focus would be on exploring and critiquing the status quo in education and schooling, and provided a list of topics that we could engage in in order to problem pose, engage in dialogue, and then find ways to put things into action. Teachers facilitated all subsequent PLCs and used the list to guide the group's next steps regarding the content to cover. Nonetheless, at times I did support teachers in the process of engagement during the sessions since dialogue and the círculo methodology was new to most participants. However, I only did this whenever the process was not being followed

or when I was asked to clarify specific aspects of the meetings or purpose behind our dialogue and the CPC initiative. In order to further mitigate power dynamics, I took steps to ensure that all of the participants were as comfortable as possible by asking for their input as to the setting, time, and day of the interviews and focus group meetings (CPCs). Although I helped to focus our purpose and time in the CPCs during our first meeting, teachers were given the liberty to choose content, activities, and dialogue points to cover in the subsequent sessions. To reiterate, all teachers had a chance to facilitate CPC sessions as a way to ensure equity of voice and equity of diverse ideas and perspectives.

Another aspect of the study that further mitigated power dynamics included the way that dialogue was employed in the methodology of this study. Freire (1973) posits that educators should become co-creators of knowledge through dialogue on theory and one's epistemology (ways of knowing, or experiential knowledge); this dialogue should cause educators to problem pose and then to find tangible solutions for the problems and/or issues that are recognized through the dialogue process. True dialogue mitigates power dynamics as it calls for equity of voice for all participants regardless of position or privilege (Schein, 1993). Teacher participants consistently engaged in dialogue during the CPCs and participated as facilitators, thus mitigating power dynamics within the group.

Prior to this school (at another school site), I also used a teacher-led inquiry PLC (PLC with the aforementioned Freirean methodologies) to engage with teachers in order to allow for teachers to become vested in the PLC, as they were also co-creators of knowledge through dialogue and through alternating facilitation. Moreover, teachers

played a leadership role in the group and helped to decide on topics they wanted to cover. This effort mirrored my normal practice as a principal, yet I documented and analyzed the work done (dialogue and praxis) in the CPC by recording audio of the meetings, coding data gathered in the CPC and analyzing it, as well as by conducting pre and post interviews that were captured through the audio recordings. By doing this, I had more clarity as to how this process may help to shift awareness for teachers, as well as to develop CCW informed teacher pedagogy.

This study aimed at understanding the process of and effects of a PLC focused on teacher ideology and instructional practice; I used Freire's notion of praxis that calls for action as a means to impact both ideology and practice (Freire, 1973). This focus was highlighted through this particular PLC which was similar to our normal district-wide collaborative practice. Five teachers and I came together once a month for an hour to an hour and a half in a PLC to engage in dialogue related to issues that affect students and families in our school. This PLC met monthly for six months and provided us with six cycles of praxis to engage in and reflect on during subsequent meetings and during interviews with participants. This PLC approach was intentional in centering teachers as the drivers for change in their own school community, as it specifically called for teachers to facilitate and lead the process and dialogue.

Methodology

Native American stories tell of the way in which elders made decisions for their tribes and communities. Elders from all or most native tribes and peoples held the 7th generation as foundational to all aspects of life or way of being (ontology); a principle

that required decisions to be made only after considering how these decisions (as lucrative as they may have seemed) would affect children and the tribe's descendants as far as the 7th generation. When leaders made final decisions for the tribe, they would take final recommendations to elders and would ask for their final blessing; a blessing that would only be given once they asked a final essential question: how will this decision affect the children and the following seven generations? Only after deeply and authentically considering this question would tribe leaders move forward with decisions (Allenbaugh, 2002).

I begin this section recounting this principle and an often forgotten part of United States' history to highlight how it parallels participatory research and/or critical praxis, and dialogue, all of which are methods that were used throughout the study. The goal of this project was to deepen the understanding of school life in the service of students with specific attention to issues of equity, and oppression (Anderson, G. L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A. S., 2007). Furthermore, since this study aimed at moving teacher ideology and instructional practice, I used Freire's notion of praxis that calls for social action as a means to accomplish both (Freire, 1973). The call of this study was to explore ways to develop collective critical consciousness in the hope that it would potentially impact instructional and pedagogical action.

Using dialogue as a means to engage in critical praxis ensured that all voices were heard and that power dynamics were minimized since all participants had equal time to share during our *círculo* format meetings. Dialogue aims at making sure all people are involved authentically, listen to one another, and build trust in organizations and/or

community meetings. The task of developing critical consciousness through exploration of critical literature and through the exploration of lived experiences was accomplished through critical dialogue and praxis, as suggested by Freire (2000). Dialogue calls for building trust, understanding each other's stories or situations, thereby appeasing fears. It is also a viable path to building empathy and trust and is even more powerful when teams and groups engage in this manner as a means to address issues via praxis (Darder, 2016; Freire, 1973). This type of convening and communicating is not traditionally found in organizations and schools, yet it has the potential to transform the meaning-making and decision-making process and the way that leaders hold power in order to truly create spaces whereby critical praxis is at the center and whereby teachers have authentic say as to how to further engage students of color in order to ensure vested learning.

Furthermore, dialogue for this study took place using the *círculo* approach since this is a native Mesoamerican and Native American approach that originates with the ancestors of the community that we are serving and thus, a relevant ontology that can directly impact one's epistemology (Carrillo, 2008, pp 54-57; Kinship Circles, 2017; Reagan, 2004).

Native American communities believed that one's epistemology or way of knowing was interconnected and rooted in one's way of being or ontology (Reagan, 2004). One cannot separate our minds from our heart, spirit, and soul, and therefore education should encompass and build upon all aspects of a person. Similarly, the concept of *educación* in the Latino community as defined by Valenzuela (1999) also emphasizes the importance of engaging students of color from a standpoint of *educación*, a term that involves elements of pedagogy and academics, yet is founded on principles as to how one should

live in the world including moral, social and personal values that should serve as a foundation for all learning (Valenzuela, 1999).

These approaches to learning are deeply connected to this study since the intent was to engage teachers in a process that not only allowed us to convene and learn from one another, but also ensured that teachers experienced methods that affirmed ontology (círculo and dialogue), and methods that can be used in the classroom to also engage students by embracing their ontology as a bridge to learning. Moreover, these approaches lead to building a caring teacher community, which is one of the goals in engaging teachers in culturally responsive teacher development. Furthermore, the círculo approach entails dialogic communication and ensures that all participants have equal voice, and that no one has power over another. *Círculo* (circle) is a ceremonial act that requires a high level of Respeto (respect) and Palabra (living out your word and what you say), as well as an intense focus on authentically listening to one another or listening with the heart (Carrillo, 2008 pp 54-57).

Such an approach was used in this study so that the time together would be fruitful in listening to one another, building community, and in co-constructing meaning and action through praxis. Additionally, participating teachers were asked to alternate as facilitators of the meetings so that positional power dynamics would be further mitigated, thus ensuring trust, equal sharing, and authentic co-construction of meaning and knowledge. Since the focus of the PLC included dialogue and círculo elements, as well as critical praxis elements, I named the PLC meetings, Critical Praxis Círculo (CPC). During the CPC, teachers and staff followed this general agenda:

1. Breathing and check-in: educators here took time to simply express whatever was on their mind or whatever they chose to contribute to the space.
2. The facilitator from the previous meeting provided an overview of what was shared and decided on by the team.
 - a. How did the actions decided go?
 - b. What worked and or what challenges were faced?
3. The facilitator for the meeting provided a synopsis of a critical topic and or article or video that all had a chance to preview before the meeting.
4. The facilitator posed questions about the reading and engaged in a created activity intended to bring about clarity and focus related to the topic that was chosen by the facilitating teacher.
5. Time for dialogue and meaning making was allotted. During this time, the facilitator ensured that all had an opportunity to share their thoughts and or lived experiences [*testimonio*] related to the topic.
6. Educators then move decided on how they would implement what was learned during the meeting. This ranged from attempting a new approach for dealing with student behaviors, finding better ways to connect with parents, and engaging students in relevant content and curriculum.

The agenda was flexible, thus allowing for participants to change it if they chose to move in different directions regarding meaning-making and/or taking action or reflecting on previous meetings, topics, literature, or other topics important to the group. That is, we used the agenda as a guide, yet did not limit areas to a certain amount of time, especially if we felt as a group that we needed more time to, for example, thoroughly explore a concept or to share an impactful *testimonio* that was related to the content explored. Since this study was participatory in nature, it sometimes shifted depending on relevant events that may have taken place, the need for further clarification or exploration of topics, and/or deep and authentic dialogue or *testimonios* (Burciaga, 2007; Huber, 2009). It was the responsibility of the facilitators to read the participants as the meetings unfold (Freire, 1973). Since the study calls for critical praxis, it also had an emergent and grounded design at its core because participants in the study had a say regarding shifts

that may have taken place in methodology or practice in order to fully understand issues and/or to solve problems that were originally posed.

I conducted interviews to elicit teacher perceptions and/or learning at different points in the study; after the first meeting, and toward the end of the study. Part of the meaning-making nature of the study entailed bringing forward the participants' experiences, and reflections or *testimonios* (Burciaga, 2007; Huber, 2009) as they participated in dialogue and as they shared during interviews with me (Merriam, 2005). In asking teachers for interviews, I asked them to interview at a time that was convenient for them and explained that the intent of the interview was to hear their authentic perspective regarding the critical praxis meetings that took place, in order to learn from them. During this disclosure I will also let them know that I was not interested in right or wrong answers. Rather, I simply wanted to hear about their perspective and or experience in the CPCs.

Open-ended questions that were asked during the initial interview included:

1. Why did you choose to participate in the Critical Praxis Círculo?
2. What do you hope to gain from your time invested in this effort?
3. What are areas of need for you as a teacher and related to the focus of CPC?
4. What related experiences or skills will you be bringing to the group?

Questions for the final interview included the following:

1. What have you learned throughout the CPC sessions?
2. Did this process impact your level of critical consciousness and or your focus on how critical issues affect our context?
3. Has this learning caused you to shift your practice in any way?
4. Has the learning impacted your focus on building relationships with students and families?
5. The last part of the final interview included revisiting some of the comments made, questions posed, suggestions made, and or reactions participants had during the CPC meetings, in order to verify that what I captured and interpreted after analyzing the CPCs was indeed what was intended by participants.

Keeping in line with grounded theory (Anderson, 2007), I constantly checked the data gathered through interviews and then revised the questions in order to ensure the answers to these questions would still provide the data needed to answer to the research questions.

In order to triangulate the data collection for this study, I also kept a reflexive journal throughout all steps of the study (Anderson, 2007). This helped me track my thoughts, actions, possible shifts in methods or approaches, and or decision-making processes. Furthermore, I was moderate participant (Anderson, 2007) during the critical praxis meetings being that we all alternated facilitating, thus taking the burden off me and allowing me to focus on my observation during the meetings. The CPCs were recorded through a digital audio recorder as agreed upon by all participants. This granted me time to go back and listen to meetings, code data, and to revisit what was said and captured with participants, in order to ensure that I fully understood what was meant by participants as well as to revisit the reactions of other participants.

Specific Areas of Focus that were Studied

Process of co-developing critical consciousness and community. Guiding questions: What topics were covered and how did dialogue serve as a conduit to create meaning for the group?

- Agreed upon or suggested content for critical praxis meetings
- Dialogic interactions
- Meaningful sharing of *testimonios* that then invite others to share their own *testimonios*

In order to capture data in the area of the process of Co-developing Critical Consciousness during the CPC meetings, I focused particularly on both the content covered and dialogic interactions, since they both are essential in the praxis process as described by Freire (reading the world through critical topics and dialogue):

To further capture and analyze data for content I used the following tool:

1. Specific literature or content covered during the length of the study.
 - a. List of articles covered along with authors
 - i. Are articles on CRP, critical pedagogy, CRT, critical consciousness, social justice, importance of building relationships, and or racial justice?
 - b. List of videos or other media files covered
 - i. Are videos or media files on CRP, critical pedagogy, CRT, critical consciousness, social justice, importance of building relationships, and or racial justice?
2. Types of activities that are proposed and engaged in during meetings.
 - a. How many activities revolve around teacher pedagogy and CRP?
 - b. What aspects of CRP are more prevalent? Relationships or Relevance?

To capture and analyze data in the area of dialogic interactions I used the following tool:

1. When and how teachers are listening to one another as evidenced by building on each other's ideas.
2. Instances when the group makes decisions and how these come to be.
3. Times when new teachers or less outspoken teachers participate in meaningful dialogue during meetings.
4. Teachers' comments and perceptions or reactions as to specific readings covered and discussed.
 - a. Did self-reflection and dialogue on race or issues of poverty lead to more engaged participants?
 - b. Levels of engagement measured by time spent on specific topics or parts of the meetings.
 - i. What topics led to longer and or more meaningful discussion? I.e. racial justice, income disparity, building relationships with students.

Capturing and analyzing data regarding content and dialogic interactions using the prior mentioned tools, provided clarity in process and content that was used throughout the narrative discussion in Chapter Four of this study. Both tools provided substantial

data allowing for clear analysis and a clear understanding of the process we engaged in as we covered the critical content brought forward by me and by teacher participants.

Impact on culturally responsive teacher development. Guiding questions: Were participants able to consistently critique systems of oppression and make connections to their life or current issues/context? Were participants able to acknowledge and bring value to Community Cultural Wealth, as well as develop a caring teacher community?

Elements of Culturally Responsive Teacher Development that were Analyzed

- Collective critique of systems of oppression
- Valuing and accessing community cultural wealth
- Building a caring teacher community

Impact on Teacher Pedagogy

Guiding questions: What did teachers say was the impact? Was there consistency between what they reported and their actual pedagogy?

- Shifts toward CCW informed Pedagogy

These specific areas were studied and analyzed using a coding system that helped to identify if and when these topics or comments were made, how often they were made, and to capture *testimonios* that included deep personal/familial vulnerability, passion, and or emotion (Burciaga, 2007, Delgado Bernal, 2012). A specific color was assigned to each one of the three elements mentioned above (1. Process of co-developing critical consciousness, 2. Impact on developing collective critical consciousness, and 3. Impact on pedagogy), and I highlighted all transcribed interviews and CPCs as a way of coding the data and making sense of it. I then charted out the comments that were made in the

previously mentioned topics and created a specific column to indicate *testimonios* that were shared since it means that participants were making deep contextualized connections to the content, which then leads to learning and to developing collective critical consciousness. After coding and analyzing the data through the three elements, I was able to ascertain if teachers were able to engage and further develop collective critical consciousness, study the CPC process and how it helped teachers engage in issues to inform action, and study the impact that this process and the development of collective critical consciousness had on teacher practice.

Figure 1 (below) is a conceptual model that depicts the design of the study:

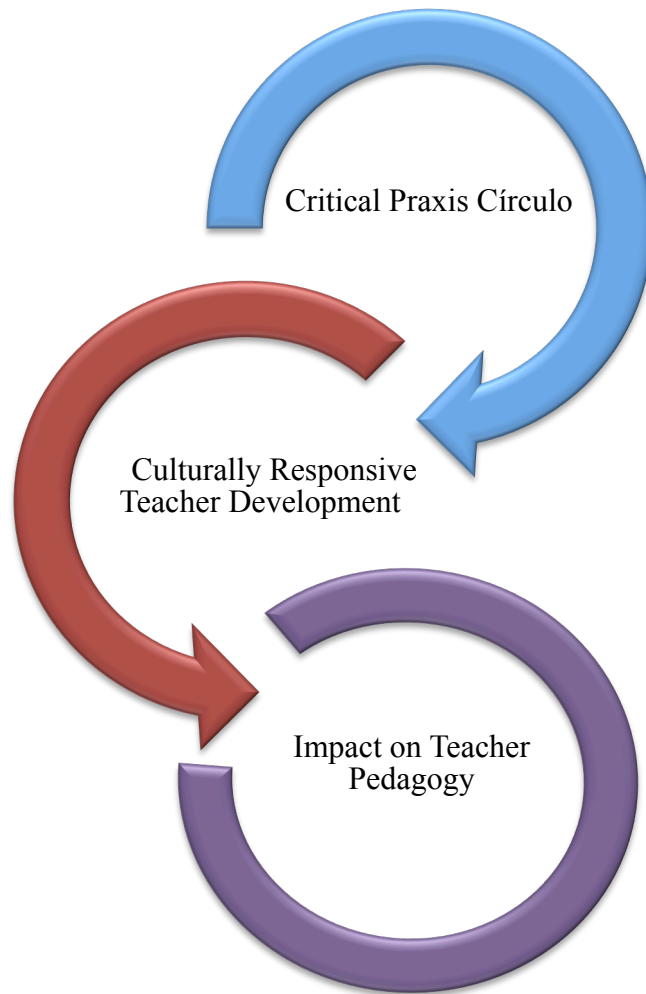


Figure 1. Critical Praxis Círculo Model

As seen in Figure 1, the CPC process was studied, as well as how participation in this group impacted culturally responsive teacher development, and thus impacted teacher pedagogy.

Critical Praxis Círculo Process and Content

The process refers to the way that we engaged with each other during the critical praxis meetings and the content refers to the critical content that we explored together. In terms of process, I was interested in how teachers could become co-creators of knowledge, how they would engage in this different approach that called for equity of voice and authentic dialogue, and in how the group would go about making decisions as to action steps following the praxis model. Additionally, I was interested in how the elements of the círculo and dialogue could lead to building a caring teacher community. Part of the decisions that were made included the topics, literature, and or activities that were chosen as content for the meetings. Content in this effort was crucial since the goal was to engage in ideas that can develop the group's critical consciousness and therefore, also included how teachers in the group responded to and/or engaged in certain parts of the meetings (the check-in time at the beginning of the meeting, the review of the previous meeting, and/or other parts of the meetings).

Conclusion

Critical Race Theory research demonstrates that many of the policies that inhibit true relevance and engagement for students of color are racialized in nature and in practice. Deficit thinking is prevalent in our educational system as evidenced by the access and achievement gaps that demonstrate substantially lower college access rates for students of color, higher dropout rates, lower college completion rates, and undeniable barriers to innovative and responsive approaches (Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). Additionally,

the factors impacting these persistent gaps are our systemic schooling approaches in curriculum and instruction that have failed to shift in order to include the experiences of people of color and in so doing have also alienated students of color and or have produced a lack of academic and school engagement for students of color (Loewen, 2008; Valencia, 2011). Although success with students of color has been reported for those employing CRP and or culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and/or culturally sustaining pedagogy (Aronson and Laughter, 2015; Paris, 2012), there is very limited research exploring how such a disposition toward CRP can be developed in teachers. especially once teachers are already working directly with students, let alone research on how educational leaders can help shift teacher methodologies toward CRP.

As the principal of the elementary school where the research was conducted, I engaged with teachers as a participant of a teacher-led PLC; for purposes of this study and due to the content explored, the PLC was referred to as a Critical Praxis Circle (CPC). This role as PLC participant is separate and distinct from the hat that I wear as principal of the school. The challenges to the validity and potential bias of having the principal participate however, were addressed by ensuring that after the first CPC my role shifted to that of a participant, and by using dialogic and círculo methodologies during all CPCs. Moreover, the intent of the study was to demonstrate how a principal can engage in dialogic leadership with teachers in order to authentically address ideology and educational practices and thus, required me to engage as a participant observer.

Specifically, this study focused on exploring how a principal can engage with teachers in a dialogic manner in order to promote the development of critical

consciousness, a caring teacher community, and accessing community cultural wealth, in and with teachers, and studied the process as well as the impacts that this effort had on teachers' pedagogy. The effort entailed co-creating a space and time whereby teachers and the principal can engage in dialogue that impacted practice and pedagogy, as depicted and described by Paulo Freire when bringing forward the concept of praxis (Freire, 1973). The focus and attempt of this study was to engage teachers in topics that may move ideologies from deficit oriented to *conscientizacao* oriented through dialogue and critical praxis (Freire, 1973), and to study how the shift would impact pedagogy in teachers with the ultimate goal of developing Culturally Responsive Teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Introduction

The primary focus of this qualitative case study lies in understanding how teachers and a school leader can develop critical consciousness (collective critical consciousness) through dialogue on critical theories and related literature, personal *testimonios*, and pedagogy, in order to impact change through engaging in praxis (action research).

Specifically, the study was designed to better understand:

RQ1: What is the impact of engaging teachers in Culturally Responsive Teacher Development?

RQ2: How does Culturally Responsive Teacher Development impact teacher pedagogy?

The study took place in Salinas Community Charter School in California during the 2017-2018 school year. Salinas Community Charter School is a dual immersion school (Spanish/English) that serves close to five hundred and fifty students from transitional kinder to sixth grade, the majority of which are of Latino descent. The initial idea for the project began in the summer of 2017 during the Institute for Teachers of Color (ITOC). This institute required teachers to develop action projects for the coming school year. Administrators were also tasked with creating a plan that would guide racial justice work at their sites. Three teachers and I were in attendance at the institute and we collaborated on a project that would be implemented during the upcoming school year. ITOC provided the initial ideas for this project that we then built on once others were invited to

participate. Once the school year began we invited staff to participate in the project and then further developed norms and content to guide our work in the CPCs. Thereafter, five teachers (an additional sixth teacher only participated in the final CPC) and I came together once a month for an hour to an hour and a half in the CPC. This group met monthly for 6 months, providing 6 praxis cycles to reflect on. Participants were invited to participate via an email that explained the research topic and process to teachers. Participation in the critical praxis círculo and study was voluntary and open to any teacher from Salinas charter school.

Description of the Participants

All but one participant in the study participated in at least five of the six sessions. The participants included four classroom teachers, the principal of the school, and a teacher on special assignment. Experience in education ranged from two to thirty years; the average being nine and a half years. All of the participants identify as Latinx and are bilingual. Two participants are male and four are female. The following are summaries of the participants' background in education and with the school.

Xiara has been teaching at Salinas Charter School for twelve years and is currently in her first year as an equity teacher on special assignment. She is one of the few veteran teachers at the school and has shown deep dedication to students and the school community. She is deeply respected by staff in the school and is soft spoken and subtle in her approach to supporting teachers and students. She expressed her interest in the study as she stressed the importance of becoming aware of the needs of the school community in order to be proactive in meeting those needs. Moreover, she mentioned

that she would like to find more ways to support students and parents because she relates to the community since her background is very similar to the background of the students and families served at Salinas Charter school.

Valeria has been a teacher for two years and led the after school program at Salinas Charter School prior to becoming a teacher. She is passionate about dual immersion programs because she attended a dual immersion elementary school when she was a kid. Valeria expressed that she was interested in participating in the study since she feels “strongly about social justice,” and also shared that this is a topic that is often overlooked. She went on to express that it is important to show students about the injustices happening to them and in their community. Additionally, she expressed that she wanted to be able to collaborate with like-minded educators in order to validate one another, as well as the pertinent issues, and to motivate and enlighten others in the school. During our initial interview, Valeria also brought up themes from CCW and described how it was also important to engage parents and students with CCW in mind. As it can be gathered here, Valeria already demonstrated critical consciousness and strong notions of the need for relevant pedagogy.

Lorena is the participant with the most experience in education, yet was in her first year with Salinas Charter School during the study. Lorena has taught in various districts in California and was also a teacher on special assignment/teacher coach for a few districts prior to joining Salinas Charter School. Her main reason for participating in the study is her search for marrying critical theories in education to practice, while “being part of a system that is still operating under the oppression.” She also shared that she

would like to be a part of a team that could help create and enact equitable systems and practices. Lorena is also a participant that has had a good amount of exposure to critical theories evidenced by her background in Chicano studies, and has expressed passion for social justice and change in schools through her initial interview.

Luca is in his third year of teaching and second year with Salinas Charter School. Luca has a bit of history with the school being that he attended Salinas Charter School when he was in grade school and also has family that attended and or work within the district. He has and is a part of the Salinas Charter School community and therefore expressed that he is vested in being a positive influence for the community. Luca was initially interested in participating in order to grow as a teacher by learning new ways of engaging in education. He also mentioned the importance of finding ways to truly close the achievement gap, considering that many attempts have been made through the years, yet none seem to have really made a significant difference. Additionally, Luca alluded to setting up equitable systems in school to include and engage all learners and made various references to exposing students to more relevant curriculum while critiquing some of the content found in textbooks. Luca demonstrates a strong disposition to engaging in critically conscious conversations in order to promote equitable change for the school.

Zoe is a second year teacher at Salinas Charter School. She also did her student teaching at the school prior to becoming a teacher. Her commitment to the school is demonstrated by her choice to interview and accept her position as a teacher at the site after her student teaching experience. She also shared that she participated in a critical

research academy when completing her teaching credential and focused her studies in the area of Community Cultural Wealth. She talked about choosing to participate in the study in order to reflect with other teachers as to critical issues and critical theories in education. Engaging in dialogue and being present in meetings with like-minded teachers was also a priority for Zoe being that many are either not aware of or ignore issues that deeply affect education and communities of color. Zoe also expressed concern as to how to engage teachers (those not participating in the study) that may be resistant to critical theories and or social justice issues. Her experience in the critical research academy, as well as her motivation to authentically engage students made Zoe a strong participant in the CPCs.

Content and Process during the Critical Praxis Círculos

During the first CPC we focused on creating norms that would ground and guide us throughout the year. Creating norms as a team was intentional since it set us out in the direction of co-creating space whereby authentic dialogue could take place around critical and many times controversial topics and issues. The following are the norms that we came up with:

1. Check your privilege; race, socioeconomic status, gender, navigational, seniority, positional
2. Suspend judgment
3. Fist to 5 for group decisions
4. Honoring time; start on time and end on time (1 hour sessions)
5. Be flexible
6. What is shared in sessions, stays in sessions

We spent a lot of time discussing the first norm since we wanted to make sure that this space would be different from other professional development or teacher meetings in

that all participants would have an opportunity to share and to truly engage in dialogue that requires authentic and engaged listening, as well as sharing. We made sure to address positional privilege since I was a participant and also the principal of the school. In addressing this, we focused on the goal and purpose of dialogue that is to ensure that all have equal voice and influence on the group. This was important to highlight since I was involved as a participant, as were other veteran teachers that tend to have a bigger voice and influence in schools. We committed to ensuring that dialogue was to be the norm and that we would hold each other accountable and check our own privileges.

We also focused on making sure that all participants felt encouraged to engage and share, notwithstanding seniority or navigational privileges based on seniority or other factors. Suspending judgment was also an important agreed-upon norm since it helped set the tone for true dialogue. As a result of the norms that we agreed to, the group process felt “different” for all, as reported by participants, and also led to dialogic interactions that supported the goals of the CPC. It was evident in the CPCs that all participants including me, were conscientious as to the amount of time for sharing, keeping in mind our privilege. Participants often times held back comments whenever others indicated that they had something related to share. As a result, we were able to hear from all participants and perspectives and were also able to build off of each other’s ideas and perspectives. Participants also consistently listened intently to one another and provided ample time for others to share and make their points, thus demonstrating adherence to the agreed upon norms like, suspending judgment, and being flexible.

Content

The content for the CPCs was selected by the participants. I led the first CPC and therefore selected the Duncan-Andrade piece for us to pre-view and discuss during the initial meeting (which will be discussed in the next paragraph). Toward the end of the initial session, I went over the intent of the CPC and shared possible topics that we could explore such as meritocracy, CRP, racial inequalities, critical race theory, and others. Thereafter, part of the initial CPC (and all CPCs) was to identify the facilitator for the subsequent CPC whom would then select the reading, video, and or other content to pre-view prior to the session. The following is the list of articles and other media that were selected and covered during CPCs:

Duncan-Andrade, J. (2009). Note to educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(2), 181-194.

Nava, P. E., & Lara, A. (2016). Reconceptualizing Leadership in Migrant Communities: Latina/o Parent Leadership Retreats as Sites of Community Cultural Wealth. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 10(3).

Nieto, S. (2008). Chapter 9: Culture and education. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 107(1), 127-142.

Rendón, L. I., Nora, A., & Kanagala, V. (2014). Ventajas/assets conocimientos/knowledge: Leveraging Latin@ strengths to foster student success. San Antonio, Texas: Center for Research and Policy in Education, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Shor, I. (2012). Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change. University of Chicago Press.

Yosso*, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race ethnicity and education*, 8(1), *Educators Journal*, 10(3).

(2015, November 11). The Myth of Meritocracy. Retrieved August 25, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bNr4o3jJo4>

John Henry (2000): Retells the story of John Henry, who raced against a steam drill.
Producer: Steven Keller Writer: Broose Johnson, Tim Hodge, Shirley Pierce

Strong Island (2017): is a Danish-American true-crime documentary film directed by Yance Ford.

To reiterate, the only article brought forward by me was by Duncan-Andrade (2009). I chose this article to lay the groundwork for the subsequent CPCs since it clearly depicts the types of teachers that can make the biggest impact in students of color that have been traditionally marginalized through the schooling process. The article also highlights how providing critical hope for students is an essential element that teachers must understand and develop in order to have adequate impact on all students. The other articles listed and covered throughout the six CPCs brought in topics such as critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, the acknowledgement of wealth in all communities, and assets possessed by Latinx students. The biggest focus area based on all articles was the concept of CCW. Yosso's article (2005) was used during one of the sessions and was then often referenced throughout subsequent sessions. Three of the five articles described CCW in depth and/or used the framework to inform study and/or to apply to various contexts. CRT and CRP are not clearly called out in the articles read, yet CRT clearly informs CCW and thus informs at least three of the five articles. Elements of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy are found in Duncan-Andrade's article, as well as in the articles by Shor and Rendón. All of the articles that were analyzed and used to guide the CPCs were informed by CRT, thus providing for depth of discussion around topics and

theories foundational to developing critical consciousness. Figure 2 emphasizes some of the most important aspects of the CPC process that then impacted developing of CCC and thereby impacted teacher pedagogy:

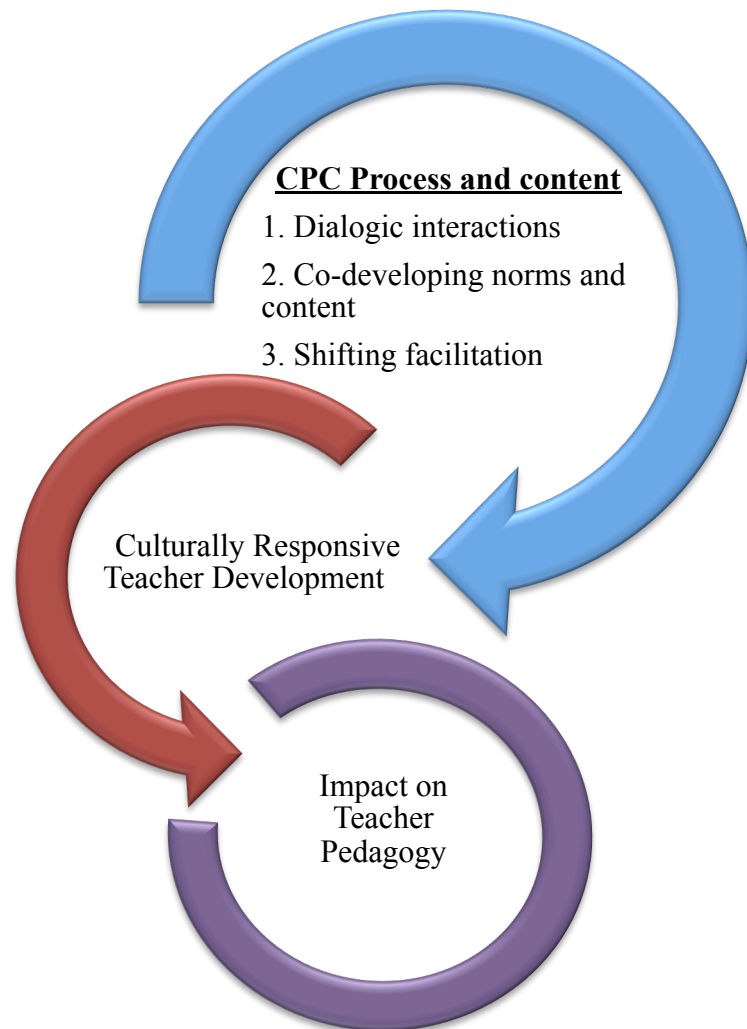


Figure 2. CPC Process and Content

Organization of Results and Data Analysis

I separated the analysis of data in the following three areas (1 and 2 will be analyzed and discussed in Section 1):

1. Process of developing Collective Critical Consciousness and Community (informs RQ1)
 - Including, the agreed upon or suggested content for critical praxis meetings, dialogic interactions, meaningful sharing of *testimonios* that then invite others to share their own *testimonios*.
2. Impact on Culturally Responsive Teacher Development (informs RQ1)
 - Including the following elements: Critique of systems of oppression and making connections to their life or current issues/context, valuing and accessing community cultural wealth, and developing a caring teacher community.
3. Impact on teacher pedagogy (informs RQ2) [to be analyzed and discussed in section 2]
 - Shifts toward Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, including, relevant content and curriculum, and a focus on building relationships with students and parents

Section 1: Data Analysis of CPC Process and the Impact that It Had

The following includes an analysis of how the group created meaning and built community through the CPC process. I used the tools stated in the Methods section in order to first capture the major themes that became apparent through my analysis of the data, the activities that the group engaged in, the articles or media or other literature that were used during the CPCs, and then to analyze these further using the *dialogic interactions* tool mentioned in the methods section. This allows for focused and clear stating of results.

Analyzing Culturally Responsive Teacher Development (Informing RQ1 and RQ2)

The task of developing critical consciousness through exploration of critical literature and lived experiences is best accomplished through critical dialogue, as suggested by

Freire (2000). As such, I focused on the way the CPC led to development of Collective Critical Consciousness (a key component to culturally responsive teacher development), and then on how this newfound consciousness would impact teacher pedagogy as seen in the praxis step of the CPC and as seen in the reflection and dialogue around praxis steps. Culturally Responsive Teacher Development (CRTD,) as I have defined and closely related to Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Tintiango-Cubales, 2014), is accomplished when a group of educators come together in dialogue and engage in: 1. Collective critique of systems of oppression, 2. Valuing and accessing community cultural wealth, all while, 3. Developing and sustaining a caring teacher community.

Rather than attempting to capture each element separate from one another, my discussion of results will incorporate one, two, or all three areas, as they are all interrelated, intersecting, and/or build upon one another in the CPC context. For instance, a participant's *testimonio* about living in poverty will connect to critiquing systems that contribute to poverty, while the *testimonio* can also allude to how CCW enabled the participant to gain the confidence or skills needed to succeed through systems of oppression. I also went on to identify specific themes that came up and used them to guide my discussion as to what was shared and how it connected to life experiences and or to CCW. Moreover, I only included key examples in which CRTD was evident, in order to deeply demonstrate the way in which the process unfolded and supported collective understanding, built community, and led to developing culturally responsive teachers.

Meritocracy (Hokey Hope): Fact or Fiction?

Prior to our second critical praxis círculo, I chose Duncan Andrade's article on the importance of building Critical Hope and differentiating this from other types of hope for us to read and discuss. I chose this article since it brings forward issues of race, trauma, teacher pedagogy, teacher effectiveness, as well as identifies the different types of teacher attributes that best engage students of color. The group seemed to be very engaged by the reading as they reflected and shared many areas that impacted them as well as made various connections with the topics explored. When we met our conversation began with Lorena sharing,

Hokey hope just resonates with me right now, because I feel like since the last election, we are living in hokey hope, more than ever, in our educational system. I mean people do everything you can imagine; you work hard, you play the game, you will advance... What happens to those people today? What happens to those people who did work hard, who earned it, who achieved the American Dream, and now may have it completely taken away from them? Just this is on my mind right now, this really resonates, and when we're there, how do you push out of it?

Part of the dialogue here led to others commenting on and making connections to how the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was being dismantled by the new White House administration. This struck a chord with all of the participants being that a lot of the students at our school, as well as teachers, have been directly impacted by the removal of the DACA program, and also since it was uncovering how violent the system is toward certain groups of people. The dialogue at this juncture became increasingly personal as participants shared *testimonios* that led to further vulnerability in sharing. An example of emotional vulnerability is found in the following excerpt shared by Zoe.

This makes me think a little bit about how I think, towards the bottom (referring to the article), it talks about how certain people get to decide for other groups of people. It just makes me think how unfortunate it is... it's almost insulting. I just can't get past that. I feel like that's when you get angry about things.

Zoe's comments helped the group understand and critique the structures that are in place that continue to replicate the status quo since the power continues to be in the hands of white, upper class men. Zoe also gave an example of this by referencing how, "We are more segregated now than when segregation was made illegal." She went on to express that this time in the CPC could also become restorative for participants being that anger, fear, and other emotions would be uncovered through the dialogue. Zoe's vulnerability made it okay for others to share in this way, thus creating a sense of community and empathy as intended by the CPC design. It is evident here that the theme of hokey hope, as shared by Lorena, led way to further contextualizing it within our current political and social climate, as well as to identifying how it impacts our own immediate community and context. After Zoe shared how violent the system can be against communities of color, and then connected this to herself and to our school context, the group really seemed to be shaken up and impacted due to the vulnerability and depth of her testimonio. Her vulnerable sharing included long emotional pauses whereby feelings of anger, sadness, and indignation were tangible and felt by the rest of the participants. This then led to other participants engaging and sharing in similar candid and authentic ways. Luca made a deep connection and shared his *testimonio* as to how he also believed in the American dream, "I followed the rules, did everything that was asked. I feel I checked all my boxes yet, I was still tracked to go a different way." In this instance, Luca took the dialogue back to further explore the myth of meritocracy

that is sold to students in our educational system; his sharing was powerful since it was authentic and since he also shared with emotion and passion as he recounted his lived experience. He connected it back to his experience and provided a clear testimonio as to how he was tracked to go a “different way,” meaning toward trade school jobs and away from college. Xiara made the connection to hokey hope as it relates to primary grades and how we lie to kids by acting like we all get along and everything is fine, and simply ignoring what is really going on. She went on to discuss the day after the election and how the kids came in to school that day.

They were in first grade, and we had an honest conversation. I think sometimes teachers don't give kids the credit, they don't see them as being able to think about these things and engaging them in these conversations, because maybe they don't want to offend kids who may be a part of the majority, or they may feel parents may get upset, or they may think kids aren't ready for this. Kids can do a lot more than we give them credit for. They can think a lot deeper than we give them credit for.

All four participants were able to engage in this dialogue in a deep way as evidenced by the *testimonios* shared that included personal experiences, as well as experiences within our school context affecting our own students and families. Xiara also alluded to the importance of believing in the capacity of even our youngest kids to be able to engage in critical dialogue about issues that directly affects them and or their community; this comment demonstrates how developing collective critical consciousness led Xiara to believe in the abilities of children (valuing CCW) to engage in one of the key aspects of CRP (critique of systems of oppression). Furthermore, participants listened intently to one another, reflected on what was being shared, were able to empathize with one another, and then built on one another's ideas (as per dialogue), all of which led to deep

connections and learning, as well as to applying these reflections and learning to students (as demonstrated by Xiara's comments regarding the abilities of children in our school); all also directly connected to RQ1 in that these ways of engaging demonstrate the dialogic effort and process that is called out in RQ1 as essential in developing culturally responsive teachers. CRTD was evident since all participants clearly reflected on critical content, applied these critiques to their own life (as seen in comments made by Zoe and Luca), and then applied critiques and personal *testimonios* to the school context, as well as acknowledged students' profound abilities to engage in similar critiques and or discussions, all while building a trusting and caring community.

As set forward in the first research question, the CPC dialogic process was foundational in supporting the development of culturally responsive teacher development being that participants engaged in authentic sharing and dialogue in order to: 1. Collectively critique status quo and or unequitable institutions/practices, 2. Identify and access CCW in our community as a way to respond to inequity and to engage students and families in CCW informed pedagogy and or activities, and 3. Build a caring community through the círculo and dialogic process.

Through the dialogue around meritocracy, the participants in the CPC were able to identify and then discuss critical themes coming from the selected text by Duncan-Andrade. The topic of meritocracy and what Duncan-Andrade (2009) calls hokey hope, was identified and brought forward during this CPC, and participants went on to engage in dialogue around how they processed and reflected on the ideas presented in the text. Participants were then able to connect the ideas from the reading, critique current systems

of oppression (in this case, the phase out of the DACA program) and then made connections to personal experiences and to the way that these issues affect our school community. The dialogue started on meritocracy, yet shifted a bit with every participants' personal connection (i.e. DACA connection, students being able to critique connection), reflection, and sharing; all the while, the dialogue took us back to the importance of critiquing systems of oppression in order to become more aware and to make others more aware. The sharing became increasingly authentic and vulnerable as the CPC meeting unfolded, due to the content explored and to the nature of dialogue and the círculo process which requires participants to take turns speaking, to listen authentically, and to share deeply. As more participants engaged in this way, comfort levels rose, giving way to higher levels of vulnerability, authenticity, and connection to one another (building a caring community). Thus, the CPC participants were able to build a newfound collective critical consciousness founded on the article and discussion, as well as in the *testimonios* of all of the participants.

Also notable is the way in which the CPC participants were building community through personal reflection, collective reflection, and vulnerable sharing. Applying critiques to one's own life and sharing the ways in which we have been marginalized or the ways in which schooling institutions have negatively impacted us, takes courage in being vulnerable and builds trust. Thus, participants were building a space of community filled with authenticity, empathy and trust, evidenced by *testimonios* shared and the subsequent vulnerable sharing that took place by multiple participants.

Institutional Practices that Continue to Oppress People of Color

We had various conversations on the institutional practices that have not changed and continue to oppress people of color. As intended by the CPC, we had another teacher facilitator (Zoe) lead the meeting and we used dialogue as a conduit to collective critique and further understanding of institutional systems of oppression. Participants were all able to reflect on the film that was assigned by Zoe and were then able to make personal and/or contextual connections. The topic on oppressive practices was again brought forth during this CPC where we engaged in discussing Yance Ford's documentary, *Strong Island*. The documentary chronicles the story of a black middle-class family living in the suburbs, and the unexpected violent death of the Yance's brother, William who was a 24-year-old teacher in New York when a white mechanic killed him. The documentary goes on to cover how an all-white jury declined to indict the killer. Zoe brought this documentary forward as the facilitator for our third CPC and cited the following quote after providing a summary of the film that we had all watched parts of on our own time,

However strongly you buy into the American Dream, however many of the rules of blackness that America draws for you and you follow, no matter what you do, who you are, where you are, you aren't safe.

Zoe then went on to mention, "I think this applies to us Latinos as well." To further substantiate her analysis of how the film applies to the Latinx community, she connected this concept and critique to a parent participation school in a nearby city where the white parents decided that the school should be split in two since they were the one's participating and organizing all events. They specifically said that the Latinx parents weren't pulling their weight and demanded that the school be broken up. The district

went forward and split the school up in two. Zoe then quoted Mandela, “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate.” Lorena continued the dialogue and building of collective understanding by sharing,

I learned a lot about the justice system too, because I know right now, we're doing a unit in benchmark about government. It makes me think about how the purpose of what we're teaching our kids a law is something that's supposed to keep order. Yeah, that's what it is. Where are we teaching them that laws can be unfair? Who makes these laws? Why do they get the power? That's what I wanna teach, you know?

I also supported these questions and Zoe’s point by mentioning the following quote by Martin Luther King Jr., “One has the moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”

Zoe then responded, “I think it can start in the classroom, just the awareness piece.

What’s unfortunate is that if you start it, but then it doesn't continue (to subsequent grade levels), what does that mean? Is that enough? I don’t know.” My response was, “It’s gotta be sparked somewhere with someone, which is a big part of this.”

The previous dialogic interactions demonstrate how engaging critical content selected by teachers led to deep critiques of systems (in this case the justice system) and then allowed for participants to further connect critiques to the Latinx community, back to liberatory figures and what they said (Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr.), and to begin to imagine how such content could also be shared with students in our school context. The dialogue during this CPC as evidenced here allowed for participants to reflect on what they were learning through the film and through sharing, and also demonstrated how one or two participants were able to encourage one another by pushing each other’s thinking as to how some of these issues could be introduced to students in the classroom setting.

Valeria also participated by sharing part of her reflection from the film and turned our attention to think about the way the Ford's mom must have felt knowing that her son was dead and that justice wouldn't be served in any way due to the color of his skin. Valeria further noted, "We are led to believe that there are consequences whenever someone does something wrong, yet it is obviously not always the case and it seems to depend on race." She made her point even more powerful by sharing, "I always think from a mom's perspective, now that I am also a mom." This helped us to empathize further as parents and as friends or colleagues of Valeria. Yet another participant (Luca) agreed with this reflection and shared his perspective on how those guilty of mass shootings are treated differently by media based on the color of their skin.

If the person committing the crimes is not white, they are depicted as terrorists, however, if they are white, the rhetoric shifts toward mental illness, or other factors that may have impacted them and caused them to engage in the killing spree.

This extension of the original concept we discussed to another context whereby race is a big factor also demonstrates how dialogue supports exploration of critical topics as well as extensions to ideas and application of critiques to multiple contexts. During Luca's sharing, others chipped in to affirm his points by adding phrases like, "umm humm," or "It's like poor thing (referring to white perpetrators)," "Or the rhetoric goes straight to the cause in terms of a white perpetrator." In this instance, not only was Luca making the connections in terms of racialized assumptions and racism from one context to another, other participants were also making connections as demonstrated by the responses and affirmations seen here. It was obvious that participants were building collective critical consciousness, based on these affirming phrases and based on the level

of engagement felt and seen during the círculo. Connections to personal and/or other contexts were evident throughout the dialogue, and supported by the transparency and openness to share community and personal examples.

The previous dialogue was sparked by reflecting on the *Strong Island* documentary that was assigned by Zoe for the participants to watch before our CPC. Zoe's reflection and participation as the facilitator helped to open up this rich and critical dialogue. She started off by providing a synopsis of the documentary and then shared a quote by the director of the film in which she strongly critiques the notion of buying into the American Dream while Black. CPC participants were able to reflect on and understand how such a tragedy and lack of follow through by the judicial system demonstrates how the system continues to blatantly discriminate Black people, and how it many times covers up crimes by White people when the victims are Black. The dialogue then shifted to highlighting similar connections in the Latinx community and a *testimonio* was shared about a nearby school (system) that was split in two after the white parent community demanded it. All of the participants seemed surprised to hear that a district in this part of the country and in the 21st century would actually back such a shift. The conversation again pivoted to how our curriculum covers laws and the judicial system, yet does not include critiques as to historically unjust laws and as to who creates laws and continues to hold power to create and uphold laws; with critique of systems of oppression being a key component of culturally responsive pedagogy. One participant indicated that she would like to focus on this with students and engage them in this type of critique of systems in order to expand

their awareness, thus demonstrating a newfound disposition toward culturally responsive pedagogy.

Valeria then shared her reflection on the film and also made strong connections to the injustice that must have been felt by the family and especially by the mother of the victim. Another connection was then made to the way that criminals are depicted depending on their race; some (people of color) are automatically depicted as terrorist while the rhetoric for others always shifts to mental illness and/or other illnesses or challenges that they may have encountered. As can be gathered, the dialogue was enriched with each participants' reflection, sharing, and personal connections made. As a result of the content and further connections, participants left the meeting with newfound collective awareness as to the justice system, judicial system, educational system, and as to how these have and continue to negatively impact people of color in the United States, and in our local communities.

Dialogue in which someone shares their take on an idea or event and another expands and or makes further connections, took place quite often during the CPC. As such, the dialogue served to deeply engage all participants in critique of systems and in making personal connections to the content and to one another (through deep sharing) in order to promote collective awareness of issues supported by personal and or localized examples. This CPC provided further clear evidence of ways in which participants built community through the círculo process, identified and critiqued systems of oppression, connected these to current issues and our context, and also explored ways in which such content

could be and should be presented to students, all of which lead to culturally responsive teacher development.

The Chef Analogy

The following dialogue took place during our second CPC, and stood out to me (since we were clearly able to build on one another's ideas) and for a few others as was shared during our third CPC when we were recounting and summarizing some of the major takeaways from the previous CPC. Various participants (during the final interview) also brought up this CPC as an example of how we were able to build a newfound collective awareness.

We were engaging in dialogue around teacher pedagogy (brought up by Xiara) and how to make sure students were being prepared for careers of the future, and to think critically in order to solve real world problems. I then shared an analogy as to how many times we as teachers simply want a recipe to follow because this is the way that we were schooled, i.e. curriculum, direct instruction, step by step lessons, page numbers and handouts, rather than acting like a chef that fully understands his craft and can improvise with ingredients and recipes in order to come up with incredibly delicious dishes. In the same way, highly effective teachers should know their content and learning goals at such levels that they can improvise on instructional strategies and make the content exciting and relevant, in order to produce high levels of learning in all students. I further applied this analogy in teaching by sharing,

We need to have that sense of urgency where it's not just about having the right handbook or curriculum. It's, I have the right mentality and consciousness and understanding of what's going on so that I know how to react when a Latino or African American boy/girl is acting up. Rather than continue to perpetuate the

system that pushes people of color out, I would improvise and know how to engage them back into the class.

Xiara further added to this analogy by stating,

Part of this is knowing your kids, and knowing who they are and where they come from. For a chef, their recipe depends on what's in season, and what's fresh. Our teaching has to reflect our students. We need to bring that, who they are, into what we do. Not just give them what we think they need.

Zoe then applied the analogy to students and focused on allowing students to think and on developing skills in students,

The chefs are successful because they have skills. Skills that go across the board. In chef shows, they all come out with different dishes even when they have the same ingredients, like you said. Why? They have been given the opportunity to learn skills.

She further connected this to our site by stating,

I think about our community, and about how parents are so busy working that they don't even have time to think. Some of our parents are so busy with work, and how they are going to pay for rent and thinking, I can't even afford this sandwich (this is connected to a point made by another participant earlier in the CPC where he noticed that a family near the school became upset at one another when they didn't have the money to purchase a sandwich).

Luca continued dialogue and the analogy by sharing, "The best chefs find the best ingredients within their environment... sometimes what is not looked at as delicious... it just depends on how you cook it." By sharing this, he was implying that we have to recognize the wealth brought forth by our students and community, and use this in creating meaningful and relevant learning experiences.

The prior segment of a CPC started with Xiara's comment regarding the skills that students will need in order for them to be prepared for jobs and careers that may not even currently exist. Connected to this, I likened a teacher to a chef that is not limited by mere

recipes. The analogy further developed into thinking about how chefs work with the freshest ingredients and with those ingredients that are in season; this was connected to how teachers can also make content and skills relevant for students. Again, another participant connected the analogy to developing skills in students so that they can also have chef-like skills where they can think critically and develop skills that they can use to create new dishes or to creatively solve problems of the future. In addition, elements as to how classroom teachers can also contribute to perpetuating systems of oppression in the school through pushing students of color out and or not engaging them in class. The CPC also further connected the dialogue to acknowledging how parents that have been oppressed have not been given the opportunity to think since they have to focus on providing for their families and paying rent to make ends meet. Luca further developed this topic as he led us to critiquing ways in which we engage all segments of our community, not just the middle class or affluent families. This segment of the CPC seems to have left a strong impression in many, probably due to the analogy that helped us all to better understand how teachers might focus more on developing skills in students through critical awareness of institutions and systems that have caused harm to them and to their families. Not only was the analogy powerful, it shifted and evolved as various participants further provided ideas as to how the analogy could be applied in other ways to teaching and to students. As a school leader, I thought the mere sharing of the analogy would be powerful enough, yet found through the CPC process that building collective knowledge and sharing in dialogue can take a good idea and make it greater and/or can

apply a concept to other contexts, all which can lead to more powerful learning experiences.

Process during this CPC was critical to helping participants develop greater meaning of teacher pedagogy and acknowledgement of student and parent community needs. Participants were verbally agreeing with elements that were shared in dialogue and did so with comments like, “yes,” “uhumm,” and other affirmations. These affirmations were especially evident during the presentation and development of the analogy. Introducing the chef analogy and noticing how it was built out through engaged participation and dialogue, one can see the process of co-creating consciousness and or awareness unfold. This can be attributed to the evolving caring community and space that was being co-constructed by all participants. Dialogue and promoting the notion that all participants have valuable and unique perspectives to provide encouraged creative thinking (as seen by the evolution of the analogy), critical thinking (seen in the application of analogy to teachers and then students), and vulnerable sharing (as demonstrated through personal and context connections made). Furthermore, various comments made by participants were connected to what others had already mentioned during earlier segments of this particular CPC. Participants consistently framed their comments by stating, “Like so and so mentioned,” or, “To add to what was shared earlier.” Evidently, the dialogue process and shifting facilitation lent itself to participants generating new ideas and then building on these, and to connecting these new ideas or concepts to their lives, to current events, or to our school context. Dialogue and the círculo process was key in helping to develop collective understanding because it provided a caring climate in which all members

listened intently and sought to understand, to reflect, and to build upon one another's ideas. Again, it is interesting that the dialogue started with critique of the status quo in terms of schooling and teaching (in this case), shifted to contextualizing the critique, and then led to generating CCW informed ideas as to how the newfound collective knowledge could be implemented with our students and school.

Community Cultural Wealth Dialogue

Our 5th CPC was co-facilitated by Xiara and Valeria and they had assigned all participants to read an article by Nava (2016). The article demonstrates how Nava, along with other educators, engaged parents from a small community in California in a week-long retreat, with the intent of having them discover the CCW that they already possessed, and to encourage them to use their wealth to advocate for their kids and community. Xiara and Valeria led us to the areas that they thought were most impactful from the article and then, as in prior meetings, we were encouraged to dialogue and co-construct meaning of the critical topic and make connections. We went over the different types of community cultural wealth and mainly focused on familial, linguistic, resistant, and aspirational capital. The dialogue also led to exploring the goal that Nava had in engaging and empowering immigrant origin parents, and led to thinking of ways that we could do the same for our context. One of the first connections made had to do with how we try to do a lot to celebrate bilingualism in our dual immersion program, yet we do not explicitly promote or acknowledge the importance of being a native Spanish speaker (linguistic wealth) with parents or with students. Further reflection of this in the CPC brought forth ways in which our Spanish speakers from different countries often promote

the idea that certain types of Spanish (from certain countries), are ‘better’ types of Spanish. Lorena shared, “I would see this when I had parents from different Spanish speaking countries, and they made comments like, people from Mexico do not speak proper Spanish.” We then explored how we noticed that families in our dual language program that are from South America or Spain often demonstrate higher levels of pride in their primary language, whereas families from Mexico sometimes are conversely embarrassed that they do not speak English. I noted during one of our meetings, “They haven’t had the same experience,” indicating that Mexicans in the United States were the first and the biggest group of Latinx immigrants in this country; they also experienced much higher levels of racism and shame for speaking Spanish, to the point of students being hit by teachers for using the language, and/or to the point of being suspended or expelled, not to mention mocked and ridiculed by students, teachers, and school staff. As we engaged in critiquing our own school in how we, even as a Dual Immersion, do not fully value and help parents to fully recognize and celebrate their own linguistic wealth, we: identified key ideas from the selected article, applied these to our context, and built upon each other’s ideas and reflections through dialogue. Luca brought forth the notion of purposefully engaging less affluent immigrant origin parents and shared the following in making his point:

Are we providing the right opportunities for those parents to hop in? Sometimes as teachers we also miss that opportunity because we ask them to make meetings with us instead of opening the door and engaging them, and so we’re cutting off their wings ourselves for some of those families that we need to come in. A lot of our families have a lot to offer yet we have not provided them with the opportunity to provide their gifts.

This led to further critiques about the times when we hold meetings for parents, and about finding ways to engage parents that may have two or three jobs and are not able to attend meetings. Here, Luca demonstrates how he was able to internalize our collective learning in the area of CCW and then identified ways in which we do not acknowledge our own school community's wealth, and how we do not provide the right environment to make all families feel welcome.

During another CPC meeting, Lorena made a connection to this discussion from her prior school district where she found that most of the parent participants in the District English Learners Advisory Committee (DLAC) were affluent Asian parents, although the majority of English Learners in the district were Latinx. I further supported her critique by noting that the DELAC and ELAC (English Learner Advisory Committee) both observe very formal rules of order for their meetings. We noted how this can be a barrier for families that may not be familiar with Roberts Rules of Order, and may feel out of place as a result of this very formal way to meet, discuss, debate, and make decisions. These examples of rich dialogue and critique allowed us to deeply reflect on our practices as a school and as teachers, and helped us identify issues that we need to address in order to authentically engage parents that are often disregarded in schools.

Individual ideas and critiques from participants in the CPC were very valuable and could lead to consciousness that may impact change in our site, yet being able to hear these ideas in the context of círculo and with various participants, allowed us to further build collective critiques and to authentically identify issues that we needed to address as a school. This allowed us to problem solve and find practical ways in which we could

engage parents in acknowledging their wealth and ways in which we could eradicate barriers for parent engagement.

The prior section brought forth elements of Community Cultural Wealth and explored ways that it can be applied to engage and empower immigrant origin Latinx parent communities. Ideas based on the article explored were applied to our context and we began by also critiquing the ways in which we (our school and the education system) engage certain communities of parents and how we sometimes continue to create barriers for others. Participants provided various examples as to the barriers that we have in place that deeply affect engagement, particularly for immigrant origin Spanish speaking families. We were also able to touch on linguistic capital and how we can recognize it and promote it for immigrant origin Mexican families that have historically received a strong message against using their mother tongue, and who have been ridiculed for not speaking English. We noted how immigrant origin Mexican families are many times less proud of their language and as a result, do not celebrate it and fully support their students in maintaining it and further developing it. We also made sure to connect this to the historical context that has caused this perception regarding their own language and focused our next steps on both emphasizing the importance of the Spanish language and finding ways to engage parents in counter narratives in order to acknowledge their language as a form of wealth or capital. These reflections, critiques, and acknowledgments by the CPC participants are powerful since they help teachers reflect on issues affecting the majority of the students and families that they serve, thus making a big impact on pedagogy, and thus shifting the CPC toward the authentic building of

culturally responsive pedagogical approaches that entail the type of collective critique demonstrated here.

The process throughout the dialogue in this CPC continued to follow the flow from prior meetings and included a starting point (article), application to our context in education and our own school and life, as well as finding next steps informed by the dialogue and co-construction of knowledge, all while continuing to sustain a caring teacher community via the CPC process. Participants listened intently to one another and were able to make deep connections to our own school context and our own society and educational system. Participants co-constructed knowledge throughout the CPC and consistently built off of each other in terms of examples of how we could acknowledge and use CCW as teachers, and in creating a more engaging climate for parents. All of the aspects of CRTD were evident during this CPC, thus further highlighting the impact of a teacher/principal-led dialogic effort in developing culturally responsive dispositions.

Figure 3 (below) demonstrates what was evident in all of the CPCs we engaged in. The CPC process supported the development of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as evidenced by the ways in which participants were able to build and sustain a caring teacher community, consistently critique systems of oppression, apply these critiques to themselves and or to localized context, and to begin to explore ways in which we could collectively access CCW approaches to support students or our community in exploring critical issues and or in equipping them through knowledge of their own wealth in order to learn and possibly navigate systems that continue to oppress people of color.

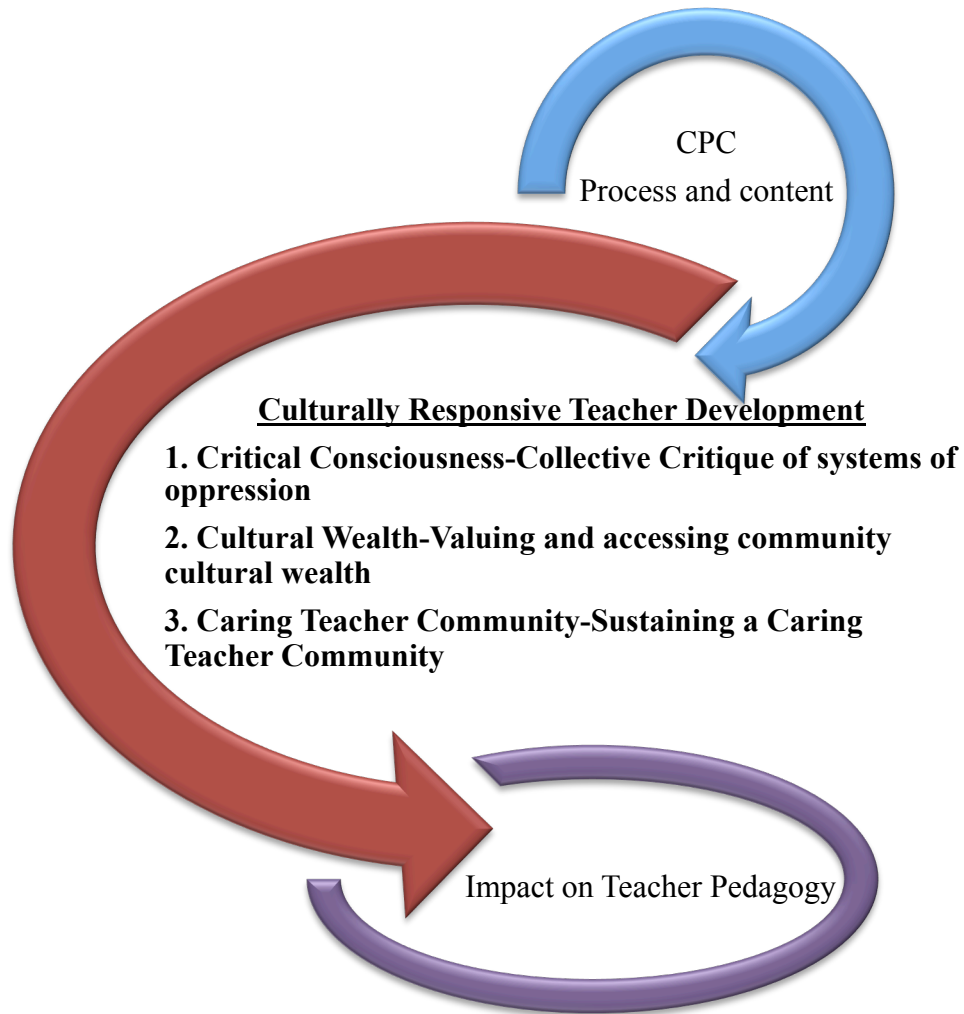


Figure 3. Culturally Responsive Teacher Development

Final Interview Results

The following is a summary of the results of the final interview, including key responses by individual participants for each question:

What have you learned throughout the sessions?

Zoe: “I appreciated the piece on collectively getting to a place of consciousness. Our school is really lucky since a lot of us already get it, due to our background. It was good to see that there are other people that see things critically.”

Xiara: “It’s important that we are critical as to what we teach our students. Also, that they understand that they have a lot to offer so that they feel valued for who they are.”

Valeria: “Nice to have conversations and hearing from others’ experiences and also hearing about what others are doing. I’ve been very sheltered in the past, but it helped me question things more and focus on the why behind the way things are.”

Lorena: “This CPC has been very beneficial for personal growth. I learned a lot about Cultural Wealth and it’s importance and value for all schools.”

Luca: “I learned throughout the sessions the importance of utilizing the local community within the school. I also found it interesting when we talked about making content more relevant to the children to better utilize their prior knowledge.”

Did this process impact your level of critical consciousness and or your focus on how critical issues affect our context?

All but one participant (Zoe) indicated that their level of critical consciousness grew as a result of participating in the CPCs.

Zoe: “It kept it going for me... and that, it was good to do this with like-minded individuals.”

Xiara: “Made me think differently about our school and how we engage the whole community. Also helped me see how the curriculum doesn’t really include our kids stories. We had good conversations that were tied to our context and the shared facilitation was good.”

Valeria: “Made me think of starting sooner with these topics with kids. It’s ok to question and to give students the ability to do so, as well.”

Lorena: “It reinforced my personal beliefs about education and the importance of teaching students from the heart.”

Luca: “It has had an impact on my critical consciousness because now I view my history and social science material in a different light and it allows to me approach lesson planning from a whole new angle.”

Has this learning caused you to shift your practice in any way?

All participants indicated that they did shift their practice as a result of the CPC praxis steps and reflections.

Zoe: “Made me more mindful of my practice, oppression is real and we sometimes do not realize it. My Brother said *les vas a lavar el coco...* I said, *no, les voy a abrir el coco.*”

Zoe was referring to engaging students in critiquing systems of oppression, a concept that her brother attributed to brainwashing students. Zoe corrected him by indicating that she was actually going to open their minds.

Xiara: “Has caused me to think more about making lessons more relevant even though it’s hard. I’ve also applied my learning to the way that I communicate with parents by acknowledging their needs, as well as attributes and wealth.”

Valeria: “The praxis worked really well! It helped me reflect on things and try new things with students. Students were impacted greatly. Further going into details as to what really happened helps students really react and engage.”

Lorena: “This is the first district and first school in my 16 years of teaching where I felt encouraged, and comfortable to create culturally relevant curriculum.”

Luca: “I am now more conscious in what is taught and how. Being careful with my choice in words would also be a shift I have seen in my practice.”

Has the learning impacted your focus on building relationships with students and families?

All participants excluding Zoe and Xiara indicated that the learning impacted their focus on building relationships with students and families.

Zoe: “Not a direct connection but it is something that I really value. Buy in for kids is connected to relationships.”

Xiara: “Always had this as a focus. Teachers often forget that a lot of what impacts students is not academic.”

Valeria: “The talk on how parents are not always involved... helped me focus on parents that work a lot and acknowledging their challenges. Kids also understand that Maestra is being REAL with them and this helps their relationships.”

Lorena: “The learning that we had on Community Cultural Wealth reinforced the desire and need to teach and empower our parent community to be involved in our school.”

Luca: “I have always been a firm believer that developing relationships is the key to success and having these talks helped me solidify things I practice or have practiced in the past. It also reminded me of the success I had when working in communities of high need and how focusing on building relationships was what brought progress.”

The final interview results shown here further demonstrate how teachers clearly engaged in aspects of CRTD including critique of systems of oppression, valuing and accessing CCW, and building a caring teacher community through the CPC process. Some responses here also indicate that teachers benefited by listening to one another and learning through reflection during the CPCs. Applying their learning during CPCs to the school context, to the classroom, and to content and curriculum was specifically evident.

As previously seen in this chapter and connected to RQ1, participants engaged in critiquing the status quo, critiquing systems of oppression, made personal or context connections as to the reading that we engaged in and as to the ideas that were posed by one another, accessed CCW in student and families, all while building community through the CPC process. These ideas, conversations, and connections, led to effective CRTD and also led to praxis (as will be discussed in the following section). Throughout the CPC, participants made many suggestions as to praxis steps (addressing RQ2) that could be taken that would impact classroom practices and relationships with students and parents. Some examples of the ways in which participants were now thinking about

shifts in pedagogy, which I will call *critical pedagogical revelations*, can be seen through the following participant quotes and further described by my commentary:

The following demonstrates revelations in the area of CCW and funds of knowledge approaches to engaging students, “Our teaching has to reflect our students, and it has to reflect who they are. We need to bring that, who they are, into what we do. Not just give them what we think they need.”

An example of a pedagogical revelation as to the abilities of students’ to critique the status quo and to find ways to contend it, includes, “We need to teach them how to think critically. Just teaching them not just how to do something, but how to think about things. To think about their environment. To think about how to solve problems.”

The following is an example of a participant acknowledging oppressive cycles that have negative impacts on students of color, even to the point of obstructing students and communities from having the freedom to stop and think.

That's why you have these oppressive cycles. Because we can't even stop to think. I think it is really important, at least as a teacher for me, with our children that we have. To give them that power to just think, you know?

This example brings forward CCW as a way to promote positive cultural identity in students as a precursor to enacting change. “At the end of the day, it has to start with at least them knowing my story matters. I have a voice. How can I use it to create a change.”

The following example highlights CCW as a way to promote positive cultural identity in students. Thinking of ways to build empathy and true community in diverse classrooms and contexts. “How do we teach our kids to understand and appreciate their

story? How do we teach the other kids to recognize that, and to help? Not just to empathize. I think we could do more...”

The following quote demonstrates a participant reflecting on the importance of exposing students to critiquing institutions and forces of oppression.

It makes me think about how the purpose of what we're teaching our kids a law is something that's supposed to keep order. Yeah, that's what it is. Where are we teaching them that laws can be unfair? Who makes these laws? Why do they get the power? That's what I wanna teach, you know?

An example of a revelation about engaging students through CRP and responsive pedagogical approaches, includes, “How do we become responsive? How do we bring in relevant pedagogy? How do we become critical of what we’re putting in front of them so that it is engaging for all learners?”

This final quote demonstrates a CCW aligned revelation to engage students of color and a teacher’s reflection on funds of knowledge that students already possess and that can be used within curriculum and instruction.

In the Latino culture, storytelling is a huge piece. I feel like that is something that’s not highlighted as much as it should be. I feel like our kids themselves, if they learned that they are great storytellers, that they have a voice, and they learn how to use that, then that in turn will be a starting point. Now use your voice and turn it into writing. Letting em know that they are strong in this, because it comes from their culture, you know?

Section 2: Praxis, Impact on Teacher Pedagogy (Informing RQ2)

In addition to these examples of *critical pedagogical revelations* (deep reflecting and thinking about better ways to engage students through content, acknowledgement of CCW, and ideas that can be implemented to shift practices), the CPC participants also committed to various praxis actions that were implemented in similar ways by all or most

participants. I will highlight three different praxis actions that were agreed upon and taken, since these seemed to have had the biggest impact based on the depth of sharing and based on participants' input during final interviews.

Critical Noticing Campaign

One of the initial agreed upon praxis action steps was to engage in a critical noticing campaign. This idea was posed by Zoe as she explained that she hadn't noticed some of the parent interactions that Luca and others had mentioned during the first part of our Critical Praxis Círculo CPC. Others agreed that this would be a worthy first praxis steps since it would lend itself to noticing and reflecting on social interactions at our school that could be motivated by race, ethnicity, nationality, and or socio-economic status. We agreed to take note of what we noticed considering race, class, or other issues affecting our community. We also agreed on sending emails to the group on what we noticed, as well as on being ready to share what we found, during our next CPC. During the following CPC, participants shared different things that they noticed throughout the month. Zoe focused her sharing on comparing the ways in which Latinx parents interact with teachers and the way that white parents interact with teachers. She mentioned that she noticed during back to school night how different her presentations were. One was with Spanish-only parents and the other with English-only parents. The Spanish speaking parents were grateful with all that was presented and asked about how they could support, while the English parents pushed back on a few areas presented including the ways in which they could get homework in English so that they could assist their students. Along these lines, Valeria mentioned how she noticed that in general the Latinx

parents pushed their kids to do better whenever teachers brought up any concerns, whereas white families seemed to automatically question teachers whenever students had challenges in class.

Luca shared about how he noticed that the majority of white parents almost scolded their children for not taking advantage of all of the extracurricular activities that they signed them up for. The Latinx parents on the other hand, used their struggles to encourage their children to value the opportunities that they now have in school and in this community. Also reflecting on parent interactions, Luca shared about how he noticed that parents consistently congregate in groups based on race and or income levels, “Almost like cliques in high school.” Lorena agreed with this assertion and shared how she also noticed similar cliques with students when in class and out in the playground. I also went on the noticing campaign and shared about two racial slurs that were uttered by students (2nd and 5th grade) and directed at other students of color. The younger student may not have been fully aware of what it meant to use the ‘N’ word toward someone, yet I made sure to address it with him and his family. The fifth grade student fully understood what he was saying and doing and I therefore required him to further research the implications of the word and to apologize to the whole fifth grade class. Xiara participated throughout the dialogue and also gave examples as to how we sometimes do not do enough to engage non-English speaking parents that are often times excluded from certain groups.

This campaign allowed us to make note of various social interactions that can be tied back to race, social class, ethnicity, and or nationality. It allowed participants to

recognize and how some of the issues that we had initially explored were also present and affecting our own school context. This initial praxis action helped us become more aware as to the ways in which critical issues are manifested in schools, specifically in our school. We noticed parent cliques by race and class, student segregation by race and/or class, parent demands on kids and teachers based on race, as well as kids using racial slurs. Noticing these deep race and class issues and reflecting with one another helped to lay the groundwork for subsequent CPCs and praxis action steps, thus creating a collective sense of urgency to find ways to counter the said issues by bringing them to the attention of other staff members, and mainly by engaging students in ways that acknowledge issues of race and class in order to create socially just communities within our classrooms.

As a principal, it was very interesting to engage in such a noticing campaign that highlighted inequalities, issues of race, and issues of class in the school setting. What I reported during the CPC (and after we engaged in the noticing campaign) had to do with two issues of race and racial slurs. As a principal, this would have come to my attention even without engaging in the campaign, yet it did catch me off guard that kids this age would be repeating racial slurs in a school like ours (diverse demographics). Knowing that I would have to report out to the group also pushed me to ensure that I treated the situation with care and in a way that brought about learning and social justice, although the details of my sharing would be minimal. Issues reported out by participants were completely out of my radar and I learned a lot about how class segregation and inequalities were status quo in this community. It was great to know that I could co-

create solutions to these issues within the CPC and to know that all members of the CPC were at the very least now exposed to and reflecting on how these issues exist and play out in our school setting, and now had a caring space where they could bring up these issues and co-create ways to counter them in their classrooms and even via school-wide interventions.

Classroom Simulations

Another agreed upon praxis action was to engage kids through critical simulations. This came about toward the end of our third CPC when we were brainstorming as to praxis steps that we would take during the coming month. We had touched on the justice system and equity during the CPC and the idea of simulations came up as a way to have students briefly feel what inequalities or injustices may have felt like for groups of people in history. Valeria suggested simulations as a way to do this and referenced one of her teachers growing up that used to engage students in this way. She relayed that she was deeply impacted by the simulations in the class and still remembers how she felt and a lot of things that she was exposed to. For our purposes, the focus of the simulations would be to exemplify historical injustices so that students could experience what it could have felt like to be a part of privileged or non-privileged groups. Valeria described how she engaged students in this activity, as follows:

We were talking about how women were fighting to have the right to vote, right? *La causa de eso* (the cause behind woman rights), *you know?* And what I did was I had all the boys come over, and I said, we're gonna play a game today. All boys come sit in the circle in the middle. Girls, you're just gonna watch for now. We just started playing the game. The kids were having fun. The girls were just kinda sitting there, looking at me like, what is wrong with you, woman? Why are we sitting out here not playing the game? Then I had them freeze. I was

like, So what am I doing right now? Why am I having just the boys play and not the girls?

Valeria went on to explain how the girls in the class were really uncomfortable and trying to make eye contact with her as a way to question the reasons why they were being excluded. A couple male students also expressed that they were feeling uncomfortable since the girls were being excluded. Valeria also shared during our final interview that her students often remember this simulation, and that she believes it left a lasting imprint on students since they were able to briefly feel what it could have felt like to be excluded as were women in recent history. Through this simulation, students were clearly able to make the connection to the content that they had recently explored and were able to empathize with one another in meaningful ways.

Lorena also engaged students in a similar simulation where she had kids play a game with a ball. The kids passed the ball around and she would call students out of the game without them knowing why. She purposely omitted rules in order to have students experience what society and institutions many times do to people of color. As the game progressed, some students became frustrated and angry saying things like, “Well, you didn't tell us what we had to do!” After fifteen to twenty minutes, she brought everyone together and explained, “What does this tell you about the power of the rule maker? The rule maker has the power. Whatever the rule maker says, goes.” Some students responded, “That's just not fair,” to which she said, “It doesn't have to be fair, that's the way that it is.” They then went into a discussion as to the holders of power at the school, district, businesses, and state government. Kids were able to connect this to a prior unit where they explored the differences in schools in Los Angeles years ago when schools

were segregated into white schools and Mexican schools. They tied the notion that those in power usually favor people and communities that look like them and that come from similar backgrounds and social classes. The learning and dialogue continued to other units and current issues of race and racism in our country and community. They ultimately ended the conversation talking about what rules are for and how to important it is that rules are fair. The class came up with the following tenets that should guide all rules if they are to be fair, “Rules have to be set with everyone in mind, rules have to make sense, and rules have to start with fairness in mind.”

As can be gathered here, students were able to feel what many in society feel (or have felt) daily when they are mistreated or not treated fairly (not given a fair shot at winning). Students were also able to critique rules and what it means to be fair through their post-simulation discussion. Moreover, students were able to create tenets that could be used as a starting point for promoting fairness and equality. In essence, students were engaged in culturally relevant pedagogy as Ladson-Billings (1995) described since they made relevant connections, were excited (angered) about the learning, and were engaged in high levels of critical thinking and in finding possible solutions for the equity problems introduced in the lesson.

Luca also engaged students in a simulation that related to the science unit he was exposing students to. The unit had to do with natural disasters and he had students close their eyes and imagine what it would feel like during an earthquake. Luca shared various scenarios that could happen during an earthquake thus exposing students to imagine how they may react and or feel given the circumstance of a real earthquake. They used this

activity to inform a class discussion in order to help students in generating ideas for a narrative writing assignment. Luca mentioned that he was still waiting for the right unit in order to facilitate a more critical simulation with students as was intended as our praxis step.

Xiara and I did not engage in this praxis step since neither of us are assigned to a classroom and therefore do not have the ability to lead a simulation. Zoe was also not able to engage her students in a simulation due to other curricular constraints and or to the units not lending themselves to a critical simulation. She did share that she was committed to finding a way to engage students in a critical simulation in the coming weeks.

Even though some of the participants were not able to take this praxis step, we all benefited by engaging in the dialogue as we were generating the idea for the praxis step, and as we reflected on and heard from those that were able to engage kids in this manner. The sharing from Valeria and Lorena was very informative and allowed all participants to get a glimpse as to what a simulation in their classroom could look like and how impactful it could be for students. Through this sharing, it was evident that the simulations led to deep discussions, led to students being able to better understand injustice through experiencing it, and also led to lasting learning through their critique of forces that have oppressed and that sometimes continue to oppress. Luca, Valeria, and Lorena also shared more about the simulations during subsequent CPCs and during other staff meetings and PLCs. During our final interview, Valeria shared that her students keep on bringing up the simulation and ask her to engage them in this form again.

Evidently, students were positively impacted by the activity and learning, thus further supporting the effectiveness culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy (Tintiangco-Cubales, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Community Cultural Wealth Praxis Project

The praxis step that we agreed upon during our fourth CPC was to engage Spanish speaking parents in a workshop whereby we would explore CCW as theorized and described by Tara Yosso (2005). Through final interviews, reflections as to prior CPC sessions, and my analysis of sessions, it was evident that CCW topics spanned various CPC sessions, and a lot of energy seemed to be around this. Even though we finally agreed upon this as our praxis step during our fourth CPC, we had explored the possibility of engaging parents in this topic during prior CPCs. Various ideas were posed as to how to go about this including:

1. The possibility of doing a retreat with parents and thus mirroring Nava's study (2016)
2. Having parents prepare a testimonio to then share as a starting point to the workshop
3. Doing a three session workshop during our school's Parent University (yearly parent event whereby teachers lead workshops on various topics)

Various ideas like these were shared during the CPC, yet we continued to deliberate until we came up with an action step that was viable and that we thought would be a good starting point.

I shared, "I could do a session on testimonio through círculo and can bring in the topic of CCW." Some agreed that this could work and then Zoe shared, "If we are to choose who participates in the session, shouldn't we reach out to them and give them a prompt?" Valeria replied, "Yeah sounds great!" Many questions then came up as to

specifics for Parent University regarding coordinating time for identifying the content for the session and coming up with the lesson plan or agenda. Valeria suggested, “Let’s ask teachers to identify one or two parents that would benefit from the workshop, because it is important to share the wealth and have participants from various grade levels.” Xiara shared, “Let’s start small with one session and then ask parents to recruit.” Valeria agreed with this approach. Valeria went on to suggest for others to incorporate CCW into their presentations, sharing, “My session is on parenting and I can easily incorporate CCW as a way to validate the ways in which parents do already possess areas of strength in the ways in which they parent.” Zoe agreed and shared how she could also incorporate elements of CCW into growth mindset. Xiara also shared how she would bring in elements of CCW as a starting point for her session on social emotional development. I suggested that we look at the forms of capital from CCW that would make sense to incorporate into specific sessions. We decided that we would hold various sessions (same content with different participating parents) for parents during the coming Parent University. We also realized that many CPC participants had already committed to other sessions for the parent university and therefore would not be able to participate in the CCW session for parents. Lorena and I agreed to move forward with the CCW session or workshop for parents and all others agreed to incorporating aspects of CCW in their own Parent University sessions. We also shared emails during the days following this CPC and during the days leading up to the parent university. Through these emails we were able to agree on the title for the session, *Riqueza Cultural y Comunitaria* (Community Cultural Wealth) as well as agreed to the format of the invitation. All CPC participants

gave invitations to parents and encouraged other teachers to do the same. Lorena and I met a couple weeks before the parent university and we finalized the power point that we would use during the CCW session with parents. Lorena took it upon herself to create most of the content for the presentation that provided an overview of the different types of wealth and also called for parents to engage in dialogue and in creating paper leaves where they would jot down ideas of how they and their community/family already possess aspects of CCW. These leaves would then be placed on a paper tree to demonstrate how our collective wealth brings life to the tree through the leaves.

We ended up holding two sessions on CCW with parents during Parent University. Lorena and I co-led the sessions with parents. Both sessions brought together about ten parents and parents expressed that the content was both revelatory and engaging. Many parents shared ways in which language was a wealth to them and their families and how they could further promote this wealth with their own kids. Others shared about how they possessed high levels of familial wealth and how this helped them during difficult or key times in life. Yet other parents focused on sharing how persevering or *ganas* wealth was developed in them from a young age and how this has helped them in various aspects in life including school and work. The other CPC participants also incorporated CCW in their distinct presentations during the parent university. More recently, we also engaged other parents in the same CCW session during one of our school's monthly coffee chats with the principal. Similar outcomes were seen here with parents. The sharing during all CCW sessions helped to create a sense of pride for immigrant origin and or economically disadvantaged parents. Although this population is sometimes seen as having economic

and or language deficits (since they do not speak English), this session on CCW gave them a newfound sense of pride based on the CCW framework and perspective that acknowledges and celebrates other forms of wealth. English-only and more affluent parents were in attendance during the coffee chat, yet they were also exposed to other perspectives that could help them to more fully appreciate other forms of wealth and in so doing, appreciate fellow parents from other backgrounds.

As can be gathered in this section on praxis, CRTD [developed in CPC] impacted teachers' pedagogy as demonstrated by the praxis steps taken, including the way in which they engaged students (simulations), the way in which they perceived their own school context (noticing campaign), and the way in which they acknowledged the strengths of and therefore engaged parents and students (CCW parent session). While some participants more fully demonstrated pedagogical shifts based on their follow through in the praxis steps, their sharing in the CPC sessions, and or based on the depth of their sharing, all participants demonstrated shifts in pedagogy and or at least engaged in: deep dialogue and reflection as to how topics we discussed could impact their own pedagogy (evidenced by their participation in the CPCs), engaged in dialogue and reflection as to how praxis steps were incorporated into the classroom or school context, and engaged in collectively developing praxis steps. As intended by our dialogic círculo approach in the CPCs, some participants were more vocal during certain CPCs and others were more vocal during previous or subsequent CPCs. That is, dialogue shifted with the group and ensured participation of all, yet was not prescriptive as to how long each participant should take during each session. Rather, it was improvisational in that it followed passion

and depth of sharing that shifted depending on the topic or activity. Moreover, it is evident in this section that all participants were able to co-create change projects that can have a lasting effect in their own pedagogy and in the way in which we encourage parent participation as a school. Lastly, the CRTD components that led to praxis steps, could not have happened without the participation of all six members of the CPC since:

1. It called for deliberating as to what to do in relation to what we discussed during each CPC
2. It entailed all participants to work together to create an action step, thus ensuring well thought out shifts in pedagogy
3. The CPC provided a space for reflecting on the actions taken, thus helping all participants to further think about how to continue to develop their pedagogy
4. The CPC participants were all from the same school, thus allowing for continual reflection or refinement of pedagogical shifts outside of the CPC time

This opportunity to work together and learn from one another is not always present in schools. Evidence here demonstrates that there are many positive outcomes in pedagogy that can come about whenever teachers are allowed to lead and are provided with a space to co-create action steps that impact pedagogy, and when they also have a space to reflect on their own attempts. Even though some participants may not have been able to take all of the praxis steps, all were able to learn through the creation of praxis steps and through listening to the outcome of praxis steps that were taken and or that were attempted by other participants.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the ways in which this principal/teacher-led effort impacted CRP for all participants in the CPC. Participants engaged in seven CPC sessions whereby they consistently listened intently to one another, reflected on what was being shared, and built on one another's comments and ideas, which helped to build a

caring teacher community and a collective understanding of concepts, issues, and helped to develop praxis steps. Dialogue was clearly evident and allowed for deep sharing and listening evidenced by the length of time that participants shared with consistent engagement from all participants, all essential components to building trust and community. Most participants held the attention of others and shared in instances for 5-10 minutes at a time. This type of authentic sharing is usually not the norm in school settings. Often times, teachers are required to simply sit and listen to presentations by school or district administrators and or experts, during meetings and professional development sessions. Whenever teachers are called to share, they are given minimal time to express their point of view or to pose questions; at times, teachers are asked to interact with one another, yet these interactions are few and far between and often merely consist of short (1-2 minutes) think-pair-share activities. Teacher voice, alternating facilitation, and dialogue as a part of the círculo process was key in all CPCs as a way to build a caring teacher community, and to authentically provide a space for discovery, deep reflection, application to our context or life experience, and in order to collectively develop action steps in response to our learning. Culturally Responsive Teacher Development as defined earlier in this chapter includes:

1. Critical Consciousness- Collective Critique of systems of oppression
2. Cultural Wealth- Valuing and accessing community cultural wealth
3. Caring Teacher Community- Sustaining a caring teacher community

All three CRTD elements were in place during all of the CPC sessions. Participants in the CPC naturally engaged in critiques based on the content selected, then applied these to their or our own context, and consistently also shared about how we could

engage our community or students in accessing their own wealth to contend the institutional forces of oppression that continue to hinder people of color. In so doing, participants clearly were able to engage in CRTD that undoubtedly impacted teacher ideology. In addition to engaging in CRTD, participants then were able to come up with relevant praxis steps informed by the dialogue that we engaged in and by the collective consciousness that we built during the CPC. These praxis steps and other sharing during CPCs demonstrated shifts in pedagogy that could only be attributed to the conversations we engaged in through the CPCs. That is, if we had not engaged in this project, teachers would not have attempted all that they did and that is described in this chapter. Even some of the comments made as to how they were now thinking about students and our school environment (see critical pedagogical revelations earlier in this section) demonstrate how the CPC impacted pedagogy and further support the fact that neither the action steps nor participant reflections could have taken place without collectively engaging as we did in the CPCs. Furthermore, the praxis steps taken were all informed by community cultural wealth, thus demonstrating how this process both helped to shift ideology and allowed for teachers to attempt CCW informed pedagogical shifts, as well as to reflect on the steps taken.

Figure 4 further depicts the deep impact that CRTD had on teacher pedagogy, which was the overall intended outcome of the whole initiative. The model highlights the main components of the CPC, Culturally Responsive Teacher Development, and the impacts that both had on teacher pedagogy.

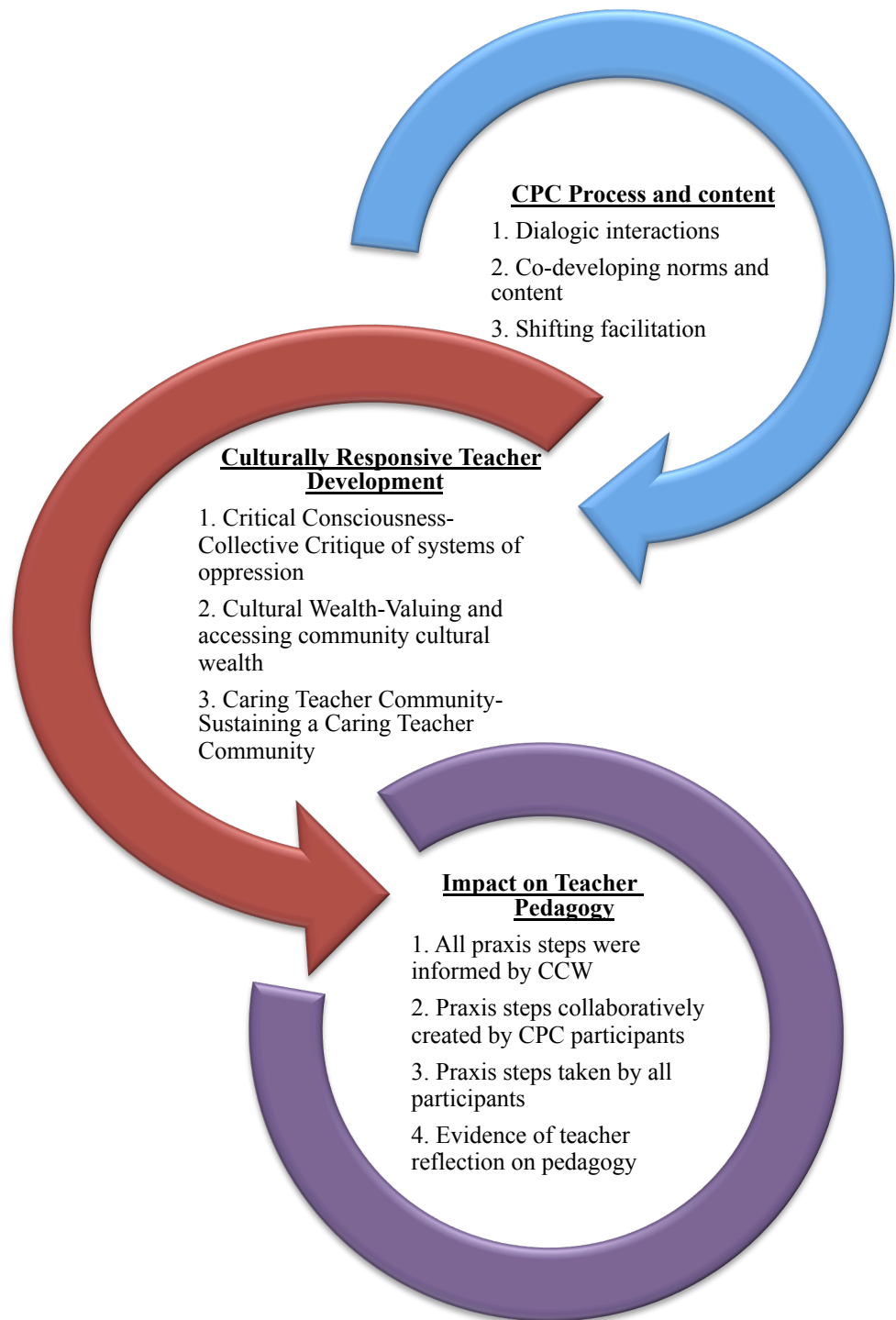


Figure 4. CPC Impact on Pedagogy

Principal Reflection

My participation throughout the sessions started with the design of the CPCs, the focus of the content to be discussed, facilitation of the first meeting to ensure a dialogic círculo process meant to build community and to serve as a conduit for developing collective critical consciousness, in order to respond via CCW-informed praxis steps within the context of our school. I was intentional in centering teachers as the drivers of the initiative since it is important that teachers lead change efforts in school communities and have a voice as to how to go about praxis steps necessary in order to counter forces of oppression that have become the status quo in schooling. Centering teachers also ensured high levels of buy in and provided the group with collective knowledge informed by multiple perspectives, thus making our praxis steps stronger and more meaningful to participants and to the larger school community. Checking my privileges in this context as one of only two men in the study, and as the principal at the school, was not easy yet necessary in order to truly build trust and to develop a caring community of educators whereby meaningful exploration and deep vulnerability took place as we healed and learned together. I had to stop myself from bringing in my ‘two cents,’ as leaders often do and instead was patient in allowing for the process to guide our CPC thus allowing for collective discovery and for learning informed by multiple unique perspectives and life experiences. This attempt at developing teacher dispositions toward CRP was uniquely special to me, since I had never been a part of a collective (within a school context) that included such vulnerable dialogue, deep learning, and collective reflections meant to impact teachers, students, parents, and the school at large.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

Amidst the real barriers to CRP, Funds of Knowledge, CCW, and other efforts and theories that have proven to promote success for students of color, educators must remain committed to bringing about equity and positive change for students of color that already are and/or are becoming the majority of students in our public education system. As explored in the previous chapters, CRP and similar pedagogical approaches call for teachers that have certain qualities and ideologies that are anti-deficit thinking (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Paris, 2012; Tintiangco-Cubales, 2014; alencia, 2011; Valenzuela, 2010). Freire brings forward the notion of critical consciousness as a precursor to true teaching and learning. He defined critical consciousness as an educational and sociopolitical tool that engages learners in questioning the nature of their historical and social situation (Freire, 2000). His call was to develop this consciousness in students so that they could become subjects in the world (and in the classroom), rather than mere objects of the world (Freire, 2005). As Freire posits, subjects work collectively to read the world and to change aspects of it through focused and collaborative efforts (Freire, 1973, p. 7). Additionally, Tintiangco-Cubales (2014) brings forward the notion of creating a caring community for learners as a key component to culturally responsive pedagogy that is a staple in ethnic studies. Applying this to teachers (and also acknowledging the need for teacher retention and development in effectively engaging students of color), both engaging in critiquing systems of oppression and building a caring community were key

goals in this study as they are crucial elements needed in developing culturally responsive teachers. For this reason, it is important as an educational leader to engage teachers in Culturally Responsive Teacher Development (as seen in this study) as an imperative first step on the path toward critically engaging students of color through CCW informed approaches like CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Tintiango-Cubales, 2004). There exists a gap in the literature as to how a school leader can engage teachers in culturally responsive development that will then lead to CCW informed shifts pedagogy. Freire and Bartolomé further remind us that focusing on methods in teaching alone to engage students of color or marginalized communities will not work since these methods are often based on ideologies (ideological errors) that many times did not have particular communities and or students in mind (Bartolome, 1994; Freire, 1973). Bartolome clearly provides evidence of the “methods fetish” that is often detrimental to the teaching profession as it moves teachers to become a conduit for learning similar to the banking method described by Freire, rather than empowering teachers to use their ideologies, skills, pedagogy to engage students (Bartolome, 1994). Furthermore, focusing on methods instead of teacher pedagogy and ideology negates the fact that schooling and teaching are political acts whereby one is either perpetuating societal, racial, gendered, inequalities, or working to dismantle one or some of these inequalities that negatively impact communities of color (Anyon, 1981; Bartolome, 1994; Freire, 1973).

Summary of Results

This qualitative study takes Freire's notions of schooling a step back and revolves around Culturally Responsive Teacher Development as a precursor to CCW informed pedagogical shifts. Therefore, I focused on studying the process of developing and engaging in a dialogic teacher/principal led effort to develop dispositions needed for culturally responsive pedagogy, and also studied the impact that this newfound collective consciousness and dispositions would have on teacher pedagogy. As stated in Chapter Four and directly addressing RQ1, the following three elements must be present in dialogic interactions in CRTD:

1. Critical Consciousness-Collective Critique of systems of oppression
2. Cultural Wealth-Valuing and accessing community cultural wealth
3. Caring Teacher Community-Sustaining a Caring Teacher Community

Findings in chapter four and the narrative description provided demonstrate how a team of educators comprised of five teachers and a principal, were able to engage in meaningful dialogue whereby all three CRTD elements were consistently present. All participants indicated through final interviews that the process was effective and led to developing a collective critical consciousness and pointed to dialogue and authentic sharing as elements that were essential throughout the process. Chapter Four further provides a rich description as to the ways in which dialogue was manifested during the CPC, which included listening intently, making connections to one another (empathy), sharing *testimonios*, deep reflection, and building off of one another's comments and or ideas. The second section in Chapter Four addressing RQ2, also provides examples of the dialogue that took place in support of the creation of praxis projects and or praxis steps

that were informed by CRTD in the CPC sessions. It was clearly evident that the CPC process both ensured CRTD and helped to shift pedagogy for teachers and educators as was demonstrated by the praxis projects and steps that were taken, and demonstrated by the reflective sharing that took place whereby teachers shared about projects they were thinking to attempt, as well as the ways in which they were now thinking (CCW informed) about students and the community.

Conclusion

During our initial planning stages of the CPC, we viewed and discussed one of Disney's short animated films, *John Henry*. We shared how even though Disney was trying to be inclusive by highlighting an African American hero, they purposely failed to show the face of the antagonist that just so happened to be white. Using a CRT lens, we agreed that this was on purpose as we acknowledged that they did not fail to show a white man when it came to Abraham Lincoln; since in this case, the white man was seen as a hero and as the liberator of the slaves.

I use this short description as a starting point to this section since it is a clear example as to how the status quo as developed and maintained by systems of oppression, sends indirect and direct messages as to who has and should continue to have power, prestige, wealth, say, and influence over society. Furthermore, this also depicts how the media and Hollywood support and help to maintain a status quo plagued with and founded on racism and inequality. Evidently, Disney's attempt to acknowledge an African American hero fell short and actually ensured that the white man (Abraham Lincoln and figuratively speaking) continues to be seen as a hero, as well as ensuring that racist history is covered

up so that the white man is not seen as an antagonist or as a villain, even though this is all too clear in history.

Acknowledging and reflecting on these realities as educators of students of color is increasingly important being that omissions in history directly impact curriculum and content, thereby directly affecting the perception of students toward themselves and toward others. Moreover, students of color need to understand the full history of this country as well as the ways in which forces of oppression and institutional racism have and can continue to directly impede access to power, privilege, and wealth. Students will not be able to understand forces of oppression and find ways to liberate themselves, if teachers and educators are not first able to fully grasp the historical and contemporary forces of oppression that impede access and oppress students of color.

Critiquing the Status Quo and Systems of Oppression and Applying Critique to Our Own Context

Many of these similar themes were discussed during subsequent CPCs and were important in CRTD that could then be accessed in order to shift our pedagogy and ways of engaging parents in our school community. Collectively critiquing the status quo was an important starting point as it helped us to more fully understand how systems of oppression and current systems in government and school were founded on oppressive principles and racist ideologies, as seen through the content that we explored and through the authentic sharing from participants that helped to further denote how real these systems are and how they have led to oppressing our communities, our families, and ourselves (Freire, 2000). Once we explored the critical content selected by participants, we focused on finding ways in which specific forces of oppression and or oppressive

practices, affected our school context. We did this through: the initial noticing campaign, dialogic interactions and sharing of *testimonios*, and by reflecting and listening intently to one another (Burciaga, 2013).

Accessing CCW as a Way to Counter Systems of Oppression

Throughout the CPC sessions we did not stop at identifying the problems and then applying them to our own life and context, rather, we engaged in discussing the ways in which we could access CCW in students and the school community in order to counter systems of oppression and or the status quo (Burciaga, 2013; Yosso, 2005). Some of this included dialogue and reflection on CCW's forms of wealth and on how these apply to us and to our school context. Reflecting on these more inclusive forms of wealth during initial CPCs helped participants in developing a sense of urgency to move toward action in re-thinking and acting on how we could more effectively engage students and the community. As a result of these conversations in the CPC and by design, we developed praxis steps to attempt immediately after any given CPC (Freire, 1973).

Impact on Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Teacher Development impacted CPC participants' pedagogy as demonstrated by the way in which they engaged students (simulations), the way in which they perceived their own school context (noticing campaign), and the way in which they acknowledged the strengths of and therefore engaged parents and students (CCW parent session). Apart from the three praxis steps (as well as others not included here) described above and more fully in chapter four, there were many other reflective components that demonstrated the ways in which participants began to think about

pedagogy in ways that are aligned to CCW, as well as other reflections indicating the ways in which participants were planning on applying learning from each other in their classroom and context, thus also demonstrating shifts in pedagogy. While some participants more fully demonstrated pedagogical shifts based on their follow through in the praxis steps, their sharing in the CPC sessions, and or based on the depth of their sharing, all participants also engaged in deep dialogue as to how topics we discussed could impact their own pedagogy, and also engaged in listening to and reflecting on how praxis steps were incorporated into the classroom or school context, thus demonstrating shifts in pedagogy. This opportunity to work together and learn from one another is not always present in schools. Evidence here demonstrates that there are many positive outcomes in pedagogy that can come about whenever teachers are allowed to lead and are provided with a space to co-create action steps that impact pedagogy, and when they also have a space to reflect on their own attempts. Even though some participants may not have been able to take all of the praxis steps, all were able to learn through the creation of praxis steps and through listening to the outcome of praxis steps that were taken and or that were attempted by other participants.

Implications for Teachers and Latinx students

Ensuring that teachers and educators have a place to engage in CRTD that will impact pedagogy, leads to engaging students and the school community in more inclusive and relevant ways. This study demonstrates how teachers shifted thinking and practice as a result of the CPC. Other studies demonstrate that CCW informed shifts in pedagogy (toward culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and or culturally

relevant teaching), have positive effects on student academic achievement, critical thinking skills, and on students engagement in school curriculum and content, especially for students of color (Aronson and Laughter, 2015; Cammarota, 2014; Covarrubias, 2017; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Tintiangco-Cubales, 2004; Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). Specifically, Ladson-Billings (1995) proposes that CRP produces students that achieve academically, produces students who demonstrate cultural competence, and develops students who understand and can critique the existing social order. Skills targeted and developed through CRP are also closely aligned to many of the integral skills identified within the Common Core state standards that are known as the 4 Cs: communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking (Roekel, 2010). Not only is CRP engaging for students of color, it also ensures that students are developing Common Core aligned skills and competencies that are also based on ensuring readiness for college and careers of the future (Roekel, 2010).

Most importantly, Latinx students that are engaged through CCW informed pedagogical approaches will benefit from developing a deep sense of identity through cultural competence, as well as skills in critiquing the social order and status quo, thus providing our society with hope as to necessary changes (toward equity, and racial/social justice) that they may implement as they move through our educational system and into future careers. In so doing, they will be living out Freire's vision of education that includes students engaging in questioning the nature of their historical and social situation in order to counter it through working collectively to change aspects of it through focused and collaborative efforts (Freire, 2000; Freire, 1973). In this sense,

education goals shift to become a liberatory process by which the educators and the students learn together in order to reflect critically and enact change within the person and in communities (Freire, 2005).

Recommendations for School and District Leaders

In our collective attempts to find solutions for the persisting achievement gaps that clearly affect students of color, and in particular Latinx students in California and the rest of the country, we must make sure that we are not making ideological errors as described by Borrero (1994). That is, we must make sure that proposed solutions in education are specifically focused on students of color and rooted in CCW, so that we can rethink how we do school in order to authentically engage all students. Focusing on assessments, and making year to year performance comparisons on gender, race, economic status, and other demographic markers, merely point out the persistent gaps that are not being impacted by insistent hyper assessment and data comparisons, since our responses to this data continue to evolve from the same ideological errors that created the gaps in the first place (Bartolome, 1994). Rather, the field of education needs to address teacher ideology and teacher disposition as they relate to students of color which will lead to authentic engagement of students of color. Moreover, this can be done by:

1. Engaging teachers in exploration of historical and current systems of oppression that minoritize students of color (through a CRT lens). As seen in this study, teachers consistently engaged in such topics that were essential to developing a collective critical consciousness, which then led to shifts in ideology and pedagogy. The following are examples as to content that can be collectively explored:
 - Exploring CRT as a framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses (Yosso, 2005).

- Acknowledging and exploring the contradictory nature of education, since it has the potential to emancipate and empower yet more often than not contributes to oppressing and marginalizing people of color (Freire, 1973).
 - CRT in education shifts the focus and goal back to the liberatory potential of schooling (hooks, 2014; Freire, 1973)
 - Using contemporary or historical examples in literature or forms of media to explore and expose forces of oppression
 - Explore institutional practices and societal paradigms that have a significant marginalization effect on the overall achievement for students of color and other groups in the United States
2. Engaging teachers in exploration of and in accessing Community Cultural Wealth to inform ideology and pedagogy (centering Latinx students). This study demonstrates how it was essential to not only critique systems of oppression, but also to value and access CCW as a way to counter oppression and to think about changing school processes and pedagogy in order to center students and their experiences. Further points on CCW include:
- Community cultural wealth brings forth, identifies, and emphasizes the many aspects of wealth found in communities of color; an essential factor in an educator's pedagogical outlook especially in the context of communities of color (Yosso, 2005; Burciaga 2012).
 - Community cultural wealth also directly negates and contends *deficit thinking* by focusing on the capital accumulated by people of color as a starting point for education, rather than on assuming that the education system is fair and 'works,' and then blaming those that are not succeeding (Yosso, 2005)
3. Building a Caring Teacher Community - exploring these topics through dialogue, círculo process, and by sharing personal connections (*testimonio*). Essential to the study was the process of developing said dispositions toward CCW informed pedagogy. Developing a deep sense of community led to vulnerable sharing and deeper collective learning. The following are important aspects of the process to consider and apply when developing culturally responsive pedagogy:
- Develop a caring climate in which all members listen intently and seek to understand, to reflect, and to build upon one another's ideas
 - Spend time going over what it means to engage in dialogue [how it is different from discussion or debate]
 - Take time giving value to and explaining the círculo process by sharing about the indigenous origins of the practice, and the overall intention behind it which begins with an acknowledgement that all people are sacred and should be authentically listened to
 - Allow for and model teacher *testimonios* that lead to deep sharing and meaningful connected learning
 - This type of convening and communicating is not traditionally found in organizations and schools, yet has the potential to transform the meaning making

and decision making process and the way that leaders hold power in order to truly create spaces whereby critical praxis is at the center

- Alternate facilitation of dialogue sessions to ensure teacher buy in and multifaceted perspectives and contributions
 - Make sure that teachers have a say as to the aligned content that is explored in order to further develop their ownership of the collective process
4. Establishing praxis steps to be taken after each dialogic session. Another key component of the study was to ensure that teachers were able to take steps toward enacting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. We did this through allowing for time in the CPCs to develop and decide on praxis steps to take that were informed by the newfound collective consciousness and focus on CCW. Essential elements to praxis include:
- Using Freire's notion of praxis that call for action as a means to impact both ideology and practice (Freire, 1973)
 - Collective processes where we are able to know and act upon our context in order to change it (Darder, 2016, p. 61)
 - Developed by teachers and principal in a collaborative fashion and connected to the explored content

Teacher voice, alternating facilitation, and dialogue is key in order to authentically provide a space for discovery, deep reflection, application to community context or life experience, and in order to collectively develop action steps in response to collective reflection and learning. The goal of such dialogic sessions should be to engage in Culturally Responsive Teacher Development as defined earlier in this study including:

1. Critical Consciousness-Collective Critique of systems of oppression
2. Cultural Wealth-Valuing and accessing community cultural wealth
3. Caring Teacher Community-Sustaining a Caring Teacher Community

As a principal, it is important that you first fully understand the círculo and or dialogic process, so that you can speak authentically as to the need for this in developing collective understanding and collective praxis steps. It is essential that you become the model for this type of convening which requires authentic sharing (testimonio), deep listening that withholds judgment, and equity of voice. Modeling is essential since

teachers rarely convene in this manner. It is also imperative to lay out the purpose (equity, engagement of latinx students, development of pedagogy) behind the process and the aligned content that will be explored. Once this is modeled and the purpose is clear, a leader must step back and allow for the dialogue, reflection, and development of pedagogy to evolve naturally, only intervening whenever the process is not followed or not functioning. I found that the círculo process whereby tables were not used (as in other school meetings), and where we all sat in a perfect circle with nothing in front of us, was a bit uncomfortable for some and I had to reiterate the CCW informed pedagogical reasoning (both a method used by our ancestors, and key to building a caring community) behind using círculo as our process in building collective knowledge. Moreover, it is essential to be a full participant in the development of consciousness and development of praxis steps, doing so in a natural way that is mindful of positionality and privilege. That is, the school leader must be an equal participant that tempers him or herself from over sharing so to not take over meetings, and that has the liberty to share authentically whenever the opportunity presents itself and when sharing will build on others' ideas and thoughts. Engaging in such an effort, although not the norm, will lead to meaningful dialogue, deep reflection, collective learning and development of critical consciousness, and to teachers taking CCW informed action steps that will then have a positive and lasting impact on students of color.

Additional Considerations and Implications for Further Research and Practicum

Although some scholars have demonstrated how to develop CCW informed dispositions in teachers, the context has been teacher preparation programs in universities

(Bartolome, 1994; Darder, 2016). Little to no research focuses on how site leaders can continue the work of developing and or sustaining critical consciousness in teachers in order to ensure ideological dispositions toward developing CCW informed pedagogical approaches. This study is an example of the way a school leader along with teachers can develop a caring teacher community, all while collaboratively engaging in CRTD through the exploration of critical topics and content, application of these critiques to one's own life and local context, and through identifying and accessing community cultural wealth in students in order to reflect on pedagogy and to think about more effective ways to engage Latinx students. Ideological errors are not committed in the example of this study, since we used the CCW lens in thinking about pedagogical shifts. Additionally, this study also demonstrates how a principal and teacher team can use their Culturally Responsive dispositions built through the CPC process, to develop and attempt praxis steps intended to more fully engage students of color and the community at large (Freire, 1997). In attempting these praxis steps, it is important to also note that participants were also able to move away from the "methods fetish" (Bartolome, 1994) that hinders teacher learning; learning that only comes through taking action steps and reflecting on the action taken, as we did throughout the CPCs.

Some may have questions as to student achievement as a result of the CPC, and as a result of the praxis steps that we took. However, this study was not intended to measure student success; rather it was intended to impact teacher disposition toward more inclusive and affirming pedagogy. Many other studies have already demonstrated how CCW informed pedagogy, such as culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally sustaining

pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and others, which lead to better outcome for students of color (Aronson and Laughter, 2015; Cammarota, 2014; Covarrubias, 2017; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Tintiagco-Cubales, 2014; Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). This study can also be seen as fundamental for teachers and principals as well as district staff, as they think of ways to implement Ethnic Studies, CRP, CRT, CST, and or other CCW informed pedagogical models. Scholars in the field may also be interested in finding meaningful ways (possible partnerships with districts and school organizations) to continue the reflective awareness raising learning that is already happening in some teacher education programs, and that unfortunately immediately ends once teacher candidates become teachers. School and district leaders often have the right intentions toward equity yet they may not know how to fully partner with teachers in questioning the status quo and systems of oppression in order to fully understand how both consistently impact students of color. Additionally, school and district leaders may themselves be lacking in sufficient socio-political awareness, thus impeding them from not making ideological errors in their response to persisting achievement gaps. Scholars in the field of education that are interested in authentically engaging students of color and in re-imagining how the schooling system can work toward that end, may be some of the partners needed in districts and public schools in order to support authentic efforts seeking to bring about equity, inclusion, and better outcomes for students of color.

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