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By

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BRIDGING THE GAP: A CASE STUDY INVESTIGATING ONE COMMUNITY-
UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP AND PROGRAM IN AN URBAN CONTEXT

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Background: Historically, universities have held a civic obligation to the communities in which they exist as “infrastructures of responsibility.” A partnership was formed between the teacher education program at the University of Houston and a local community center in which student teachers volunteered in the after-school program.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to explore the social constructions and experiences of the participants during this “Community-University Partnership Program.” All subjective experiences and participant narratives associated with this partnership were utilized to examine the accounts of this one urban “Community Engagement Project.”

The inquiries were: What reasons emerged for creating, carrying out, and ultimately ending the “Community Engagement Project” and partnership as reported by the participants?; How were the experiences of the “Community Engagement Project” interpreted and conceptualized in reflections and interviews?; and, What motivations, beliefs, and actions were evident of the participants’ reported experiences of the “Community Engagement” project? **Methods:** This qualitative case study’s data

collection and analysis employed Carspecken’s three stages of critical qualitative research. Three kinds of data were used for this study: the researcher’s field notes, student teacher reflections, administrator interviews. The 257 student teacher reflections and three administrators’ interviews were analyzed using reconstructive analysis and horizon analysis. **Findings:** This case study resulted in four emergent themes: Affective Responses, New Experiences and Learnings, Programmatic Responses and Reflections, and Perceptions and the Students and Community. **Conclusion:** This research recommends that future replications of community engagement partnerships should be

accompanied by bias-reduction training for student teachers and administrators working within diverse populations, and comprehensive infrastructural provisions for the maintenance of the program.

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Chapter I

Introduction

In her song, “Talkin’ ‘Bout a Revolution,” Tracy Chapman (1988) sang:

Don't you know they're talkin' about a revolution. It sounds like a whisper. While they're standing in the welfare lines. Crying at the doorsteps of those armies of salvation. Wasting time in the unemployment lines. Sitting around waiting for a promotion. Don't you know they're talkin' 'bout a revolution. It sounds like a whisper. Poor people gonna rise up. And get their share. Poor people gonna rise up, and take what's theirs.

Practically a call to action, this song inspires the listener to make changes, to become “agitators” (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008) to a broken system. The words of this song give life to my philosophy as an educator. As teachers, we are taught that education is the way out of poverty, out of abuse, as escape from disadvantage, but since it was discovered by a U.S. Census in 2008 that, “47 percent of all low-income young adults were or had been enrolled in postsecondary education,” (Dimaria, 2010, p. 22) this claim quickly become a myth for those still living in poverty despite having a solid educational background. However, even if this number is disheartening, teachers still have a powerful tool in their educational arsenal. Educators not only have the rare opportunity to awaken their students to their power, but they also are given the opportunity to be awakened by their students. Although the struggle for equity and social justice in schools and society is an uphill climb, it is a matter of “critical hope”, the foundation on which this study stands. Joe Kincheloe (2008) stated that, “Hope is alive, but it must be a practical and not a naive hope. A practical hope doesn’t simply celebrate

rainbows, unicorns, nutbread, and niceness, but rigorously understands ‘what is’ in relation to ‘what could be’”(p. 72).

During the twenty-first century, the United States has shifted and changed in countless social, political, and educational directions. This country has gone through evolutionarily unforgettable events since its very inception. We have taken steps forward, but many steps were taken horizontally or simply backwards. As one of the wealthiest nations in the world, one in five children lives at or under the poverty line (B.D. Proctor, 2016), and Houston, Texas is no exception to that statistic. Although the number of people living at or below the poverty line has recently fallen slightly, Houston still measured its poverty rate in 2015 at 14.6 percent (DePillis, 2016). Based on these numbers, and what scholars and scientists have discovered about the cognitive and social-emotional development of children (D. Almond, 2011), it is imperative to address the immediate and educational needs of children. This motivation should be in the forefront of our city. As an educator, I am perpetually concerned with the improvement of education in all its realms, but as a social educator I am driven by an equitable and conscious pedagogical approach to classroom teaching.

The following case study’s purpose is to examine the nature of how one university-community partnership program was developed as a means to fulfill some of the community’s needs, as well as fulfill the needs of a teacher education program. The administrators and creators of this partnership had hoped for the community, “to see [vertical alignment] happen... what happens in high poverty areas, and low resource areas, is kids start out behind, so they get less early childhood enrichment programs. They are exposed to fewer words, so when they start school in kindergarten they are way

behind, and then they stay behind. So, enrichment should be the idea that you are targeting those areas and you are helping them catch up.” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). As one of the interview participants and administrators of the Community-University partnership, “Dr. Thames” was concerned with the training the student teachers. The expectation for meeting the needs of student teachers’ recorded in “Dr. Thames’s” interview, “was to allow students to be involved with kids in the community and to see what goes on outside of when they're in school, the school day. There is before and after school care, there is this whole other life that happened outside of their classroom” (“Dr. Thames”, personal communication, October 16, 2017).

Through a lens of “critical hope,” this case study will investigate the creation of one community-university partnership that ultimately led to the construction of a program that brought student teachers and young students living in local publically subsidized housing into contact with one another. I will explore the thoughts and perceptions of the student teachers who attended this program, as well as my own perceptions and experiences during my role as a Community Engagement Supervisor. Additionally, I will analyze the understandings of participants who played various important roles in the creation, operation, and involvement in the program and partnership. I will consider questions concerning the events before, during, and after the creation of this program. For example, what motivated the creation of this program? What areas need to be improved in the program in order to give student teachers the tools needed to find and activate “critical hope” in Houston’s schools? My own hope for this research is that it

will reveal and recognize injustice and inequity, and then inspire students and administrators to mobilize for justice.

In order to contextualize these analyses with myself as the researcher, I find it necessary to describe my own narrative. My narrative as a learner and as an educator brings a deeper understanding to the research, as it places the findings of this case study through the lens of my own experiences, understandings, and culture. Furthermore, this narrative provides a context for the analysis and findings.

The Role of the Educator

The goal of *the educator* is to improve the lives of her students. Along the way we attempt to teach them life skills or maybe offer valuable information that will drive them to become the person they hope to be. For a teacher to decide that this is their goal, I feel that there must be a struggle with what they believe is pedagogically important to them. By asking difficult and, perhaps even, uncomfortable questions pertaining to identity and motivations for teaching, a teacher can better attain the goal of stronger advocacy and become a role model for her students. Herbert Kohl (1976) believed that, “it makes sense, if you are thinking of becoming a teacher, to begin questioning yourself and understanding what you expect from teaching, and what you are willing to give to it.” (p. 23). Therefore, the role and narrative of the educator is an invaluable aspect of understanding the context of any classroom (Crockett, McCain, Jukes, 2010), but in particular, a teacher who comes from a background that tends to differ from that of her students. Any teacher would be making a mistake to assume that the answers to those questions have no bearing on successes or failures in the four walls of a classroom. An

educator must be honest and realistic by admitting that her experiences do play a crucial part in her abilities to reach, relate, and transform knowledge to her students.

In the Western construction of knowledge, “teacher” is well understood as a player of many roles, someone who wears many “hats”. Although it is important for a teacher to be reflective, the principle responsibility of becoming a teacher is to become an advocate for their students, the community in which they teach, and for the world in which they exist. In *Promoting the Social Justice Orientation of Students: the Role of the Educator*, Simon Funge (2001) outlines a study that deals with what educators feel is their responsibility to orient their students toward a social justice mindset. The results of that study were dismaying, as many of the educators felt that they not only did not have the time to worry about that aspect of the curriculum, they claimed they had more important and pressing topics to cover in the curriculum, but they also felt that the task was impossible. Many of the teachers felt that, “the responsibility of the educator is not to promote a social justice perspective, but rather to present social justice content, ostensibly with the hope that students might adopt a social justice orientation in their future practice” (p. 81). Based on modern pedagogical and educational research, this idea is antithetical to the lessons of scholars like Michael Apple, Joe Kincheloe, Howard Zinn, Maxine Greene, Nell Noddings, and bell hooks. These academics have written volumes speaking to the academic and progressive power of orienting a socially just mindset in students. It is not unusual to consider within the realm of understanding for a teacher, particularly a social studies teacher, to be geared toward the efforts of social justice. The role of *educator* may be defined quite differently from classroom to classroom, but personally, my role as an educator has and always will be as *the advocate*.

The hope and aim of the following will attempt to illustrate the experiences of myself as a researcher and educator, as well as, other participants involved in the research story. These stories will attempt to address the reasons behind vast achievement disparities and perceptions of urban students, as it relates to the experiences of pre-service educators. The city of Houston, although filled with economic and academic opportunity is every day becoming more populated and urban, and therefore, diversity has become an imperative aspect of curriculum building and educative experiences.

My Role as the Educator

When I contemplate my career path and question my motives for becoming a teacher, a certain level of anxiety rises in me. Being relatively young, I have often struggled with the question of why I have chosen to become an educator. Before I went into college, I always watched my own teachers and wished for myself that same life, but it became difficult for me to explain to others why I wanted to go down that path. When I finally graduated from college and was given my first teaching position as a fifth grade reading and mathematics teacher, I still could not articulate why I wanted to be a teacher, but the reason was beginning to come into focus. There was a feeling, an evolving image. A feeling of inspiration would swell inside of me when I was able to watch a student come to realization, wonder about the question I had posed, light up at the activity they were engaged in. I had found my creative space.

As a child, I had always felt more comfortable in a classroom than anywhere else, and there was no exception to this in the earliest days of my career. During that first year, there were so many moments that reassured me I chosen the right path, but one

moment in particular highlights why I am in a field that reminds students of their power.

It was just after lunch, and all of the students were heading into their afternoon classes, and a student in my class, Samantha, had returned to class as close to rage as a fifth grader can be. Her anger was palpable. It showed in her tears. She was inconsolable. I went to her and asked her what had happened. She explained to me how throughout the entirety of the school year, she felt the Montessori classes were receiving preferential treatment to that of the traditionally taught children. She continued to tell me that an event had just occurred in which she went to tell the principal, whom had created the Montessori program in the school, that she, a traditional student, was being bullied by a Montessori student.

“Well, what did she say?” I asked.

“Nothing. She didn’t believe me! She didn’t do anything!”

In my lack of experience, I was simply taken aback. I was utterly confused at the notion of a principal completely ignoring a student asking for help, and especially for an issue concerning bullying. Because I valued my job and did not want to rock the boat with an administrator (particularly as a brand new teacher), I simply consoled her as best I could and told her to ignore the jeers. Once Samantha calmed down, the day went on as normal, but it was the next day, that I learned my first lesson in the power of student activism. The next morning, Samantha came to class with her usual confidence holding a piece of loose leaf notebook paper, the edges freshly perforated from her journal. She came to me and explained that she had had enough of it. She proudly held that piece of paper, which contained the signatures of all of her classmates who agreed with her that

the principal had been giving special treatment to children in a different program than she. She explained that she had already gone to the front office, by herself, to make an appointment to see the principal and give her this petition. I was completely blown away.

Samantha is now a junior in high school, and has most likely forgotten the injustices she faced as a fifth grader, but I gained more insight into what it meant to be a teacher that day. I have yet to reach the status of being an incredible teacher at all times, but I have had incredible teachable moments, both for my students and for myself. I may not have been the activist-advocate that Samantha needed that day, but I did remind her that her feelings were valid, and that her concerns mattered. She mattered. This is where socially just and awakened teaching showed up for the first time in my classroom (Picower, 2012).

As from this point, I had two full semesters of higher education teaching under my belt, and that same feeling comes back to me frequently. From the moment I invited a transgender student out of the classroom to ask for his proper pronouns, to when at the end of the semester, an entire class came together to donate money to a local charity for hungry people in Houston in my name, I quickly became aware of what I was doing. To quote my students, they had wanted to thank me, “for helping to inspire [them] to give back and right wrongs”. I crave to be back in the classroom every day, because it truly is where my heart lies, and I suppose this is why I teach, why I chose to be an educator. A feeling is difficult to describe to anyone who has not encountered it, but how I feel in a classroom is just that. I may not be Howard Zinn or Maria Montessori just yet, but I do believe I have a heart after their hearts. I only want for my students to be the best versions of themselves, and this is what makes the teacher such a powerful curriculum

maker (Craig, 2012). As culture can carry with it into the classroom a “hidden curriculum,” a teacher’s curriculum may be much harder to access, as it is most likely unconscious. This is why my own self-reflection is such an obligatory undertaking, for a teacher’s narrative is what projects the direction of her classroom.

A Sense of Justice

How does someone, particularly an educator, come to the realization that some people in this world are given better and more opportunities simply because of their “cultural capital” (Saltman, 2014)? I would argue through diverse experiences and critical dialogue (Greene, 1978). The following narrative seeks to fit that mold.

I was raised in kitchens. In the proper Southern circles I was brought up in, the women in my family (and the men who were privy) knew that all of the important information and transformative experiences started in the kitchen. Leaning over the island counter, I would have countless conversations with my mother about life, about God, about society, about my family.

I can still remember how our driveway would exude the smell of grease for a whole week after my father’s fish was fried to perfection. I was never happier than when my family of five spent two hours around the kitchen table just talking. Talking about the days we had had, the books we had read, the people we had seen, and maybe even the pain we had felt.

I came home from hockey practice when I was twelve. I had been holding in more than the usual amount of emotional baggage for an introvert. The entry into our house lead almost directly into the kitchen and I was emphatically and magnetically drawn to that same island counter that knew the soft spot in my belly so intimately. I

leaned over and placed my elbows on the counter, and was welcomed back to that familiar place, and I began to feel that same painful lump inside on my throat that had told me not to cry so many time before, but that I would despite my protest; that side of me through which my father spoke. At this junction in my life, the things I occupied my time with were distracting enough that I did not need anything other than the daily activities that kept me from swallowing the world around me. But that day was different. That day had slapped me awake. I had recently learned not only one of my teacher's, my coach, was living a lie, but that also humans were capable of utter denial. I looked up at the woman I held in the ivory tower of my own creation, and I asked her, "Mom. I just found out that Coach Lisa and Coach Shelley are actually a couple!"

My mother responded with, "Well, yes, but why are you so upset about it? Why are you crying?"

I, in my pain, replied, "They are lying to everyone! Even Lisa's daughter doesn't know! Why are they lying to everyone about it?" My mother's eyes were filled with agony and exhaustion in that moment. In the kindest and most collected way she could, she revealed to me, "Honey, people keep things like that a secret because they don't want to hurt people with the truth, but that doesn't make it right... You know, I have been having a similar struggle."

From this moment forward, my life has taken many sharp turns. I learned that my mother was attracted to women when I was twelve, but it was not until I was fifteen that my parents separated, and divorced. My mother lived with this mammoth of a secret for so long, and it made me question everything that I believed to be true, including how I saw the world and who I thought I was.

It was this experience and the many more that followed and preceded it, which helped shaped how I viewed the world around me. It was my relationship with my mother that helped me to not only see the world as grey spaces, but through all the experiences my mother gave to me one of the most important was how she taught me to see my privilege and to question it, and it started with the books she read to me.

My mother read *Anansi the Spider* (Gleeson, 1991) to me as little girl, and this was how I was first introduced to the darker side of human nature. On the first page of this special book an image and introductory story was displayed. The illustration showed a line of people wearing brightly colored cloth coverings and being directed onto a wooden ship. My mother would read the words, “[then] one day, a terrible thing happened. Many, many of those people were taken away from their homes in Africa. Men made them slaves” (Gleeson, 1991), and I was perplexed. I can still remember staring at the drawing and being confused by the concept of making humans into slaves. She would ask me to think about how the people of Africa had been forced to leave their homes and how after that they had been forced to work for many generations against their will. She also told me they were denied basic human rights, including an education. It was here, in my room, at bedtime, that I was introduced to social justice. My mother would read me the books that many other parents were afraid were too upsetting or too depressing for children of my age. I would ask questions about race and what it might have been like to be treated so poorly, and she would respond by asking me how I would answer those questions myself. My mother, although at times imperfect and damaged, had given me the gift of recognitions and legitimizing painful experiences through what I read and questioned. As I grew older, this love reading and the human experience began

to grow immensely within me, and so I began to evolve. As I changed and grew, so did the books I chose to read. I wanted to know and understand more about what I was blind to.

Theoretical Framework: Reflections of Race, Ethnicity, and Urban Education

As a white female, I am most definitely in the majority when it comes to the ethnic makeup of teachers. This country's teachers are, "primarily women (75%) and primarily white (85%)" (Brown, 2013), there are strong indications that racist ideologies can be carried out through the well meaning, but unaware, classroom practices. This fact is not only unsettling, it is sobering because in order for a white female teacher (in my own opinion and understanding) to be successful with a diverse classroom, she needs to struggle with her own understanding of race of privilege. Through this process of self-discovery and revelation, the recognition of personal privilege can take place and once that recognition materializes, she can better orient herself towards the efforts of social justice.

It has taken time to understand the meaning and consequences of my own white privilege, of which I am still working on and always will be. At the start of my critical examination of race, it was easy to hear the other white people around me say, "it's all about your attitude, and your success it only measured by how hard you work," and think that was right, but I kept coming back to that feeling inside that told me to keep looking for answer that was not so simple. Just like any complicated problem, the solution will also be complex. I have had to constantly ask myself to be awakened and really question the context of the society in which I live. For a white person to recognize their privilege is not an easy journey. It almost functions as a grieving process. There are aspects of

the journey that involve guilt, anger, and confusion, but the final step is not acceptance. There is no final step in the journey of the socially just teacher. This goal and endeavor is lifelong and constantly evolving. It is a constant struggle to stay in a state of consciousness and know that some of the things I have been afforded are not because of my merits, but instead because I happen to have more cultural capital (Saltman, 2014) than that of people who fall outside the white, cisgender, Protestant, and male categories.

Now that I have contextualized myself as the researcher and helped to illustrate my understandings of the educational landscape, I will discuss the four major themes discovered from this case study of this one Community-University Partnership Program.

Background

The University of Houston lies in the heart of Houston's Third Ward, located on the Southeast side of Houston's Management District. This neighborhood has gone through significant phases of cultural, economic, and educational change. "From its days as an African-American enclave, to a period of racial segregation, to its decline in the 1970s," (Sabatino, 2008, p. 78), the community known as Third Ward has been rarely associated with the University of Houston, or particularly the College of Education. There have been efforts to keep the university separate from the surrounding neighborhood, and as a result segregation has become a physical and metaphorical barrier between the university and the community. Because of this barrier, the implication for students not only in the College of Education, but also for the outer community, is notable. It is easy for student teachers enrolled in the College of Education to excuse themselves from the issues facing the local community (i.e. gentrification, policing, poverty) when the training they are

receiving does not involve any discussion or experiences that asks them focus on those points of contention.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, I found the opportunity to work with the community members of a local public subsidized housing complex and afterschool program through my role as a graduate assistant in the department of Teacher Education. The idea for this program, which was spearheaded by a leader in College of Education, was to create a partnership with the Teacher Education program and a community afterschool program, in order to give more authentic experiences to student teachers working in urban schools. This afterschool program was housed in the community building of a low-income housing project. These homes are not only located in an area of Houston that represents a rich history and community, but also an epicenter for research issues such as social justice, race, and education.

Historically, universities have held a civic obligation to the communities that they exist in and have held titles as “infrastructures of responsibility,” (Watson, 2007, p. 9). This fact leads me to the conclusion that the College of Education at the University of Houston should be held to that same long-standing covenant. The initial creator of this “Community Engagement Project” stated in an interview, “that if you live in a community, you should be a part of that community” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017).

This was what drove him to work with members of the College and community to create what would ultimately become a important partnership and experience for so many student teachers. Furthermore, before the creation and implementation of the “Community Engagement Project”, it was difficult to find members of the university’s

community actively cultivating a meaningful relationship with the community surrounding the campus. This assessment was based on the responses of the participants. The following case study illustrates the my experiences in the role of community engagement supervisor during the “Community Engagement Project” in the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2016, as well as, the experiences of the other selected participants involved in a story that illuminates the need for localized community education that partners with universities and teacher education programs.

Since the needs of Houston’s educational landscape is always diversifying and evolving, it is necessary to meet the educational needs of our diverse student landscape. An easily identifiable area for improvement is in the field of teacher education and training. As a way to more accurately understand the driving need for university-community partnerships and projects, it is appropriate to employ a critical qualitative methodological approach. This study will be conducted based on a framework of research methodology outlined and described by Phil Carspecken (1996) and his Five Stages of critical qualitative research. This methodological framework allows for a better understanding of how the “Program” was received, viewed, and interpreted by all participants who came into contact with it. The power of critical qualitative research is that it, “encompasses the ability to study significant problems of practice, engage with practitioners in the conduct of research studies, learn and change processes during a study” (Kozleski, 2017, p. 19). The findings of this study will hopefully lead to changes and improvements in the program at a later point, or in future programs. The reason, more specifically, I have chosen Carspecken’s (1996) methods of data collection and analysis are so that I can provide the chance to “[portray] through the imagery of a focal

region... the object of my study” (p. 35). The aim of this case study is to tell the story of this community-university engagement program through the voices of those who experienced it, so as to more fully understand the significance of social structures and the, “nature of action, experience, and... conditions,” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 26) of the participants while maintaining the function of the aforementioned program.

Statement of the Problem and Questions

Mouzelis (1991) believes that a methodological approach based in Social Theory is, “not meant to produce empirically testable hypotheses, but merely to prepare the ground for an empirical investigation of social structures and actors” (p. 2). For this study, my goal is only to discover social structures and any possible phenomena involved in this one Community Engagement Project. This study explored the perceptions, actions, and motivations of myself, as the researcher, the student teachers who were asked to participate, and the administrative bodies of the program who breathed life into this Community Engagement Project. I will ask of all of participants their understandings of what took place before, during, and after this university-community partnership. The research questions of this study are:

1. What were the reasons for creating, carrying out, and ultimately ending the “Community Engagement Project” and partnership as reported by the participants?
2. How were the experiences of the “Community Engagement Project” interpreted and conceptualized?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore social constructions and the experiences of the participants during the time period in which this particular “Community Engagement Project” was carried out. In order to complete this task, it is necessary for the case study to consider social routines, social sites, cultural norms, subjective experiences, and participant narratives associated with this partnership to consider the benefits and pitfalls of this urban “Community engagement project”. The further purpose of this study is, as many critical pedagogues are concerned with, to shine a light on and deconstruct the power structures, which continue to perpetuate a “violent curriculum” (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2011). Kincheloe described the effects of this curriculum as “the ways power operates to construct identities and oppress particular groups” (2008, p. 4). This precisely depicts the purpose and intention of critical qualitative research, therefore it is also the purpose and intention of the following study.

Significance of the Study

It is important to note that there is currently a gap in the field of educational research regarding the perceptions and definitions of the terms “urban education” and “urban students” and how those terms manifest themselves in an educational setting as the one I am attempting to describe and what perhaps the motivations are for the creation of community-university projects. There is no one single definition for “urban education”. Understanding how the term is conceptualized in different contexts and with participants is a critical issue that needs to be investigated. The sources that describe a clear, delineated image of “urban education” do not exist, or are extremely difficult to locate. Many educators can recognize the connection and significance of these words,

and can draw out a simple illustration of it, but the picture is still quite blurry. The significance of this study lies within experiences of the other participants and their narratives associated with this “Community Engagement Project”, as well as any recurring themes, which present themselves in the archived written reflections of student teachers who were asked to participate in this program. Written permission from the instructor of the teacher education course and owner of the reflections will permit access to these archived records for the researcher.

The investigation of this case study will add to a body of educational research concerning community engagement programs by showing what is currently being perpetuated in this, one local educational community. Based on the field of teacher education in research, there exist varied journals and quantitative studies that address the realm of Community Engagement Projects and how it connects to the improvement of teacher education training, but the gap for this research can be found in the specificity of this one program. Although many community engagement programs were born from the various halls of this institution, there exist few qualitative studies that provide an indepth look at community engagement programs which partner with teacher education programs within this urban Houston setting. A study of this nature has been necessary for some time, as it will allow not only the Teacher Education program at the University of Houston to strengthen its knowledge of urban education, but also how community engagement programs functioning within the Third Ward can be contextualized and made to be more culturally relevant for community members. For a city as ethnically, racially, financially, and educationally diverse as Houston (Strait & Gong, 2010), it is imperative to understand how this “urban” “Community Engagement Project” came into being and

the stories which sprung from it. Since no scholar has told of these events or of this *specific* community-university partnership, so there exists a gap, as well as a contribution to educational research.

Conclusion

In the following chapter, I will build the foundations on which this study is built by discussing how “urban education” has been previously described and utilized for. Additionally, by providing a history of the Third Ward neighborhood in Houston, Texas, the study will be further contextualized. Next, adding to the framework, I will outline the current field of critical pedagogy, its history and how it plays an integral role in this research project. I will also illustrate the connection and significance of how Critical Race Theory (CRT) seeks to reveal the hidden structures that racism propagates in the American educational system. Additionally, as a balm to these hidden structures, it is essential to discuss how powerful multicultural education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and community education are for a curriculum that only meets the needs of the majority. Finally, I will discuss the origins and current state of teacher education, as it will be the field of focus for this study.

Chapter II

A Review of the Literature

“What I have loved in your writing is the abiding warmth behind the intellectual push, the voice that is critical, but not judgmental, both fiercely discerning and endlessly inquiring.” -Julie Searle (2010)

The research being brought into question works around a theoretical framework that includes the constructions of urban education, critical race theory, multicultural education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and teacher education practices. These areas and the themes that support them allow a conversation to take place that questions the pedagogical practices of undergraduate teacher education programs and the experiences they provide to ready pre-service teachers the skills required to teach in the ever growing and expanding urban classroom. An explanation of urban education and its history is needed to not only understand the context in which the following study will be taking place, but also to understand the culture that exists in the field of public education to this point. Critical race theory will be needed to explain that the act of teaching is a political one, and can be used to bring about social change and equity in the current political system. Multiculturalism and culturally responsive pedagogy will be utilized to outline ideal classroom and pedagogical practice in order to best serve the needs of an ever expansive diverse and urban student population. Teachers need to be able to speak their students’ language, and that may not mean what many undergraduates in a teacher education program want it to mean.

This section highlights the broad themes tied to the development and growth of my research questions. In order to understand the population I hope to work with, I have

first gone into detail of the history and current state of urban public schools. It is essential for this study to fully understand and recognize the inner workings of trends and pedagogical practices in urban classrooms, in both the past and the present. In addition to this history, I have described the effects poverty has had on the education of students in urban populations, as well as its devastating effects on the educational system. Next, I discuss the basis for which this study is fixed upon, critical pedagogy. By exploring the scholarly works done by critical pedagogues, this study will situate itself within the theory that believes, “changes are brought about through critique, resistance, and struggle. It aims to enable people to avoid manipulation and to empower them” (Winter, 2005). This truly is the purpose and aim of this study, as well as my own personal goal as an educator.

Once I have discussed the necessities of critical pedagogy, I feel it is important to accompany this broader theory with the history and politics of race and education, as this will further reveal how the connection between the two is unmistakably true. Once these connections have been made, I will go on to discuss the importance of Critical Race Theory and how critical the legal system has been to the educational system. By delving into the legalities of the public and university educational system, the reader will be able to see that in order to study the authenticity and effectiveness of community engagements for pre-service teachers, this is where the conversation must go. In an effort to further examine the issues of how teachers are trained to educate urban classrooms, culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural education are needed to bring this study into further focus. Each of these schools of thought bring an awareness to the classroom. While multicultural education creates room for differences in the classroom by

recognizing and honoring those differences, culturally responsive pedagogy is the action teachers take to contextualize and situate classroom-teaching practices (Gay, 2000).

Lastly, I will close this review of literature with a detailed description of the population I hope to work with, as this particular community has a make-up similar to many other urban communities. So, in order to fully understand where I hope to take this research, I believe contextualizing and localizing these issues can and will only make for a stronger and grounded critical-qualitative approach to this research.

Urban Education

Why is urban education so pertinent to a well-rounded teacher's education? To answer this question, one need only to look at the demographics of any major metropolitan city to see that this country is not only growing in population, but that our population is becoming more and more urban with each passing day, looking to the metropolitan areas for economic and educational opportunity. The numbers and rates of urbanization across the United States have been consistently growing decade after decade (Brown, Cromartie, & Kulcsar, 2004; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), therefore the issues of urbanization are paramount, particularly in relation to education. The National Center for Education statistics simply defines an urban area as, "areas of 50,000 or more population and urban clusters of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 population," (2010), and because of this definition, which has been fairly consistent in its essence since the inception of public education, the charge of the public school system has been to give a quality education to a numerous and diverse population.

Underneath the umbrella that is urban education, are the various theories and topics that come together to explain where the public educational system has been, where

it is going, and the holes that have been left by traditional and academic rationalistic approaches to the curriculum (Eisner, 1985). Because “urban education” does not have one single or limited definition, the most accurate way to describe the currents within urban education is to delve into the theories that explain the legs on which it stands. In addition to the history of the United States’ public school’s creation, it is essential to note the current political and economic state of the field, as well as the philosophies that the leading pedagogues believe will lead to a more equitable and critical field of urban education.

The History of “Urban” and Urban Education

The public school system was born out of the Industrial Revolution, when the country needed factory workers who would fall into line, perform, and produce. In what David Tyack refers to as, “the bureaucratization of urban schools” (p. 11), the American school needed to be a place of discipline and duty, so that the government and private sector could thrive on the promise of controlled and complacent citizens. By the end of the nineteenth century, the idea that there was truly “one best way” to educate urban communities was a principle belief and all of the urban, metropolitan areas began to practice within this machinery of education (Tyack, 1974, p. 40). The reason the school system needed to become so incredibly systematized was because, “the perfecting of urban education was the key to the prosperity and survival of the republic” (p. 40).

The connection between the functionality of democracy, a somewhat educated citizenry, and urbanization was that in order for a democratic republic to properly function, the voters needed to feel some semblance of responsibility for the continuation of that system. In order to do this, the education they would receive would inform those

pupils of what it meant to be a good student and citizen. “The first requisite of the school is *Order*: each pupil must be taught first and foremost to conform his behavior to a general standard,” (p. 43) one superintendent from St. Louis wrote in 1871. This “order” was successful in carrying out the real goal of the school, which was referred to as “the hidden curriculum” (Tyack, 1974). This “hidden curriculum” may not have been a part of the official pedagogy, but just like any child who is learning to function in society, some behaviors were rewarded while others were punished. Positive reinforcement would be given for high marks and wanted - or positive- classroom behaviors. Through this conditioning, students would quickly learn what they needed to do in order to be successful in a classroom environment. In a collection of articles highlighting the growth and importance of urban education, *Teacher Education and Urban Education: The move from the traditional to the pragmatic* (2002), Charles Jenks deconstructs the history and creation of the modern city as it is related to the evolution of social education in his article, *Evolution of Social Studies Education: The melting pot to the salad bowl*. He states that social studies education has changed greatly since the 1890s, but one aspect of that education has remained steadfast. He writes that, “there has been one common thread that binds the social studies curriculum; citizenship education,” (p. 49) and because of this the systematization of education has always carried the essence of falling into line or rule following, or what Hertzberg (1981) called “social betterment.”

In addition to the aim of making the school a place of order and discipline, the educational landscape was, of course, used to measure who were the strongest students and who were the weakest. Competition has and, mostly likely, will always be a part of

the American identity, and the schoolhouse was no exception. Already into the 1870s, testing and the measurement of academic success could be seen immediately as harmful to both teachers and students, especially since early in the practice, the results of those tests were public record. The standards, to which the students were held, set them up to fail. Later the National Education Association stated that the publication of tests results, “should not be used to compare schools and teachers,” (Tyack, 1974) but perhaps those scores could be used to measure an intake of “positive knowledge”. So, the testing continued, and does to this day. Because the creation of the city lead to various social issues, “such as overcrowding, poverty, and social alienation” (Jenks, 2002, p. 50), Social Darwinism became almost a necessary tool to function in the urban educational system. Living in the city meant that only the strongest, smartest, and scrupulous would survive.

In the early educational reform movements of the 1950s, since many of the wealthier Americans were migrating to the newly created suburbs, what was left of the urban population tended to be more made up of people lower on the socioeconomic scale, and because of this and various political moves, poverty and the issues tied to it became a problem of the city. So due to this demographic shift, educational reform has been historically an attempt to address the issues of poor people in America’s cities (Jenks, 2002). As mentioned above, one of the major goals of educational reform and implementation is to teach democracy and democratic values to students, and social studies educators have traditionally been the ones charged with instilling these ideals and beliefs in American children, but what happens when those values exclude and alienate so many of the voices in urban populations? What urban education had become

by the end of the twentieth century, was what Reagan and his administration called a “back-to-basics” approach, which made the classroom to be centered around and controlled by the teacher, which enforced the deficit model of teaching (Kakos, 2013). Students had become empty vessels, who brought nothing into the classroom worth contributing. Social studies was an area of which the curriculum had already been decided would be based on the contributions of White, upper class males. Since urban populations tend not to reflect White and affluent populations, what good would it be to enforce a curriculum and pedagogy that does not relate to the students being taught? The current educational system is set up in such a way that the requirements for finishing such programs forces the students to conform and acquire a specific set of knowledge and skills that have been preselected by the powerful elite as, “the ‘right’ knowledge” (Saltman, 2014).

A Response to Poverty

In William Clayson’s 2010 book, *Freedom is Not Enough: The War on Poverty and the Civil Rights Movement in Texas*, he explores the long and complicated history of the structural racism and classism within the political and economic policies that lead to protests and riots from Chicano and African-American Texans due to the discrimination that kept their neighborhoods poor. Once the economic history of this state has been analyzed, it is easy to see how the rates of poverty in Texas (although have since dropped from the 1980s) are still concerning and continue to have a lasting effect on our citizens.

The manner in which institutions create language and terms for specific subjects, shapes the ways in which the matter will be addressed and approached. Urban education, which has long been charged with “solving” poverty has maintained a pattern

of repeating the very same power structures that have been practiced by previous generations and therefore inadvertently (or consciously) “produce, ‘subjects who fit into, constitute and reproduce a social order’” (Haymes, Joseph & Vidal, 2014; Barker & Galasinski, 2001). Social consequences for what Foucault referred to as “governmentality” are populations who are unaware of their oppression. Haymes and Vargas (2014) claim that, “It is through this way of governing that modern institutions regulate or ‘police’ societies and subject populations to bureaucratic regimes and modes of discipline”. This is how modern societies are able to perpetuate the cycles of policies that, “link the production of knowledge about the “poor” with forms of institutional power and intervention that represent and produce ‘poor people’” (Haymes & Vargas, 2014). Within the context of neoliberal educational politics, the American schooling system has hurt students in two ways: by teaching them that “the oppressed” are not actually exploited, but rather responsible for their condition, and in addition to this, the systems have deprived the majority of young people the knowledge needed to end the multi-generational cycle of poverty (Blair & Santos, 2014). There has been no exception to the manners in which pre-service teachers have been prepared and trained for the critical job that lies ahead of them. According to Krain and Shadle (2006):

[v]ery few undergraduates have more than a basic understanding of this global crisis, and very few college courses deal adequately with that knowledge gap...To help bridge the gap between the reality of poverty, inequality, and hunger, and that of the average college student, innovative pedagogical techniques must be used.

In accordance with the American cultural development and favor for capitalism and neoliberalism, schools in this country perpetuate the myth that, “education will lift the poor out of poverty and materially enrich our entire nation” (Berliner & Glass, 2014). The problem with this belief is that, while education may be able to close some gaps in achievement, without the social and political reforms that are so desperately needed, poverty will continue to flourish and the causes of justice will become futile (Berliner & Glass, 2014). The common belief is that if a young woman wants to end her family’s multigenerational cycle of living hand-to-mouth, her best investment is to get a good education and work very hard to get a job that will elevate her to a higher socioeconomic status. This is the story that American schools have been telling since the creation of Horace Mann’s Common School: education will end poverty.

Almost two hundred years later, poverty is still a devastating issue in the United States and politicians continue to believe that the only way to alleviate poverty is through education. Even in the previous administration, President Obama has advocated for Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs with the hopes that this early intervention will help to create more students who, after high school, will be “career and college ready” (Berliner & Glass, 2014). This is not to say that education is not a worthy investment, as there is plenty of data that supports a positive correlation between education levels and lifetime earnings, but there is something missing from a formula that relies too heavily on a political system that aims to produce consumers and manufacturers of a globally competitive economy. Perhaps though, profitable gain should not be the motivating factor for why someone should want to educate themselves.

Even if a young woman were to invest in her education by going to college and aim for a high-paying career, she still must face the high probability that she will not be paid the same amount as her male counterpart. In David Berliner's book, *50 Myths and Lies that Threaten America's Public Schools; the Real Crisis in Education*, he states that, "financial benefit from education is lower for women, people of color, and children of parents with lower-than-average socioeconomic status." Women, especially women of color, face the very real challenge of investing the same amount in a degree that may not be worth as much as a man with the very same diploma. According to the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center in New York, in 2008 the annual median income for Asian males with a bachelor's degree was \$60,300, but when compared to the median income for Hispanic females with the very same bachelor's degree, \$41,000, it raises some disturbing and important issues with the current social and political climate.

The political language and attitudes that have; in the past dissuaded women from choosing certain professions while, at the same time creating the "glass ceiling" for women in professional and managerial professions continues to have the very same impact on the young women of today. It is a simple connection to make that the consequences of neoliberal politics in education, as well as in the politics of poverty, lack any explanation or attempt at addressing why the current system is failing to bring millions of women and their families out of poverty.

Critical Pedagogy

In the current progressive approaches to educational philosophy and how it pertains to urban education, John Dewey and his pedagogical philosophy of learning through experience is the foundation of democratic and critical educational practice.

Austin Volz, in his article, *Beyond Commonplace Definitions: Dewey's Conceptions of Democracy and Education* (2014), stated of John Dewey's philosophy:

The variety of forms of education may take in different societies [as] a reflection of the society itself. As Dewey wrote, 'a criterion for educational criticism and construction implies a particular social ideal' (Dewey, 2004, p. 95). Just as the criteria for the success of the educational system in a society cannot be separated from the society itself, so the society to a large extent determines the aim of education. (p. 84)

In so little words, John Dewey and his followers have come to the belief that education is a reflection of what a society finds important, but the problem with this is that our American society has found a hypocritical and antithetical approach to how democracy is practiced in the classroom. In John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916) he explains his conceptualization of education and its purpose, as well as its relationship to the ideals of democracy. He illustrates what education should look like by writing that, "[on] the active hand, experience is trying... On the passive, it is undergoing. When we experience something, we act upon it..." (p.133). In order to truly learn something, a student must experiment, watch the result, and then respond to that result. Beyond this, the connection between the aims of education and democracy, as Dewey explained it is,

“that the government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated” (p. 83).

In more recent texts, Joe Kincheloe has been one the most important scholars to start bridging the gap between theory and practice. His *Critical Pedagogy: A Primer* (2008) is a convenient place to start for any educator who wishes to understand or practice critical pedagogy. Kincheloe clearly continues the goals of Deweyan learning by stating that, “[T]hus proponents of critical pedagogy understand that every dimension of schooling and every form of educational practice are politically contested spaces” (p. 3). Essentially, what Kincheloe is advocating for in his work is for the fully awakened educator to become a social activist teacher, to become aware of the fact that students who come into their classrooms are not empty vessels that need to be filled, but rather students who can recognize and fight against injustice in the world.

Another aspect of Kincheloe’s teachings asks of the critical pedagogue to become an active member of the community through the use of culture (2008, p. 4). To fully understand the students who live in the community a teacher is working in, one must become aware of what Kincheloe states is, “the ways power operates to construct identities and oppress particular groups”. Kincheloe goes on to describe, in detail, all of the major aspects of critical pedagogy and how a teacher can practice all of the pedagogical techniques outlined in the philosophy, but without what Paulo Freire referred to as, “radical love” (Liambas & Anastassios, 2012), a teacher can only be a semblance of the maximum potential she possesses.

Paulo Freire, described by Sandra Smidt (2014) as a man, “[you] will almost certainly know that what he is now famous for, throughout the world, is his outrage at

how the poor are oppressed and kept silent so that the status quo is maintained.” (p. 23). Smidt goes on to explain that Freire’s work was, “drawn so directly from his own experience his working life was committed to understanding just what is was within the educational establishments... that ensured that the poor were kept ignorant, malleable, and passive,” (p. 3) and this is what pushed him to uncover so many truths within society and the classroom. Freire's experiences as an impoverished child in the town of Jaboatao in Brazil, and his later experiences as an educator, resulted in the writing of one of the most famous and sought after books for educators in the 20th century, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000). In this famous work, he outlines how the people in positions of power, as well as the oppressed have had their humanity stolen. The “dehumanization” (Freire, 1998) of the oppressor takes the form of reiterating the cycle of oppression and by the creation of a “distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human” (p. 45). For the populations which are the oppressed “having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom” (p. 48). In laymen’s terms, what he is hypothesizing is that the educational, political, and economic systems have been created in a way that keeps the poor oppressed and the oppressors “dehumanized” and with a power that is unchecked by the status quo.

As one his most important points, which I believe is central to the practice of critical pedagogy, Freire points out that a pedagogy cannot be created for the oppressed, as that is a continuation of the tyrannical power structure, but instead should, “be forged *with*... the oppressed in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity” (p. 49). Through his teachings, Paulo Freire has been successful in his effort to recognize that in order to free the oppressed, it will require a reworking of how classroom teaching

is conducted and shaped. We must give to ourselves as educators the agency to advocate for the students that do not fit into the status quo, for the students who do not have the cultural and monetary capital that is required to be a member of the elite classes.

Another member of the critical pedagogy family is Shirley Steinberg, who, mostly working with Joe Kincheloe throughout her career focused on cultural, urban studies as well as critical pedagogy. Steinberg looked in the process of inquiry as a powerful tool for the classroom. In her 2012 book, *Dancing in the Light: Essential Elements for an Inquiry Classroom*, Steinberg poses the question, “what does research tell us about inquiry in practice? How does it work in classrooms?” The question she poses that I am most interested in is the latter, as I want to know what role inquiry plays in the education of pre-service teachers and the experiences they have. Steinberg goes on to outline the two major themes and twelve topics and that surround inquiry. By simply focusing on the two major themes discovered, the first being the “processes to guide inquiry” and the second, “looks at the social skills and dispositions that are required of teachers and students to make this shared responsibility happen,” (p. 26) one can see that the process of inquiry is not an easily achieved goal, but instead, rather a constant struggle for progress.

So what makes this process of inquiry successful for both teachers and students? With her co-author, Marcia Behrenbruch, Steinberg emphasizes the essential elements of inquiry: “discussion with its greater implications of discourse, social mediation of learning, the importance of planning, valuing uncertainty, reflection~action, and respect” (Steinberg & Behrenbruch, 2012, p. 111). All of this points the reader to see that nothing is more powerful to social and educational change than of, “valuing the

voice of the learner, acknowledging the power of multiple voices to learn together” (p. 130), which truly is my aim in inquiring into the experiences of pre-service educators. By looking critically into the educative experiences of pre-service teachers and then asking them to reflect on those experiences is one of the first steps to becoming what some scholars refer to as being an “awakened” educator. One of these scholars is the brilliant and well-known critical pedagogue, Maxine Greene.

If Maxine Greene could be summed up in one word, that word would be “awake.” Since her earliest philosophical writings, she has always spoken to the importance of being alive and awake to what is occurring around oneself. She particularly advocated for consciousness through the medium of art and the aesthetics for what she believed to be the primary goal of education: to help students and their teachers create meaning in their lives. In her work, “Variations on a Blue Guitar” she outlined her philosophy (2001):

What I think we ought to understand is that paintings, dances, musical works, poems, and the rest are deliberately made for the sake of such experience. They are sometimes called privileged objects for that reason. But if they are to come into existence for you as aesthetic objects or events, they also have to be attended to in a particular way. They do not open themselves automatically, anymore than do apples and cherries on a fruit stand; they have to be achieved as aesthetic objects, and that has everything to do with you... My point is that, if the painting or the dance performance or the play is to exist as an aesthetic object or event for you, it has to be attended to in a particular way. You have to be fully present to it - to focus your attention on it and, again, to allow it to exist apart from your

everydayness and your practical concerns. I do not mean that you, as a living person with your own biography, your own history, have to absent yourself. No, you have to be there in your personhood, encountering the work much in the way you encounter other persons.

What I find to be necessary about her philosophy is that she acknowledges a truth that the arts, literature, and aesthetics do not simply exist for their own sake. They must be given meaning by the awakened and conscious observer or creator. In order for anything observed, learned, or perceived in a meaningful manner, “[t]here is work done on the part of the percipient as there is on the part of the artist. The one who is lazy, idle, or indurated in convention to perform this work will not see or hear” (Dewey, 2005). Every moment in life, particularly in education, can be construed into an aesthetic experience for which to inspire and mold someone into the person they were made to be. They can become closer to their own reality.

Another giant in the field of critical pedagogy is Henry Giroux. Along with the previously mentioned educators and scholars, Giroux has described his work and the work of critical pedagogy as, “concerned with the interlocking relations between material structures of power and the pedagogical force of cultural politics” (2006). Giroux and his body of writings have worked to shine a light on how what happens within and outside of schools has shaped pedagogical practice and cultural value, and he has done this mostly through the study and dissection of popular culture in his more recent works. Through his research, he has been able to find connections between, “learning [and] social change... theory to practice, intellectual scholarship to the problems of public life, and education to the promise of a radical and inclusive democracy” (p. 4).

Applying what Giroux has referred to as, “multiple literacies,” it makes sense to include in the training and education of student-teachers, the shared and varied experiences of the students they hope to work with, as this will strengthen education as an “intervention in the world.”

In connection to the education of adults, student teachers in particular, Giroux is also a great proponent for social change through the use of critical pedagogy. He said of teacher education in his *America on the Edge: Henry Giroux on Politics, Culture, and Education* (2006), “We must get away from teaching teachers to be simply efficient technicians and practitioners. We need a new vision of what constitutes educational leadership and social agency so that we can educate teachers to think critically, locate themselves in their own histories, and exercise moral and public responsibility in their role as engaged critics and transformative intellectuals” (p. 4). These words are reminiscent of what Paulo Freire coined as “radical love” and what Joe Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg, Maxine Greene all advocated for. Teachers must be given not only the tools to be successful practitioners, but also the agency to see themselves in positions of power that can help to shape and change the way students see themselves in the world. Giroux goes on to show how the current state of the field and cultural politics have taught teachers that they are not in powerful positions. Teachers have been told that what they have to offer the world can be done, learned, and replicated by anyone, but this message has not been exclusively given to teachers, but to students, as well. Students, particularly in urban settings, have been taught that the aims of education are similar to the aims of, “private interests and market relations” (p. 9), therefore when the student narrative and experience no longer matches the culture of the school, they begin to see that they do not

belong. So, now that the problem has been clearly laid out, how can educators address the missing narrative in the classroom? How can the theories of critical pedagogy be applied in the classroom and schools?

One of the many books written on applying theory to pedagogical practice is Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell's *The Art of Critical Pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from Theory to Practice in Urban Schools* (2008). One of the statements scholars tend to hear from teachers, particularly urban teachers, is about how the theory of critical pedagogy sounds wonderful and how they would love to practice it in the classroom, but they can be unsure about what that looks like in an urban classroom. This question, and "how can a systematic investigation of critical work enacted in urban contexts simultaneously draw upon and push the core tenets of critical pedagogy?" (p. ix) is posed to the readers. The authors go on to discuss how the urban school is facing an array of issues including high dropout and teacher attrition rates, a lack of proper funding, and low standardized test scores in these schools (among other complications). In order to address these major problems in urban schools, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell have proposed that, "critical pedagogy [is] a viable force for confronting them." Within the research for their grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) for three years as co-teachers in an Oakland, California English classroom, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, "developed classroom units that coupled the study of film, newspapers, magazines, and music with the study of traditional novels, poems, and plays... [they] also created opportunities for students to study their own everyday culture..." (p. 55). Beyond the point that these educators were able to actually apply the principles of critical pedagogy in the classroom, they were successful in covering the curriculum required of them by the state

standards. It is clear that, even though, many skeptics believe that critical pedagogy is an unobtainable and unrealistic goal, it can be done, and what these scholars further claim is that this approach may be the best way to address the so-called “failures” of schools.

Morrell and Duncan-Andrade have radically advocated that in order to help improve urban public schools, we have to change the neoliberal, business mindset that schools are moving towards and stop blaming students and teachers for the “failures” of the public school system. They outline this point further describing that, “by shifting the blame from the victims of an unjust system onto the fiscal, political, and ideological policies that deliberately undercut and demean urban schools” (p. 1).

Due to what the media has painted as a failing school system, and a panicked public opinion, school reform movements seem to be the quick-fix answer to improve the conditions of the urban school, but really the population the reformers are attempting to “save” are the students of color from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, but do their schools really need a complete overhaul? Since poor Black families in urban areas are usually the ones to have to deal the majority of these reforms, it is necessary to understand how our educational system has come the racial and political conundrum that it has.

The Politics of Race and Education

It is clear that ever since the inception of collectively educating Black children, the American educational system has lacked an understanding in every sense of what it means to be culturally or ethnically aware of its relativity. David Tyack (1974) is not only able to explicitly diagram the repercussions of the obligated legalities of integration, but also reveal the long lines of racist and pseudo-scientific conclusions that have been

historically drawn by the leaders in education in order to paint a picture of African Americans as, “cripples” (p. 217) of learning. In his book, *The One Best System*, Tyack starts by explaining that, “Black Americans...arrived at a time... when educators were increasingly empowered to make classifications of pupils according to their notion of what was best for the client” (p. 217). Due to this inherent belief about African Americans in the American school system, segregation seemed the only solution to what was considered a “social problem”. Black educators responded by, in a way, giving the majority what they wanted and created their own schools. Although they were unfunded and segregated from the White schools, the teachers in those classrooms were able to tailor the lessons in a way that was relevant to the children sitting in front of them. Out of the great need for them, the Black community grew its own educators and philosophers that developed ideas on how to best serve the needs of those children, but to also work for equality and justice in American society.

Although they are quite well known, the educational philosophers and leaders in the Black community that emerged during the Reconstruction era were Booker T. Washington and W.E.B Dubois. They both created schools of thought on how Black people would be able to raise their positions in society. They very much disagreed with one another, but the goal was the same. Washington, growing up as a slave held the belief that Black people need not worry about civil rights of agitating the system for the right to vote. He believed that “in all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress” (Norris, 2009). Because of these beliefs, he was extremely popular in his time, and favored by both Black and White population. He preached for social passivity and economic gain.

His educational philosophy has since been criticized as accommodating to racism and segregation, but, “leading American historians have committed the anachronistic fallacy of removing Washington from the context of his life” (Norris, 2009). W.E.B. DuBois was much more politically and socially militant than that of his counterpart. He deeply disagreed with Washington and believed his motivation was far too materialistic. The historian C. Vann Woodward (1938) wrote of Washington that, “The businessman's gospel of free enterprise, competition, and laissez faire never had a more loyal exponent than the master of Tuskegee.” DuBois was very much the educational progressive and reformist, in that, into the 1920s he argued that not only should Black people vigorously fight for their rights to vote and have equality with Whites, he wrote in an 1929 article that he completely disagreed with the notion that Black children were in any way inferior to the intellect of White children and needed “special treatment” (Tyack, 1974). He wrote, “their poverty is part of a universal problem; their retardation is due to the wretched Southern school systems; their dullness comes from poor food and poor homes and there is absolutely no proof that it is Negroid” (DuBois, 1929, p. 1313). Through this revelation, DuBois debunked the myth that segregation was healthy for the African American population because all it did was further divorce the school system with the goals of democracy.

Outside of these two educational philosophers, the later 1800s and early 1900s would also see a small faction of White progressives who worked to create some semblance of educational quality for Black children. Berlinda Davison, Mary Holloway, and Philip A. Boyer conducted studies and worked in African American schools to discover and unveil the racist policies that maintained the status quo. Berlinda Davison,

in her masters thesis conducted a study that looked at, “the effect [that] the five great agencies of civilization - the home, the school, the vocation, the state and the church - have on the development of the Negro” (1921). She concluded in her analysis that the, “number of years of education had little correlation with the type of work [Black] men pursued” (Tyack, 1974). Mary Holloway, another educational progressive who was a principal in Cincinnati, drew similarities between her, “junior high school [and] a black community,” by saying that they both had, “low economic status... crowded living conditions, false standards of conduct, and general lack of intelligence” (Holloway, 1928). Although this analysis is quite antiquated and contains its own lacings of racism, she was able to make the connection that her students were suffering and that it should not be tolerated. Philip Boyer worked in a Chicago elementary school to attempt, “the principles of efficiency underlying scientific management in industry” (Tyack, 1974). What this meant essentially was that Boyer wanted to meet the cultural, social, and educational needs of African American children in the classroom, rather than to force them to adapt to a curriculum which represented the White middle class majority. Although the context of the place and time in which Boyer existed (the 1920s) made his ideas about how to address the lack of cultural awareness in schools somewhat lacking and prejudicial, he realized that the education needs of children in this country may not be uniform to the standard curriculum.

Later into the twentieth century, in what seemed to be the insurmountable issue of segregation in schools, the Supreme Court ruled that separate schools for Black and White children were unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. This court case, while moving the country in a progressive direction and giving African American

children the opportunity to gain access to the same schools as White children, also exposed the inherent and institutional racism that had permeated all parts of American life. Even though some laws and policies had been changed to protect minorities and the disenfranchised, the fact still remained that America's infrastructure needed to change further.

The current state of politics in education is one of concern, as, "knowledge-making is always interwoven with power relations" (Saltman, 2014). It is important to note that how the educational system is structured today has been so in a way to keep the powerful in positions of power and the oppressed in positions of oppression. Michael Foucault illustrates in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1995) how the current system of punishment for crime (the prison system) is the definition of complete, "control over time and space" in order to remind those who are out of power, that they will always be under the magnifying glass. The use of surveillance is the key to preservation of the oppressor-oppressed power structure (Saltman, 2014). When the Foucault's principles are applied to the "Black body", the evidence is clear that these kinds of practices exist in the current educational infrastructure. Ann Arnette Ferguson, who wrote *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity* (2000) brilliantly wrote about how Black bodies, because they do not fit the norm of the "whiteness", they are in a losing scenario whereby which they end of falling in the disciplinary system. Ferguson writes:

A defiant, challenging, oppositional body; dramatic, emotional expressions; a rich, complex nonstandard vocabulary establish the "outer limits" in a field of comparison in which the desired norm is a docile bodily presence and the intonation and homogenous syntax of Standard

English. This outer limit is exemplified by the black child: the closer to whiteness, to the norm of bodies, language, emotion, the more these children are self-disciplined and acceptable members of the institution. (p. 72)

What she goes on to point out is that there is a strong indication that the Black body, through cultural norms and meanings, has become associated with “fear”. The power and discipline structures are now designed to simply punish any aspect of a student which does not ascribe to the cultural capital of whiteness (Saltman, 2014).

Critical Race Theory

Although Critical Race Theory (CRT) began as a legal and political movement in the 1980s, the ideas have overflowed into the realms of education. In fact, the jump from political to educational is not that far of a jump, as teaching is very much a political act (Saltman, 2014; Anyon, 2014). The act of imparting knowledge on the young, in and of itself is a political act. Teachers must make judgement calls on a daily basis. They get to decide what information is more pertinent than other information. They must decide what conversations are worth having while other need simply to be ignored. The inception of this movement, as previously stated began in the 1980s when groups of students and professors from various law schools from around the country realized that the legal and academic elites were having conversations around race and racism that described it as an irregular occurrence. The most elite of law schools, the Ivy Leagues, because they produced some of the most powerful people in the country who eventually go on to create legislation, were continuing the cycle of institutional racism and disconnection from the truth. It is quite astounding that even, “Harvard Law faculty

promulgated a naïve view of racial justice, which worked to preserve de facto white supremacy by underestimating the breadth and depth of racial injustice in the United States” (Turner, 2011). Essentially, what critical race theorists were proposing at the time was that the discussions being held by academics surrounding the issues of race were exclusive to a definition which made racism something that was intentional and, “aberrational rather than as systemic and ingrained” (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). CRT points out that by defining racism in this manner, the laws and institutions which were historically and legally created with exclusionary and discriminatory features would be allowed to continue, as the ingrained nature of these statutes would not be considered racist. In the world of academia, CRT was not given a welcome reception. These theorists were met with wide criticism and were mostly discounted for their ideas, but as time went on and more law review articles were published within the legal community, these theorists were soon given their due respect.

Although CRT can be applied to various areas of social thought and it does not contain a strict dogma or definition, there are four basic areas of understanding that CR Theorists tend to adhere (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The first tenet is that the concept of race has no bearing in biology. There is nothing in biological study to support that various races are biologically varied, but it does hold significant weight socially. Because race has been used to undermine, enslave, and oppress historically, the concept is a necessary aspect of understanding the current and past power structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). A subset of this belief is, “to avoid essentialism and overgeneralization, it is important to study the various ways different groups have been racially categorized and characterized at different points in time” (Turner, 2011).

The second pillar of Critical Race Theory is that the federal laws that have been passed which made an attempt to create social equality, particularly those of the Civil Rights movements in the 1950s and 60s, have not done away with the social, economic, and political hurdles for people of color. CRTs believe this approach is more historically supported and by stating those laws did away with racial discrimination is not only false, but it assuages and brings comfort to an area of injustice that so desperately still requires attention.

The third tenant holds the belief that colorblindness is a hindrance to the advancement of equality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). What critical race theorists believe about color blindness, or really what is an attempt to discount cultural differences, is that it is too ideal for the current social and political state. It is unrealistic to leave color and culture out of legal interpretation and “equal protection under the law.” Although CRTs see color blindness as a lofty goal, they, “are skeptical that social and economic white supremacy can be dismantled without color-conscious, results-oriented public policy” (Turner, 2011).

The fourth and last basic belief of critical race theorists is that intersectionality of identity is important to fully recognizing the possibility of experiencing multiple oppressions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Essentially what this means is that we live in a society that has created various social definitions and associations within the contexts of race, ethnicity, gender, etc., and for someone to fall into more than one category of oppression means they could face oppression in multiple areas of political, social, and economic life. Although these are the basic beliefs under which critical race theorists

function, there are many areas in which CRT applies, particularly in relation to the inequities of education.

In one of his seminal works, James A. Banks' *Teaching the Black Experience* (1970) described how conversations and lessons on race can prove to be a powerful experience in the classroom. Although, he does not use the term "critical race theory" specifically in this book, his instruction on how to, "create an effective learning environment for the study of race relations and the black experience" (p. iii) is a major indication that what Banks spoke of points to the fact that implications in the field of education are inevitable. The country has not changed too much since the 1970s, with racial tensions at an all-time high (Hooks & McQueen, 2010), it is extremely important to consider how the classroom can become an agent for alleviating some of those tensions. Banks describes in his book the rationale for teaching the black experience in classrooms by stating, "educators now realize that unless we play a leading and decisive role in creating racial harmony and minimizing polarization our democracy will face a momentous challenge with which it may be incapable of coping" (Banks, 1970, p. 2). This is quite the warning for teachers as "curriculum makers" (Craig, 2012), as they have the ability and access to make a significant contribution to critical discussions on race.

In positive opposition to the threat of further racial divisiveness in the United States, the multicultural education advocate, James A. Banks further outlines the role of the teacher in "Intergroup Education." He quotes James Quillen, a mid-twentieth century writer on education, as saying, "... The American school system is an expression of the American way of life" (Banks, 1970), and so if applied to multicultural education, the idea that teachers are powerful and political figures must be accurate. As

researched by previously mentioned scholars, the educator who wishes to teach multi-ethnic and multicultural classrooms must become aware of, “the attitudes, perceptions, and predispositions,” that exist within themselves. This is fundamental to the implications of critical race theory in the classroom.

The political and educational implications of Critical Race Theory are well known and well researched. For many of the issues facing the urban classroom, many scholars, schools, and politicians have proposed solutions that seem not to work for the long term, but the work James A. Banks has contributed to the closely related fields of Critical Race Theory, multicultural education, and culturally responsive pedagogy created a foundation on which current educators and academics build their own practices for urban classrooms.

Multicultural Education and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

I have chosen to group the two large areas of multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy as they represent a *process* of progressive education that has the potential to, “strengthen student connectedness with school and enhance learning” (Kalyanpur, 2012; Tatum, 2012). One take on the definition of multicultural education is that, “there isn’t one. There isn’t one paradigm... nor one way of diversifying and multiculturalizing citizens and school curricula,” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2011). What this philosophy draws on are the multiple and varied stories that are either told incompletely and inaccurately in classrooms and how they must be given the opportunity to come to light. Multiculturalism as a practice focuses on the “*critical* context on issues of power and domination,” as well as, “examines issues of privilege and how they shape social and educational reality” (p. 5). A simpler way of explaining this idea is how

teachers and schools *create room* in classrooms for multiple narratives of ethnicity, race, gender, and social class. All teachers need to be aware of these trends as, “Grant (1989) pointed out that new urban teachers who are White and middle class will probably not teach students like themselves and will work with students from a wide variety of cultures, both immigrant and native” (Jenks, 2002, p. 55). Once the dialogue changes in schools and in the minds of teachers to a multicultural mindset, culturally responsive pedagogy is the next step to bringing the theory and idea into practice.

Culturally responsive pedagogy may seem a daunting task to the middle-class, white teachers that make up the majority of the teaching profession. It seems quite difficult to create a pedagogy that focuses on students that do not look like them and do not have similar backgrounds, but the work that Geneva Gay has published helps to make this formidable undertaking approachable. In her most popular book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2000), Gay explains this educational philosophy and approach as:

Teaching is a contextual and situational process. As such, it is most effective when ecological factors are included in its implementation. This basic fact is often ignored especially if [students] are poor. Instead, they are taught from the middle class, Euro- centric frameworks that shape school practices. This attitude of “cultural blindness” stems from several sources. One of these is the notion that education has nothing to do with cultures and heritages. [An- other is that] education is an effective doorway of assimilation into mainstream society for people from diverse [groups]. These students need to forget about being different and learn to adapt to U.S. society. (p. 21)

Drawing on the previously discussed Critical Race Theory, Gay points out that attempting to be “color-blind” in the classroom is not only an ineffective approach to classroom teaching, but it is also damaging to the beliefs, attitudes, and performance of minority students (Hammond & Jackson, 2015). In one of her books commenting on the multicultural classroom, she collected the varied and culturally diverse experiences of educators. She comments on the issue of “color-blindness” by asking educators to confront the issue head on. By asking teachers to deal with the discomfort that comes along with teaching from a multicultural mindset, Gay declares that one is able to, “minimize the perceived threat and to encounter some of the misconceptions surrounding to and about cultural diversity” (2003). Once this seemingly difficult issue is faced, head-on, progress can be made, so in an effort to show the reader what happens once this acknowledgement takes place, Gay offers the stories of educators who have been through and experienced what culturally responsive teaching looks like in the classroom setting.

In an effort to prove empirically the benefits of multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy, Zaretta Hammond published *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students* (2015) which aims to, “expand teachers’ vocabulary for talking about culturally responsive pedagogy, especially for underperforming culturally and linguistically diverse students” (p. 5) and also as a way to use CRP (Culturally Responsive Pedagogy) as, “the perfect catalyst to stimulate the brain’s neuroplasticity so that it grows new brain cells that help students think in more sophisticated ways” (p.

15). Based on these findings, there are practical, scientific, and heuristic reasons to utilize the powerful tool that is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in urban classrooms.

Localized and Community Education

One of the most powerful ways to create connections for urban classrooms, as critical pedagogues would strongly advocate for, is through the context of community education. Described by the Encyclopedia of Educational Leadership and Administration as, “an educational philosophy and a process that expands traditional roles of K–12 education by linking them with community learning” (Kim, 2006, p. 179). Community education is centered on the idea of meaningful partnerships between schools and the surrounding community in order to address larger community needs and hold three basic tenets: lifelong learning, community involvement, and the efficient use of resources within the community. This approach can mean localized and contextual solutions to problems within a community. The basic understanding of the word “community” is a bringing together of people with shared cultures, beliefs, and concerns, so a logical reaction would be to incorporate the traditions of building community within the walls of a school. A deeper and more clearly defined understanding of community education is:

Through community education, then, people enhance their lives and communities through learning and collaboration, and provide opportunities for families, community members, schools, businesses, and other organizations to create partnerships addressing educational and community concerns. The goal thus becomes to improve quality of life and build vitality, hence identifying a community through civic and neighborhood enhancement projects and the

operation of community schools. These schools function as learning and meeting centers. (Kim, 2006, p.1)

In an exemplary illustration of what a community-based learning experience or classroom can look like Julie Davis (2013) described how a community of Native people created their own schools and curriculum to fit the needs of their community. Davis admits, “[this]... began in ignorance.” She could not understand, “[what] might have motivated a group of Indian people to create their own independent schools,” but what she was missing was the fact that these Native people of the Twin Cities were being failed by a public school system that was in no way interested in the needs of their own community. As a response, Native communities created their own schools, curriculum, and pedagogies that met the needs of children who held multiple literacies. So why has this model not been applied to all public schools? Why are our urban communities facing immense educational, economic, and social inequity? Perhaps the reason is because, the system is set up in a way that sets students, families, and communities up to fail. One of the strongest demonstrations of this purposeful injury to community education is the process of gentrification.

Gentrification tends to have two definitions and understandings. The first definition is the simple one, in that it is, “a term used in land development to describe a trend whereby previously ‘underdeveloped’ areas become ‘revitalized’” (Norris, 2010; Buntin, 2006). This definition sounds actually quite positive for the people who live in that community, but there is a darker side to gentrification. What this movement largely means is that the people who were once living there and made the neighborhood what it was, will no longer be able to afford the land value and property taxes placed on

the homes and businesses, therefore will be forced to move to a different location. The reasons behind why this is able to take place in urban areas are due to the large numbers of renters in the area, access to areas of “job centers”, high population volumes, cheap housing, an increase in people who want to live in an urban setting, “rapid job growth, tight housing markets, preferences for city amenities, [and] increased traffic commutes and target public sector policies” (Norris, 2010). All of these create a perfect storm for the people of urban communities. This is what gentrification does to our communities, our city, and our country. We have built a tolerance for racist policies and laws which allow these kinds actions to take place. Gentrification is not a new phenomenon. This movement exists in every urban city in this country. Even the popular stories and history of Harlem is being erased due to the gentrification of its neighborhoods (Maurrasse, 2008). If what is considered to be one of the most well-known and historically documented communities in America, is not even safe from the waves of gentrification, then how is it possible to save just a few bricks right here in our own backyard.

Why does this matter to teachers? Why should educators care about something that is not happening in their own communities? For the teachers who care about the well-being of our students, we must take stock of not only the trends within the classroom and school, but also the communities in which our students live. What happens in the community will undoubtedly flow into the school, which changes school culture, classroom practices, teacher and administrator attitudes, and ultimately the “success” of the school. In order to recognize and change the aspects of the school system, which are broken, we must first be able to see what is broken, therefore teachers must be taught how to look at a situation in the classroom, the school, city, state, and country, and be

aware enough to see what should change. This is why the training and education of pre-service teachers is so dire to the process and institution of education.

Teacher Education

In the early to mid-1800s, there had been a shift for what classroom teachers looked like. Before this time period, the field of teaching was reserved for men who had just finished with their university studies, and were waiting for the opportunity to go on to jobs as lawyers, politicians, and the like. This was true in the case of Alexander Hamilton who was a teacher at Worcester, Massachusetts after graduating from Harvard (Fraser, 2007). Eventually the field for teachers became almost exclusively for women who, “received a special education” (p. 35) to be in the classroom setting. At the teacher education school of Hartford Female Seminary, Catherine Beecher believed that women were natural educators due to their “morality” and “gentle natures”. One of her students, Kathryn Kish Skylar stated, “Catherine Beecher not only wanted to ‘save’ the nation, she wanted women to save it” (p. 36). The ways in which those teachers were trained were based around the principles that, “teaching, like motherhood, was an important duty that called women to meaningful service,” as well as the idea that, “[women] need the opportunity to do serious work,” (p. 37) and so the image of educator was born, and has not changed too much to this day. Because women made up the entirety of educators to that point, the manner in which they were trained was tailored to the “needs” of those teachers. For a few short months, these future teachers would attend lectures on educational philosophy, how to “awaken the morality as well as the literacy of their students, and the use of the Protestant Bible was strongly recommended” (p. 39). Teachers would attend institutes that were short and mainly focused on religious study.

This made sense as teachers, at this time, were largely seen and moral compasses. By the 1840s, teachers were trained through the results of Teachers' Institutes, which had been:

An organization of the teachers of a town, county, or state for improvements in their profession, by meeting for a longer or shorter time for a thorough review of the studies of public schools, under teachers of acknowledged reputation, as well as, for lectures, discussions, and essays on various methods of schools discipline and instruction. (Fraser, 2007, p. 64)

The field of teacher education was in a good place here, as it relied on the collaboration and community support of other educators in a localized context, so as to help the teachers in specific regions and cities have the most up to date pedagogical practices for current and pre-service teachers. Since this point, the field of teacher education has been departmentalized, bureaucratized, and the power of the teacher has been taken out of her hands.

In the publication, *Understanding Teacher Education in Contentious Times: Political Cross-Currents and Conflicting Interests*, Catherine Cornbleth (2014) outlines the current state of the teacher education field by focusing on the legal and social constraints placed on it. She starts by explaining that because states regulate the licensure of teachers, they have an immense power to mold and shape how teachers will be trained. She then discussed how teacher education programs can be restrained, as well as enhanced by the culture of institution at which they are learning. Lastly she discussed the limitations of private and corporate interests in public universities and K-12 schools. All of these hurdles come together to create a climate in teacher education that can be

somewhat difficult to navigate and has created a culture of fear (Beyer, 1996) for pre-service teachers who enter the classroom already afraid that they could lose their jobs with just one misstep. In her chapter on State Regulations, Cornbleth states that, “the current movement toward ‘Common Core’ standards and examinations... can be seen... While justifications for such consolidation include equity, efficiency, population mobility, and excellence, less often mentioned are opportunities for comparative evaluation and ranking and larger markets (e.g., for textbooks and other school materials)” (p. 15). This could be considered one of the most pressing issues for teacher educators today because what we are having to deal with are states who can make standards for accreditation programs that have corporations and private sector needs and wants in their back pocket. This leads to programs which are designed for the sale and consumption of product rather than for the needs of students, but this does not necessarily mean that students (including pre-service teachers) are getting poor or lacking educative experiences. In most teacher education programs, the presence of field experiences is not only encouraged, but required.

The importance of giving pre-service teachers the opportunity to actively engage in classroom settings is paramount (Beyer, 1996; Cornbleth, 2014; Loughran & Russell, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2006) and, thankfully, university teacher education programs have realized this by making experiences in the field a requirement for licensure. Field experiences provide, “candidates with experiences in a variety of communities and across the range of student developmental levels... [and] an opportunity for practicing skills for interacting,” (Cornbleth, 2014, p. 30) with anyone within the walls of a real school. These lived educative experiences (with the guidance of professional teachers and

professors) are essential to development of not only pedagogical skills, but professional and social skills, as well.

Not only is it vital to give pre-service teachers the opportunity to have field experiences, but to give them those opportunities without the chance to reflect on the occurrences in the classroom, makes for a futile effort in learning pedagogical skill. In order to learn from field experiences, pre-service teachers need to self-reflect in order to improve classroom practices. Tom Russell and John Loughran pose the question, “can self-study improve teacher education?” and through the telling of various teachers’ stories, they attempt to answer this question. They highlight that research has been done to support the claim that self-study is one of the most transformative experiences a teacher can have, especially if done through a critical and socially just lens. In one example of this, Amanda Berry and John Loughran conducted a study that included one pre-service teacher participant who went through extensive self-study measures of her classroom practices and realized aspects of her own teaching that needed to be emphasized, which included, “Responding to the learners’ needs matters, and cannot always be predicted in advance” and also that, “Possibilities for being hurt and making mistakes are real” (Russell & Loughran, 2002, p. 27).

As mentioned previously, all states have made field experiences for pre-service teachers a requirement because of the opportunity they give to practice their skills and to be introduced to the issues that they will inevitably face so that they can navigate through them. In addition to the field experiences required within accredited teacher education programs, the practice of self-study and reflection must be considered to accompany

these experiences. By using reflection, teachers can recognize the mistakes they made or even build off of them, evolving into greater and more effective classroom teachers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to delve into the classroom field experiences that pre-service teachers are having and critically examining how to make those experiences more meaningful and conscious, so as to improve the field of research that improves teacher education. In chapter one, I discussed how my own identity as a student and an educator brought me to the research topic and questions I have posed. I was able to analyze my experiences as a young person developed my sense of the world and how I viewed myself. Throughout these pages, my goal has been to highlight the broad themes tied to understanding what has brought me to this point as an educator. By bringing to the table a deep understanding of the contexts which have brought the field of education to this point, I can continue to question what helps teachers to not only become practitioners and professionals in education, but also what can help them to become agents for social change in their communities, as well as in the communities of their students.

This topic provides a contextualization of the peoples I worked with, the system that functions within those communities, and the environments in which urban populations have come to function inside of. In addition to the histories and context of urban education, I have gone into great detail to deconstruct the ideas of critical pedagogy, which is needed to understand how the mentality of “oppressed peoples” must be understood and given power to in order to construct a curriculum that reduces and even eliminates inequity and oppression. I then moved on to the political and social

effects of critical race theory, which only further illustrates that a teacher education program must be created with the population in which one teaches, in mind.

In order to further create a complete description of how this study will be focused, I needed the philosophies of multicultural education, which allows for classrooms to become inclusive and socially just places, and culturally responsive pedagogy, which is how teachers actually enact those pedagogies with the cultures and histories of their students in mind. It is a powerful image to see a classroom that has been set up for nothing else other than the betterment and fulfillment of students, and culturally responsive pedagogy has been proven as the most impactful way to do that. In addition to the meaningful implementation of CRP, community education and engagement is one way to carry out the beliefs and philosophy of Gay, Banks, Freire, and the like. The impact of community education as it relates to both urban students and student teachers is an essential aspect of understanding how educational experiences are most powerful when they are personal, contextualized, and representative of the learner. My research must include community experiences and educational ones, as that is the means by which I hope to find qualitative meaning and transformative findings.

Lastly, I covered the history and manner in which teachers are educated and trained, and why it is so important for them to gain field experiences. Since my aim in this research is to understand the experiences pre-service teachers are having and looking into how that knowledge can be improved, I must acknowledge and research how teacher education programs are formed and what they are made up of. All of these ingredients come together in a culmination that ask “what are we doing to create better teachers?” of our teacher education programs. Ultimately, the goal of any educational program, any

educational motive for that matter, should be for the well being of the individual and the betterment of the teaching field and research. My research, with great hope, reaches for that goal.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

In the Third Ward of Houston, Texas, during the 2015-2016 academic year, I found the opportunity to work with the community members of a local public housing facility and afterschool program through my role as a graduate assistant in the department of Teacher Education. The idea, which was spearheaded by a leader in College of Education, was to create a meaningful partnership with the Teacher Education program and a local community afterschool program, in order to give more authentic experiences to student teachers working in urban schools. This afterschool program was housed in the community building of a low-income housing project. These homes are not only located in an area of Houston that represents a rich history and community, these homes are an epicenter for research issues such as social justice, race, and education.

This case study will highlight the experiences of the participants, including myself as researcher-participant, in a community-university program that was terminated in the summer of 2016. I, as the researcher, will present the narratives, including my own, of why the program was started, what took place during its events, and investigate why the program ended. Included in this chapter are the research design, the setting for the study, the participants, the data collection, as well as a detailed explanation of the data analysis procedures.

The knowledge to be gained from this study lies within experiences of the participants and their narratives associated with this “Community Engagement Project”, as well as any recurring themes, which present themselves in the archived written

reflections of student teachers who were asked to participate in this program. Written permission from the instructor of the teacher education course and owner of the reflections granted access to these archived records for the researcher. See Appendix B. This case study will seek to investigate the following questions:

1. What were the reasons for creating, carrying out, and ultimately ending the “Community Engagement Project” and partnership as reported by the participants?
2. How were the experiences of the “Community Engagement Project” interpreted and conceptualized?

The experiences of what roles in this “Community Engagement Project”, particularly those positioned within an urban context, must be critically researched and analyzed so that teacher education programs can gain insight into how to strengthen diversity training for student teachers and work to strengthen the bonds between urban communities and the academy. Based on the field of teacher education research, there exist many journals and quantitative studies that address the realm of urban education, but the significance of this topic exists in the unique narratives of this one program. In order to grow in effectiveness, various educational programs and community partnerships have conducted research that presents the narratives of participants in order to, “inform educators... and create dialogue around ways to engage diverse communities” (Torrez, 2014, p. 43).

Case Study Rationale

In recent history, the ‘case study’ as a method for research has become a recognized mode for investigating either a phenomenon or when a significant event has occurred and the researcher needs to, “get as close to the subject of interest as they

possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (e.g. thoughts, feelings, and desires) (Bromley, 1986).

Another scholar, R.K. Yin's (1994, p. 13) definition, saw the case study as an experimental study that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. His explanation was expanded in a second set of descriptors (p. 13). The case study inquiry:
- Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data converging in a triangulating fashion; and as another result
- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

This research employed the case study because it allowed me to approach the context of the situation from how it organically occurred. Considering that, not only was I the only person to experience this “Community Engagement Project” from the perspective of both a contributor to the environment, but also as a member of the administrative community. My access to various administrative pieces of this project required that a case study be the primary mode of research. It should be noted that although I employed Carspecken's model for analysis and data collection, this research is a case study.

My primary objective for this research was to not only closely observe the events of the “Community Engagement Project” while it was happening and then reflect on those

events personally, but also to seek the perceptions and attitudes of the roles played by various individuals who participated in this program. I wanted to know why this partnership was created, why the students who experienced it saw the program the ways they did, and what were the perceptions of the people who helped this program run. Therefore, in order to exemplify a better understanding of this event and the people within its context, a critical ethnographic case study was necessary.

Research Design and Procedures

In this qualitative case study, I have incorporated Carspecken's (1996) Five Stages of critical ethnography. The rationale for my data collection and analysis strategies is that since the purpose of this research is to present, "the nature and derivation of knowledge" (p. 9) of the participants, I felt the use of Carspecken's strategies would prove to be the most suitable. More specifically, Carspecken's approaches allowed the research to concern itself with, "the concepts of truth... on the certainty we seem to feel when seeing something present before us," (p. 11). This approach allows the qualitative researcher to investigate more deeply into the perceptions, actions, and motivations of the participants in the "Community Engagement Project". While my method put to use some of Carspecken's model and analysis strategies, my design differed in what I was collected and considered for the monological and dialogical data. Another area in which my research design differed from Carspecken's model can be found in lack of the last two stages. This case study will be unable to discover system relations, as case studies do not allow for generalizability. For this reason, this case study will only employ *stages one* through *three* on qualitative data collection and analysis.

Stage One. Building the primary record was be done by examining, transcribing, and thematically coding the reflections and experiences of myself, the researcher, during my time as the Community Engagement Supervisor for the “Community Engagement Project” which took place during the 2015-2016 Teacher Education program in the College of Education at the University of Houston in the Third Ward of Houston, Texas. Based on these written and recorded self-reflections, I gathered the monological data required to build a primary record of the events concerning this case study. This stage allowed me, the researcher, to take extensive notes on both the observed interactions of student teachers, as well as the actions, thoughts, and motivations of any one’s particular role. In another separate journal, I began recording my initial, low-inference monological data. I, as the researcher, was the only ‘speaker’ to this point, participating in the study.

Stage Two. Then, I began the reconstructive analysis based on my own perceptions, thoughts, and considerations. For this case study, Stage Two was based on the information and data yielded from the primary record (the researcher’s own experiences with having a role in the “Community Engagement Project’s” events). Transcriptions of these records (reflections and recordings) were coded for the ontological models, as well as, emerging themes, patterns of interaction, power relations, roles, etc. This was the stage which required the most attention to detail as I was searching for “cultural themes and system factors” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 42) as they related to the “Community Engagement Project”, therefore this reconstructive phase took a significant amount of time. This was also the stage where I constructed my interview protocols based on the primary record and reconstructive analysis of that primary record. Interview Protocols can be found in Appendix C. Additionally, as a way to triangulate

the events of the “Community Engagement Project”, I used the unidentifiable written reflections of the student teachers asked to participate in the “Project” as part of a requirement for the Teacher Education courses.

Stage Three. Once the reconstructive analysis was conducted and the interview protocol was created, I continued on to the generation of dialogical data was generated from interviews conducted with the willing participants. The manner in which this dialogical data generation took place was through the use of an interview protocol based on the reconstructive analysis. Since this is a case study only concerning the events that took place in the 2015-2016 Teacher Education program in the College of Education at the University of Houston, there is no need to inquire about personal or private information from the participants, which meant that an informed consent process was not required. I included an informed consent process despite this fact, as I wanted to make sure that my participants knew exactly what was going to be included in this case study. This study was only concerned with the thoughts, motivations, and reflections of the participants and their role during these events. The same analytical tools from stage two to code and analyze this dialogical data was employed to investigate any recurring themes in the data.

Limitations

Although this study is important for the improvement of Community Engagement Projects for student teachers in the Houston area, there are limitations to this study. Since this program has been terminated, the first limitation is the length of time between this study and the end of the initial program. Since this is a known limitation, I have combated this issue with the inclusion of more data that discusses the experiences of

myself in the site and the student teachers who participated in the program. Once the student teachers were finished experiencing the “Community Engagement” program, they wrote reflections based on what they saw and felt concerning the “Program”.

Another limitation of this study is the small number of participants. I had hoped to include the narratives of the counselors who helped run the program from the community center. These were the people who were employed by the community center for the after school program, and worked with the children every day. Their stories would have been invaluable to a more complete illustration of this case study. Unfortunately, since these counselors were mostly made up of undergraduate students, they are difficult to locate and contact for the sake of this study as many of them left the employment of that particular after school program. Hopefully, in a later study, I will be able to include the narrative of more members of the local community. This study, although it includes the experiences of one employee of the after school program, the study could be strengthened by the existence of community member’s narratives.

Setting the Scene

Third Ward. The history of Houston’s Third Ward is unlike any other area in the city. Third Ward was founded in 1840, and was largely a Jewish neighborhood at its creation due to the fact that the affluent River Oaks area of Houston barred Jews from buying homes there (Norris, 2010). The makeup of the population began to change in the 1950s with the establishment of Texas Southern University, which is a historically Black college (HBCU), in 1947. This was when the number of African-Americans moving into the area increased, and with the “White Flight” of the Jewish population (Wood, 2003), the Third Ward from then on became the, “black social, cultural,

economic, and financial hub of Houston” (Norris, 2010). Since the early 1980s, however, there has been significant drop in the number of African Americans who have been able to afford living and renting in the area, and by 1990, the numbers of African Americans dropped by more than twenty-five percent (Hadnot, 2006). This community has built museums, parks, schools, churches, and support systems for those who inhabit it, and the neighborhood breathes with life, but there has been an incredible and disturbing movement to gentrify the neighborhood.

Gentrification tends to have two definitions and understandings. The first definition is the simple one, in that it is, “a term used in land development to describe a trend whereby previously ‘underdeveloped’ areas become ‘revitalized’” (Norris, 2010) (Buntin, 2006). This definition sounds actually quite positive and enjoyable for the people who live in that community, but there is a darker side to gentrification. What this movement largely means is that the people who were once living there and made the neighborhood what it was, will no longer be able to afford the land value and property taxes placed on the homes and businesses, therefore will be forced to move to a different location. The reasons behind why this is happening to the Third Ward are due to the large numbers of renters in the area (68.2%, according to 2010 Census), access to areas of “job centers”, high population volumes, cheap housing, an increase in people who want to live in an urban setting, “rapid job growth, tight housing markets, preferences for city amenities, [and] increased traffic commutes and target public sector policies” (Norris, 2010). All of these create a perfect storm for the people of this community. Houston, as a major metropolitan city, does not have a solid record of maintaining historical sites. In fact, it is near impossible to find buildings and houses from even twenty years ago that

still stand. As a native Houstonian, I feel that the very *culture* of the city seems to be that is something is old, instead of preserving it or attempting to maintain its meaning and history, we should tear it down and build something that is cheap to build, shiny, and new. This is the context in which the “Community Engagement Project” found itself transfixed.

As previously mentioned, in the fall of 2015 and in the spring of 2016, I began working within the “Community Engagement Project” and community members of “Houston Homes” (pseudonym). This community, which was developed and opened in the 1930s by the Houston Housing Authority, founded the first public housing facility in the city. The complex is named for a prominent African American politician and leader in the late 1800s. I first started working as a Graduate Assistant for the Student Teaching program at the University of Houston in September of 2015. The first few times I went to the afterschool program, I simply observed and took field notes on what I witnessed. The Outreach Coordinator for the program had asked me before my first arrival to take notes on what they could improve on as a program, considering she has struggled with classroom management and organization with the students and counselors of the program. Upon my entrance, I began to realize some of the problems they were having were due to a lack of understanding about pedagogy as well as simple classroom practices. In my notes, I wrote the following:

Counselors eating around children

Sign in sheet not ready

Worksheets for kids that do not have homework and not a lot of choice-reading perhaps, different activities to choose from

This room should be theirs (the students)

They need a lot more structure

Read aloud to groups

Chaotic- they need to know where to go and what needs to be done as soon as they walk in

Are there clear rules and consequences?

Since those first experiences, I saw a vast improvement in the organization and behavioral management that they were facing. Also, since then, I saw and experienced much that as a critical educator. I saw beyond what minor classroom issues they had faced and what those behaviors could actually mean. I could see what those people, at that time, brought into that space. This is the area in which I find myself to be the most concerned, as I have heard multiple times that, “these kids are just different” and “these kids just don’t have any respect for authority.” After hearing these words, I wondered what the adults really were saying about “these kids” and about themselves. Are these children actually different from other children in more affluent areas? Does the race of the counselors, the children, or myself, mean anything to context of the situation? Why is it that my view of these children is so vastly different than that of the counselors and student teachers?

Participants

The main participants of this study are three participants that were interviewed and myself as a participant researcher. It should be noted that although I have included the 257 student teacher reflections, these were collected from archived data, but were still considered as participants. The criteria for who was included in the case study sample

required that they participated in and had specific roles in the “Community Engagement Program” from the fall of 2015 to the spring of 2016. This case study focused on the narratives of the participants who created the program, the participants who founded the program, the instructor of the course in which this experience was required; the participants who ran the program, which includes myself as the researcher-participant, and the Community Outreach Coordinator. Lastly, the archived written reflective records of student teachers placed in this “Community Engagement Program” were accessed and analyzed for this case study. Since these written reflections of experiences of the “Program” are unidentifiable for individual students, the only breach of confidentiality will exist when downloading the documents from the online database in which these archived records are held. In order to assure confidentiality and privacy of all participants, the identities of participants are coded using numeric identification, or pseudonyms. All participants were over the age of 18 and gave full knowledgeable consent for participation in this study. A waiver of informed consent was granted for this case study by the Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A). None of the participants are considered vulnerable populations.

Data Collection

There were three sources of data collected for this study. First, there was the archived self-data (preexisting) collected by the researcher during the events of the “Community Engagement Project”. These data, the researcher-participant’s field notes and daily reflections, were collected during the fall and spring of the 2015-2016 academic year. Secondly, as another source of preexisting data, the study utilized the written reflections based on experiences from the “Community Engagement Project” of 279

student teachers. These reflections were submitted as a requirement for the student teaching course in the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2016. All of these data were de-identified, and the identities will not be associated with the responses. The instructor of the courses, who is also the Director of Teacher Education, granted access to these reflections to the researcher. See Appendix B. The last source of data was found in the three (3) participants for interview data.

The written reflections created by student teachers proved to be interesting and enlightening, as even when I was in the same room, at the same time, my understanding of the environment could vary greatly for the other participants in the room. At the start of this study, I collected 279 archived reflections. Once I reviewed all 279 documents, twenty-two (22) of the documents were unusable. This resulted in a successful archival data rate of 92.11%, and 257 reflection documents to analyze. The lost twenty-two (22) reflections were unusable in this research for two reasons:

1. When the community center had been closed for a holiday, weather, community needs, etc. Therefore, the after-school program was closed for all attendees.
2. The student teachers were unable to attend and participate in the experience due to personal issues.

The semi-structured interviews were obtained through three separate interviews with: (1) the creator of the program, (2) the instructor of the student teaching course, and (3) with the Community Outreach Coordinator for the Community Center in which the program took place. These interviews were used to triangulate the cultural infrastructure of the program as seen from the administrative perspectives. Additionally, as the Creator of the program described it, he wanted to start this program “[because] I felt like it's such

a good experience for [student teachers] to have [when they] go there... because I feel like there [are] so many good things that could happen from it that I think some of it did. I think it would be great for students to have experiences...working with high poverty people outside of school as enrichment. What I really wanted, what I tried to get going for years was more targeting the interventions to the kid's needs.”

The justification for the three sources of data can be found in the methodology of the research. In the First Stage, the researcher is required to build a primary record based on field notes, this requirement is met by the monological data collected by the researcher during the events of the “Community Engagement Project”. Based on the primary record, the research moves into stage two, which is to build the interview protocols based on the reconstructive analysis of the monological data and the reflection data written by student teachers. Using both the researcher's monological data and the reflection data written by student teachers, the interview protocols were created in order to generate dialogical data. The three subjects that this case study calls for allows for multiple entry points of understanding, experiences for their various roles. One interview participant had been the creator of the program, the next was the instructor of the student teaching course which implemented the partnership, and the last interview participant had been the community outreach coordinator for the community center where student teachers were being sent. Each subject selected is selected for his or her specific role in the “Community Engagement Project”. The recruitment for this study took the form of phone calls and emails, which was carried out in September 2017.

Data Analysis

Using the qualitative research tool and application, NVivo 11, the data were compiled, coded, and analyzed all of the note taking, audio recordings, interviews, as well as transcriptions into one program. A qualitative approach calls for the investigator to discover system relations and/or meaning within the contexts participants are placed in. This process required that the researcher spend many hours creating “meaning fields” (Carspecken, 1996) and then triangulating those meanings against the thoughts, actions, and experiences of other participants and “points of entry” (Carspecken, 1996). The purpose of my analysis is to illustrate dialogue, actions, and interpretations of the participants as it pertains to the “Community Engagement Project” and its events. Additionally, another purpose of this case study is to illuminate the strengths and pitfalls of this particular community-university partnership and how it could have been improved or maintained in order to strengthen teacher education in urban contexts.

As is well known for critical qualitative research, the researcher, herself, is the main instrument for data collection and analysis (Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg, 2012). ‘Researcher as instrument’ required the use of a primary record, or detailed note taking of my own reflections and field notes as well as the reflections written by student teachers that participated in the University-Community Partnership Program. Beyond myself as an instrument in this study, this study utilized interviews with various interview protocols, as well as interviews with the participants. Member checks and peer debriefing also ensured validity of the data collection and analysis. Now, it is important to describe the complex and painstaking process of what took place during data analysis, in order to provide a deep credence in this research.

The Preliminary Stage. In order for this qualitative research to begin, a preliminary stage of creating, “general, broad, comprehensive, and flexible” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 41) research questions orients the study to a specific social site or problem. Additionally, the researcher must list what kind of information needs to be collected to satisfy the research questions posed. For example, this research used data from my field notes and reflections, student teacher written reflections, and three semi-structured interviews. Lastly for the preliminary stage, the researcher must deconstruct their own value orientations before they enter the field for data collection. The reason for this is to prevent and decrease the amount of bias in the study, and therefore adds to the trustworthiness of the research. Value orientations can be understood as, “clear statements about what is right, wrong, good, and bad and thus within the realm of moral claims” (p. 83), as it relates to data collection, as well as monological and dialogical data analysis.

Stage One. Stage One of critical qualitative ethnography requires the collection of monological data, more specifically, the assembly of a primary record. In this stage, “the observer makes herself as unobtrusive as possible within a social site to observe interactions” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 41). The instruments through which data is collected tends to be through intensive note taking, in the form of a thick record and field notes. This involves recreating the blueprint of the physical environment, as well as the recording of as much detail in the environment as possible. These include “(1) Speech acts, body movements, and body postures are recorded... (2) low inference vocabulary is used... (3) The time is recorded quite frequently...” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 47), as well as a few other features. This stage is known as “monological” data collection because the

primary record build only involves the researcher, without the influence or input from the participants (from Stage Two, on).

Stage Two. Once the monological data collection is saturated, meaning an environment has been thoroughly reviewed and the primary record has been built (this is the record on which the majority of the study is anchored in), the researcher moves on to Stage Two. Stage Two calls for the Preliminary Reconstructive Analysis period. This is the stage when coding of the data will begin. The researcher will begin the process of referring back to the primary record to draw some conclusions about validity claims, roles, and procedures observed. The steps and procedures in this stage will actually be repeated throughout the study due to the fact that analysis of the dialogical data (interviews, recordings, etc) will also require reconstruction of meaning. First, the researcher must become familiar and comfortable with the idea that, “[m]eaning is first understood in holistic and tactic ways during everyday life... [and then] toward more explicit and delineated modes of understanding” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 95). This is when the researcher will go back into the primary record to begin “mentally noting possible underlying meanings” (p. 95). Looking for thematic patterns and major events in the thick records and/or the field notes will lend itself to low-inference level coding. Based on that coding (thematic or otherwise) the construction of low-level inferences and meaning fields will allow the researcher to, “[keep] articulations close the more immediate features of the act,” (p. 98) as well as, partake in the hermeneutic process. Carspecken reminds us that the hermeneutic process is, “when one reconstructs meanings, “ and that the researcher is able to complete this process, “because the researcher is a communicative being and can imagine herself within the situation being

analyzed...” (p. 98). There are various features to the hermeneutic cycle. Some of these features include “position-taking”, culturally typical interactions, normative reflections and circles, and personality factors (p. 99-101). All of which must be considered for the hermeneutic process.

Stage Two goes on to outline the importance of features such as horizon analyses (which can be quickly understood as the construction and perception of a participant’s ‘world’) and validity claims. Objective, subjective, and normative evaluative validity claims must all be identified in order to more fully illustrate the ethnographic picture of the study. These three ontological models are used to “give us research findings that point toward truth” (p. 57).

Objective validity claims are statements, which have multiple access points. Subjective claims are those which, “concern emotions, desires, intentions, levels of awareness” (p. 69) which require direct access. Normative-evaluative claims are those which speak to any belief by the participant which helps the researcher to understand the constructions of what the participant believes “should be”. For example, if a student teacher were to say, “Students should respect their teachers,” the researcher could draw normative-evaluative claims from that statement.

Stage Three. In this stage, the researcher needs to generate the dialogical data, which, “is generated through dialogues between researcher and researched” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 154). In this stage, the interactions between the researcher and the participant tend to be less than natural, meaning dialogue will not look the same as it does in everyday interactions. The reason that the interviews come towards the end of the study is so that the researcher is able to base the interview protocol on the large amounts of data

already collected before the interview. This is so that the questions being asked and the subjects being discussed in the interviews and focus groups are focused on the aims of qualitative researcher, rather than going off topic. As mentioned previously, the interview protocol, used to cover the appropriate topics wanted by the researcher, is based off the reconstruction analyses and coding of the primary record (Stage Two).

There are multiple ways to generate this dialogical data, which includes interviews, focus groups, and interpersonal process recall (p. 163), which requires the videotaping of the participants in the environment being studied. Then, having the participant watch the recordings and stopping the film whenever the participant feels it is necessary to comment on the events of the videotaping. Once the dialogical data is collected, the same hermeneutic processes and coding from Stage Two is repeated, but added to the process are constant member and consistency checks, as well as having fellow researchers (peer debriefers) look for possible leading interview questions.

Conclusion

The importance of giving pre-service teachers the opportunity to actively engage in classroom settings is paramount (Beyer, 1996; Cornbleth, 2014; Loughran & Russell, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2006) and, thankfully, university teacher education programs have realized this by making experiences in the field a requirement for licensure. Field experiences provide, “candidates with experiences in a variety of communities and across the range of student developmental levels... [and] an opportunity for practicing skills for interacting,” (Cornbleth, 2014, p. 30) with anyone within the walls of a real school.

These lived educative experiences (with the guidance of professional teachers and

professors) are essential to development of not only pedagogical skills, but professional and social skills, as well.

Not only is it vital to give pre-service teachers the opportunity to have field experiences, but also to give them those opportunities without the chance to reflect on the occurrences in the classroom makes for a futile effort in learning pedagogical skill. In order to learn from field experiences, pre-service teacher need to self-reflect in order to improve classroom practices. Tom Russell and John Loughran pose the question, “can self-study improve teacher education?” and through the telling of various teachers’ stories, they attempt to answer this question. They highlight that research has been done to support the claim that self-study is one of the most transformative experiences a teacher can have, especially if done through a critical and socially just lens. In one example of this, Amanda Berry and John Loughran conducted a study that included one pre-service teacher participant who went through extensive self-study measures of her classroom practices and realized aspects of her own teaching that needed to be emphasized, which included, “Responding to the learners’ needs matters, and cannot always be predicted in advance” and also that, “Possibilities for being hurt and making mistakes are real” (Russell & Loughran, 2002, p. 27).

Within educational research, entire journals have been adorned with titles that mirror “urban education” or subjects pertaining to the topic and many thousands of articles have been published discussing topics related to issues in urban education. But, what this study seeks to find is how various understandings of this term fit into in actual urban context and community engagement program. By asking these pre-service teachers to look more deeply into their own biases, perceptions, and classroom practices

as they relate to “urban” students, the gap between theory and practice can begin to close. I, as the researcher, had little success locating any source claiming to know exactly a conception of what “urban education” was. I found many journals and articles pertaining to the subject, but a qualitative study of how personal definitions manifest was extremely difficult to locate. Many teachers can distinguish the importance of “urban education”, but I believe that by helping student teachers see their own personal formation of the term and how it plays a function in their teaching exercises, will yield thought-provoking and critical results.

Chapter IV

The Findings

Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis and summary of the data in this study based on the results of the findings as acquired from three key sources: self recorded reflections that served as monological data, archival data taken from written student teacher reflections, and semi-structured interviews with administrators and creators of the program.

The framework of analysis in this research took the form of critical ethnography, but intertwined with the methodology of case study, connoting that the purpose of this study was to report the findings as they appeared. The analysis of the data will reveal only what was experienced and perceived by the researcher and those who participated in various roles in the program. The significance of the findings will speak to how community-university partnerships and programs can be improved and utilized in order to strengthen teacher educations. An ethnographic analysis was implemented with the use of semi-structured interviews and the reconstructive analysis of student teacher reflections concerning the community-university partnership program. The researcher analyzed these data to explore and depict emerging social themes surrounding the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and insights from the participants.

When this community-university partnership program was first developed, as I reported in one of my many reflections of these experiences, “[When] I became involved, at that point it was in the fall of 2015, and [the program administrators] had already... set it up... And [the director] basically gave me the ability to kind of design [the assignment]

the way I [wanted to], not in terms of who was going, she knew it was going to function out of the student teaching program, but what they were going to do when they were actually there.” Throughout my written and recorded experiences that were in response to what I witnessed while performing my duties as the community engagement liaison and supervisor to the student teachers, I kept detailed field notes which were used to analyze how the culture of that particular environment (the community center in which the student teachers and myself were placed during this project) and how that culture was interpreted by those who interacted with it.

From the inception of this program, I was given the authority to design many aspects of the program. Once I decided that the participants would work with other student teachers to create at least four (4) activities in which the students attending the after-school program would cycle through, I knew they would need to process and deconstruct what they had experienced, which was the reflection piece was added to the assignment. See Appendix D to see the complete assignment as it was given. The reflection directions and response questions were as follows:

Remember to follow the WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT? Format (Driscoll, 2000) for all of your reflections.

Please answer the following questions (let them guide your thinking) about your experiences at [community-university partnership program] (do not include these questions in your responses, please make these into a cohesively thought out reflection.

1. *What were your expectations before you went to [community-university partnership program]? What did you think it would be like? What were you fearful of, nervous about etc...*
2. *What were your experiences like while you were there, which moments stood out to you? How did these conform to your preconceived notions? What did you learn that was new?*
3. *Now that you have had this experience, what would you say is the most important things you have learned about this experience?*
4. *What aspects about how this experience was designed were most helpful for you to have a successful experience? What do you wish you would have known before you went that you did not know?*

The student teaching program's purpose in giving the student teachers a reflective assignment was to imbed good teaching practices, record their thinking processes, develop and sharpen their skills as educators, be able to move forward in difficult situations, and to encourage transformational thinking (Hargreaves & Page, 2013).

Emergent Themes

These themes, which were used as coding categories for the interview data were also used as a structure for the analysis of this study. An opening vignette will be utilized at the beginning of each theme's analysis in order to develop a point of reference and further understanding. The emerging themes are *Affective Responses*, *New Experiences and Learnings*, *Perceptions of the Students and the Community*, and *Programmatic Suggestions and Reflections*.

Affective Responses

“Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.”

This quote by Dr. Seuss summarizes my experience at “Community-University Partnership Program”. Before arriving to this community, I was unsure what to expect. My group and I struggled determining the activities that we would use. We did not know the children’s personalities nor their routines, and we feared they would not accept us. I personally imagined [the after-school program] to be similar to a club-like after school program. I never understood that this program was composed of children from this same community until I arrived.

It is fair to claim that Newton’s Third Law, stating that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, is applicable to social experiences and the affective responses in this research. Many scholars have published works considering the importance of affective responses in the classroom (Taggart & Laughlin, 2017; Albrecht-Crane, 2006; Edbauer, 2005; Glarden Brand, 1994a, 1994b, 1987; McLeod, 1997; Micciche, 2005, 2006) and have defined it as, “emotions, attitudes, beliefs, moods, and conation (motivation)” (McLeod, 1997, p. 9). The importance of knowing how students respond to stimulation or experiences is a root of what teachers are consistently attempting to accomplish in their classrooms. In order to help students learn academically, teachers must be able to recognize the affective responses their lessons, as well as their cognitive comprehension of the material. This helps to aid in the development of learning experiences that meaningful and lasting. In all three data sources collected for this case study, the presence of affective responses was impossible to ignore. For this critical qualitative research it was necessary to, “come to terms with

affect, viewing the affect/cognition split not as a dichotomy but as dialectic" (McLeod, 1997, p. 7).

Affective Responses in Monological Data. During the initial stages of this research, I had collected and reflected on a vast number of experiences, and as I started to transcribe my recorded thoughts and analyze what I had written concerning these experiences over the past two years, I realized that in many of reflections, I had neglected to discuss my feelings and reflections. I had reported detailed experiences, but rarely gave much more than responses such as, "it wasn't too stressful" or, "it was a good day." It should be noted that any reference to the real name of the community center will be labeled as, "Community-University Partnership Program," and that this thick description and observation will be mined for only the validity claims and ontological models associated with my affective responses. In one of my earliest thick descriptions, I diagrammed the classroom the program would function out of for the entirety of the year.

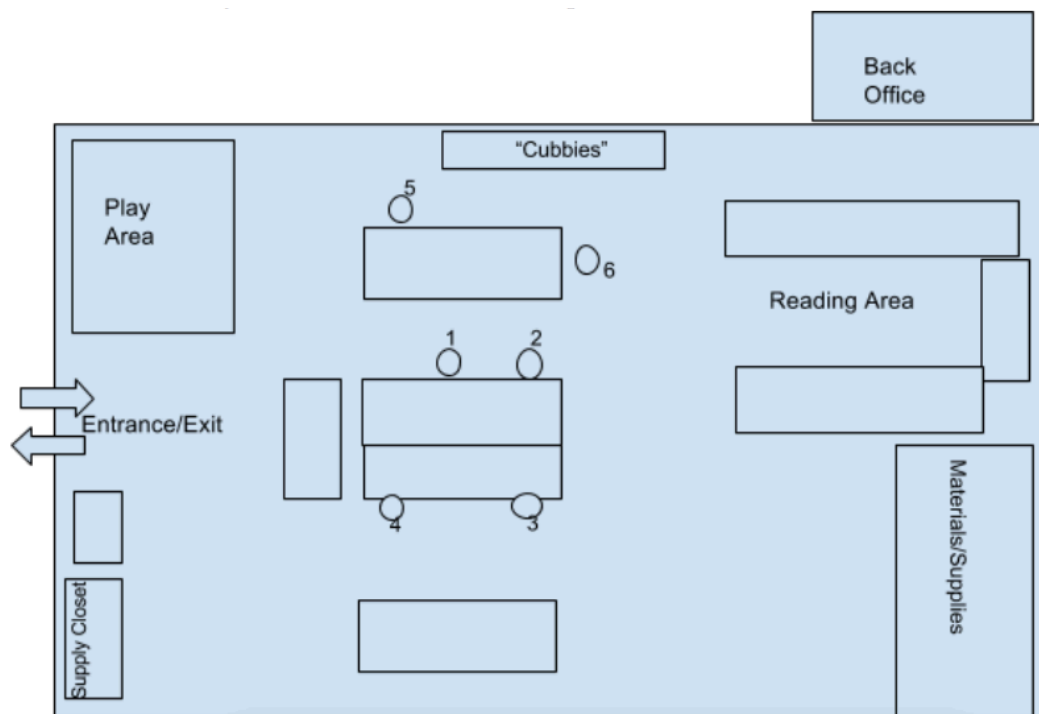


Figure 1. The Classroom Diagram

I, then, went on to report the observations of my own experiences in the community center. The inclusion of various details in this thick description allows for the necessary contextualization of what took place and my own understandings and thought pertaining to the events.

Date/Time: Tuesday, October 6, 2015; 3:00-3:30 pm

The following observation was recorded from the perspective of my being the “observer as participant,” as I had to work during the time frame to make sure that the program was running smoothly.

The... Community center is located practically right in the center of the [apartment complex], and the building houses many more community activities than simply just the [after school program, so on any given day [I] would see many different people walking in and around the space where the children spend their after school time. The room in which the After School program takes place is about twenty feet by sixteen feet and holds enough seating to seat about 30 children. The lighting is fluorescent. There are usually about twenty to twenty-five students on a daily basis. The number of children can fluctuate to as low as twelve students to as high as thirty students. There are four [counselors] there every day, one Program Director, one Program Site Coordinator, and then myself, and four student teachers. On the day in question, there were only three University of Houston Student Teachers.

On the sixth of October, I arrived at precisely 3:00 pm and entered the activity room (above) to see the [counselors] (3 and 4 on the diagram) sitting at the center table working on getting a few art projects ready to be displayed on the classroom walls. I greeted them, and noticed for the first time that day (I had already facilitated a few days

like this prior), I was greeted with what I received to be genuine warmth and welcoming from the counselors. Previously, when I first arrived to start working at “Community-University Partnership Program”, the counselors seemed very wary of my presence, and it made sense considering I was the only person in the room that was not from the community and the only white person. Perhaps, they felt like I did not belong there and they felt as if I was coming to the community center to try and tell them how I was going to “save them”.

When I sat down in a chair (1) I began to converse with [community center counselor] (3) about his plans to travel to Washington D.C. to participate in the anniversary of the Million Man March...

We were all sitting in our respective seats, and with [community center counselor] and I began to talk about the importance of knowing and understanding the law. He told me, “I used to be in this class called, ‘Texas Law’ and at first I didn’t like it because I thought it would be boring and all about memorizing facts, but I ended up really liking it because, you see, I’m an African American Studies major with a minor in sociology, and I’m in the Student Activists Organization at T.S.U. (Texas Southern University). I feel like that class taught me what I need to know so that I can know my rights and keep fighting for causes I really believe in.” After Ishmael stated this, I looked around the room to notice that the counselor sitting next to him (position 4) seemed to ignore what he was saying and continued to work on setting up her activity with the impending children. The other student teachers that were still sitting at table 1 (positions 5 and 6), also gave off the impression they were not interested in the conversation, as well.

I responded to [community center counselor], by telling him that I totally agreed with him that in order to create change and progress, you must know how to navigate the system...

When the conversation... started to die down, a young girl came into the room to start her afternoon with the counselors at the facility. I took her entrance into the room as our (the Student Teachers and myself) cue to start getting ready for the student teachers' centered activities in the next room.

The student made eye contact with me, and being that she had been introduced to my presence before this date, she walked to my chair and outstretched her arms to hug me. She and I embraced, but I did not take the hug too seriously considering she then went around the room and greeted each brand new student teacher with hugs, despite the fact that she had never met any of these people before.

After looking back critically into the context of what I had written and recorded in the field at that time, I deconstructed the quotes, which outline my affective responses by breaking down my responses into Carspecken's ontological models. In the following lines, I have diagrammed my own truth claims, as well as how those claims fit into the three ontological models: objective, subjective, and normative evaluative claims (Carspecken, 1996). The analysis of these quotes led me to categorize my reflections into four coding schemes pertaining to affective responses: dealing with the unknown, relating to the "community center" children and staff, self-awareness and mindset, and lastly, self doubt/insecurities.

I was greeted with what I received to be genuine warmth and welcoming from the counselors.

Dealing with the Unknown. The context of this quote is one that is prefaced by the idea that my previous encounters with the people in this environment were perceived as less than “warm and welcoming”. This lends itself to the conclusion that my subjective validity claim (Carspecken, 1996) in this instance was that I had felt less than welcomed in my previous interactions with the counselors of the after-school program. Despite the fact that I do not explicitly describe my level of awareness leads to me infer that some how my interactions with the counselors had “warmed”. How could I have reached this conclusion? What actions from the counselors had led me to believe that I was unwelcomed at one point, and then welcomed at another point. Therefore, in my initial subjective validity claims associated with this environment could indicate that I felt uncomfortable with this new environment. Additionally, because I had no access to the thoughts and perceptions of the counselors during these interactions, my assessment of the social site was purely created by own understandings of previous experiences in similar social sites. This theme also indicates my normative-evaluative claims that reveal what I believe to be, “proper, appropriate and conventional” (p. 83), within this context. Some of the normative-evaluative claims I discovered within my field notes and reflections were “I should not be nervous in this environment,” “People should be warm and welcoming to strangers,” and “I should be warm with everyone I meet, even if I am nervous.” Throughout the self-data analyzed, I found that my normative-evaluative and subjective claims dealing with the unknown proved to be more interesting than I initially anticipated. There is evidence that throughout this experience, even when I was

neglected introspection, what hid behind my words was quite a bit of nervousness and possibly even an attitude of judgment towards the student teachers and the counselors of the community center. Later into my self-data, this theme is less prevalent, but still present.

I responded to [community center counselor], by telling him that I totally agreed with him that in order to create change and progress, you must know how to navigate the system...

Relating to the Community Center's Children and Staff. Now that I have discussed the ontological models associated with my affective responses in “dealing with the unknown,” it makes sense to discuss how I began to assuage my nervousness and judgments by building connections and relationships with the community center’s children and staff, and furthermore, outline how the meaning fields of my reflections indicate my subjective and normative-evaluative validity claims (Carspecken, 1996). First, when I state that I agreed with the counselor in his views of politics, my subjective claims indicated a calming effect on the conversation. The lessening of tension between our differences and a connection beginning to build indicates how a calming effect had taken place within my own perception of our (myself and the community center’s staff) interactions. The normative-evaluative claims in these interactions were “I have been existent in this space for some time now, therefore I should be a part of the group dynamic,” and “Time investments in one environment should reward me with connection, relationship, and a sense of belonging.”

I took [after school student] entrance into the room as our (the Student Teachers and myself) cue to start getting ready for the student teachers' centered activities in the next room... She and I embraced, but I did not take the hug too seriously considering she then went around the room and greeted each brand new student teacher with hugs, despite the fact that she had never met any of these people before.

Self-Awareness and Mindset. In more fascinating than my subjective and normative-evaluative claims (Carspecken, 1996) when “dealing with the unknown” and “relating to the community center’s children and staff” is how much the stage one data contained a lack of self-awareness and a mindset of being a passive participant. Despite the fact that I was present in this environment three days a week for two academic semesters, I still perceived myself as an outsider or someone who had one foot in the door and one out of the door. This is shown in the times my subjective validity claims denote emotions of pride when a student or I has a “good day” in the community center or disappointment when a student teacher reporting having a negative experience. My words exhibit emotions that connote I am connected and taken ownership of my positive experiences in this environment, but distanced when the experiences as negative. For example, on November 11th, 2015 I reported that, “[today] was a really good day. The kids were fairly calm. It was pretty organized for the most part, I got a lot of help when asked for it from the counselors and it was overall a really good day.” In these words my positive experience has tied the students, the counselors, and myself into a unit that I unknowingly connected. This notion reinforced the previous theme’s idea that I carry

the normative-evaluative truth claim that time investment earns relationship and connection to other persons.

Previously, when I first arrived to start working at “Community-University Partnership Program”, the counselors seemed very wary of my presence, and it made sense considering I was the only person in the room that was not from the community and the only white person. Perhaps, they felt like I did not belong there and they felt as if I was coming to the community center to try and tell them how I was going to “save them”.

Self Doubt and Insecurities. In a later section, I will discuss how my self-data revealed quite a bit of my unconscious preconceived notions, but in relation to my doubts as a teacher and person. In the above statement, my perceived subjective claim was that I was made to feel uncomfortable in the social site. According to my own understanding, I built a case on connections between the body language of the counselors and my foreign presence. I quickly came to the conclusion that my discomfort must be coming from my foreignness. Additionally, it would be fair to claim that my discomfort could have also been caused by the foreignness of the environment and my recognition of how foreign I was. In the periodical, *Africa Insight*, an article written by Rosabelle Boswell and reviewed by Christian A. Williams (2014), told the stories of how Black people in historically and socially white spaces and environments have had to adjust their behavior in order to navigate aversive racism in South Africa. In another publication out of the Western Journal of Black Studies, Carolyn Finney writes about the historiographical perception of “the great outdoors” and environmentalism had become a “white space” with which African Americans had learned not to interact with for, as she put it, “popular perceptions of environmentalism fail to recognize the historical role of

race and racism in shaping nature, perpetuating a discourse of a “white wilderness” waiting to be conquered (as cited in Moore, 2015, p. 262). I find it necessary to consider racial context of my discomfort in this scenario, not to equate my discomfort with that of African Americans in “white spaces,” but to indicate that a connection between the scenarios is present in my subjective validity claims.

Affective Responses in Student Teacher Reflections. To claim that the student teachers sent to the “Partnership Program,” exhibited affective responses to their experiences there, would be an understatement. Almost every single student teacher’s reflection, contained mention of their, “emotions, attitudes, beliefs, moods, and conation (motivation)” (McLeod, 1997, p. 9) during the “Community-University Partnership Program” and even after. After reviewing and coding all of their affective responses, the same four subcategories of affective responses emerged that coincided with the emergent themes for stage one: dealing with the unknown, relating to the “community center” children, self-awareness and mindset, and lastly, student teacher insecurities. I feel it is important to note for the validity of this research that during the process of analyzing the stage two data, I experienced more affective responses that warrant mention. The affective responses I experienced while analyzing the student teacher written reflections included feeling defensive of the program when it was criticized and contempt and annoyance for statements that indicated the writer had their preconceived notions or stereotypes reinforced.

When I knew that I had to create a lesson plan for an after-school program and teach it, I was thinking that I had to be as perfect as possible with an excellent lesson plan so that teachers are content they partnered with UH for this project. I was imagining a

classroom full of students and that our lesson plan had to flow from my partner's lesson plan to mine and that the "Community-University Partnership Program staff will be expecting strict professionalism from the students.

Dealing with the Unknown. As was true for myself at the beginning of my experiences at the Community-University Partnership Program, most, if not all, of the stage two data exhibited the presence of the subtheme, *dealing with the unknown*. While many of the student teachers reported having anxiety connected to a lack of information about the students, community, or the assignment, a few had even explicitly stated they were not anxious about the experience or their ability to perform well.

There are two memorable moments that I have told people about my experience there. The first is when the students started showing up. We introduced ourselves then got down to the business of playing, I played the game Allowance with a third grader. My partners were coloring, reading and playing... with the other students. It was a great moment in which we weren't their teachers but their friends.

Relating to the "Community Center" Children. Many of the student teacher reflections contained stories about how they were able to relate or connect to the students of the after-school program. A few of these narratives contained phrases like the one above, which seem unremarkable outside of their context, but suggest a state of surprise or disbelief in the activity. What about playing with children was surprising to them? Another consideration for this theme is how our students relate to children they do not know. Does *dealing with the unknown* always induce a sense of anxiety for them? A few of the student teachers felt that since they were accustomed to working with other

children or even teenagers, that the age group of the children made it difficult to develop a connection with them. Although there were varying degrees of how and if the student teachers were able to relate to the children in the community center, there was significant presence of the mention of this theme.

At first, like most of the world, I was only concerned about myself. I wanted to do only what [I] wanted to do. That one day I began to see that the true joy in life was not pleasing me, but in pleasing others. When I saw the looks on the children's faces as I played with them, or when I read to them, a joy filled my life that I never received by trying to please myself.

Self-Awareness and Mindset. In the above quote, the student teacher reports how her mindset had shifted during this experience and in the environment. She states that her thinking had moved from inside her self to the outside setting, to the children and to the social situation she had found herself in. She states that is due to the reactions her presence received from the children she was able to have a moment of “true joy”. Among the student teachers’ writings, there were two categories of self-awareness and mindsets: shifting/changing or deficit thinking. Many of the expressions used to illustrate their mindsets in this community center could be summarized by one student when she stated, “I couldn’t get past the fact that this was an obligation that needed to be met in order for me to be successful for this semester. I was so fixated on this mindset, that I robbed myself the opportunity of exploring all the wonderful things this experience could be.”

I think something that I was very nervous about was that the children may not listen to me very much because I am a new person to them and I was afraid that they may test the waters with me a little bit and act up with me. I was also fearful that the children would get very bored with the activities.

Student Teacher Insecurities. This subtheme proved to be quite interesting, but one that I could have predicted. Considering that these reflections were written by student teachers whose skills have not been honed to their peak, it is expected that they may have doubts about their skills and abilities when working with children. It is even more unsurprising that they would doubt themselves in a classroom of children they had never worked with and whose backgrounds did not match their own. The room had been full of “newness” for the student teachers.

Although there was a significant presence of student teachers that reported having anxiety connected to their own “newness” and lack of pedagogical ability, there were still a number of student teachers whose anxiety was demonstrated as excitement, rather than fear. Many responses were in line with this student’s reaction stating, “I worked hard with my small group to create fun activities that the kids could participate in. I created a life size scrabble game for the kids to play in teams. I bought and put together all the materials for the game. The activities that we had planned were fun and interactive. I was excited to play with the kids.”

Affective Responses in Dialogical Data. Considering that the task (experience) for the student teachers and myself was similar in nature, it made sense that our responses were generally similar, but the dialogical data is special. The dialogical data was taken from the creators or administrators for the program, so since two of the interview

participants had little to no contact (physical presence) with the environment of the “Community-University Partnership Program,” their responses are quite varied from the participants and data that had direct contact with the “Community-University Partnership Program. There is a lesser presence of affective or emotional response (although still present). The structure of stage three’s data (dialogical) data analysis, I will discuss how each emergent theme reveals an existent role for the interview participants.

This stage of data collection and analysis it was important to perform a preliminary role analysis. The amount of data collected during stage three was not deep enough to perform a comprehensive role analysis, but does It is important to examine the roles being played in stage three, as they are, “a pragmatic unit of meaning, understood holistically but only in such a way as to perform congruently with [that role]” (p. 136). Essentially, this means that the actions performed by the role players will not necessarily *define* the role being played, but it can strongly indicate or “predict what basic form actions will take place” (p. 136). As previously mentioned, with the introduction of each emergent theme, for each interview participant, a role also emerged which coexisted with the themes.

Interviewer: *So, it seems like you are very passionate about that community university partnership. Can you talk to me a little bit about why that is? Why do you have that drive for community partnerships?*

“Dr. Smith”: *I guess it's how I was raised, is that you should not do a job unless you are trying to make positive difference in the world. So, I do not feel like I am fulfilled unless I am doing something that I feel like is trying to make a positive-- Like, not what I do for*

my regular job, it does not make a positive difference, I think it does and you try and find ways in helping people graduate, and helping maintain standards that your degree means something, those kinds of things are important.

But, I always feel like if you live in a community, you should be part of that community. I live in (omitted) so I try and do that in [my neighborhood and] in my own personal life, and then in my professional life I want to have a way to do that too.

Interviewer: *Why do you think it's such a powerful thing to do? You say it's just the right thing to do, but I guess my question is, why do you feel it's important to be involved in the community?*

“Dr. Smith”: *I mean, I cannot think of a good reason besides it's my values. I believe in it, it makes me feel good. It's for me more than it's for the community. I do not feel like I am productive or a real member of the community unless I am contributing. So, I would feel like it's somewhat selfish, that makes me feel like I am doing what I should be doing with my life if I am doing those sorts of things.*

“Dr. Smith”, *The Community Helper*. “Dr. Smith” is a leader within the College of Education on both an official and unofficial scale. In this role as the “community helper,” “Dr. Smith” exhibits how his actions are connected to his value claims. He outright states that his normative-evaluative claims are that, “contributing... makes me feel like I am doing what I should be doing with my life” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). He also states another of his normative-evaluative claims as “if you live in a community, you should be part of that community” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). This indicates that he has a definition of community and community member that requires active participation and

contribution to the betterment of the aforementioned community. This tacitly indicates in the foreground of these comments that since he was the person that founded the inception of this program, his value claims could be woven into the fabric of the program's design.

Since the affective responses from "Dr. Smith" are not as easily identified in the foreground of the interview data, it is only appropriate to use low-inference interpretations. For Dr. Smith, the affective responses seem to be closed tied to a sense of responsibility and a sense of duty to the communities in which he lives and works. He writes that, "I felt like a lot of people here were sitting in their office doing their research and not part of a community" ("Dr. Smith", personal communication, October 10, 2017). This connotes that his possible affective responses were closely tied to an uncomfortable emotion that drove him to recognize a need to create connection between the university and the surrounding community.

"Dr. Thames": *My worry was... given that student teaching doesn't meet weekly and I don't see students and that they're going to be going into a place that's very different than what they're used to. Like how do we support that? And how do we unpack things with them and make sure they're ready to go out there and that they understand the value of it? Because we ended up... really coming up with ways to support them. I mean like you (the researcher) for instance and really working with "Katie"... ended up helping them in that way but I do think that what we ended up still not really being able to do very well... [Really] convince them that it was a worthwhile experience going into it... I was really excited but I knew there was going to be some struggles...*

***Interviewer:** Well correct me if I'm wrong but it sounds like you're very... passionate... about the idea of giving student teachers these kinds of experiences outside of...the traditional classroom. Can you tell me about a time that that...clicked for you?*

***“Dr. Thames”:** I can't pinpoint a specific time when that clicked for me, except that I feel like- I don't know, I have to really think about- I really would have to think about that but I know it did because I tend to like grind, like just move forward and barrel through things and that kind of stuff, without seeing kind of the big pic- without those outside things. I've always really thought it was important for students to have some sort of service learning component of anything. I feel like I have felt that students, faculty, people in general are so worried about their own selves and just- I mean there's so many things you can point to lately about like here's what we have when we only worry about ourselves and whatever in the world is just affecting me and my taxes or my job or my experience. So it's always been really important for me to get out and do something selfless, if you will. You know what I mean?*

***“Dr. Thames”, The Concerned Instructor.** “Dr. Thames” has been a student teaching instructor for some time, so when she described the event in which “Dr. Smith” came to her with the idea to create the “Community-University Partnership Program” because she had access to student teachers, she stated that, “I think there were a lot of times when I've really thought like, there's just so much as far as teaching that is beyond the classroom, right and so we keep thinking about things but it's hard to figure out how we manage it as a program, rather than like individual instructors putting it in their courses. So I was excited to be able to have the opportunity to think, "Okay, here's a thing that we can do." Her affective response was different from “Dr. Smith's” in that*

she felt her main concern was for her own students and the lessons they would learn during their time in the community center.

In her interview with me, she stated that, “[teacher educators and teachers] have a commitment to the community and so one of the things that we want is for our student teachers to have these opportunities to do things outside of the classroom, beyond just... instruction and teaching in the classroom and kind of show how education is bigger than that. It goes beyond the four walls of your classroom and really paying attention but that is like getting them out in the community.” Her subjective claims were exhibited as anxious and unsure about whether or not the purpose of the program, mentioned in her “education... goes beyond the four walls of a classroom” comment, was being fulfilled during their experiences in the teacher education program. She poses questions to herself asking this very question. With consideration to the pragmatic horizon (Carspecken, 1996, p. 105), Dr. Thames demonstrates in the foreground of her statement that her possible normative-evaluative claims are: *good teachers help students. Good teachers help students understand the value of educational experiences. Educational experiences should have value. Valuable educational experiences should have moral lessons of selflessness.* Aside from her role as the “concerned instructor”, Dr. Thames exhibits other roles, which will be discussed later in this paper.

“Katie”: *There were so many things within the community that the children didn't have access to. So many things that they were just going through, like so sad to just know and this is something that I- it really just struck me and I've just held onto this ever since I experienced it, at “Community-University Partnership Program” as well, is that some of*

these kids are as young as like 5 years old and I mean, the reality is that their life sucks already. Like coming from single-parent homes and dealing with some of the issues that as old as we may be we probably wouldn't be able to handle them but it taught me that these kids have a lot of resilience. And so, just understanding all of that, just feel passion and so my supervisor knew that that's kind of the community that I wanted to continue working with. So when he saw that this position became available, he offered it to me and so I took it and I was at "Community-University Partnership Program" for two whole years. Makes me emotional, to be honest with you. [Tears well up in Katie's eyes].

I just love those kids.

"Katie", The Caring Investor. More so than the other two interview participants, "Katie" demonstrated far more affective responses to the "Community-University Partnership Program." Her utilization of words like *"just so sad"* and *"their [lives suck] already,"* and *"I just love those kids,"* give a clear indication that her experience and contact with the children and the after-school program varied greatly from that of myself, the student teachers, and the other interview participants. Her narrative and contribution to this research offers a completely different perspective, as her role and mindset seemed to operate more for the children of the community center than any other participant in this case study. "Katie" described her role in this program as, "I was responsible for staff and I was responsible for the children on site. Of course, primarily their safety, developing curriculum and just making sure that [partnerships were] ... positive ... and that we maintained a good relationship," ("Katie", personal communication, October 19, 2017). What is important to point out about "Katie's" affective responses are that they

are directed towards the children of the community center. Her investment with these children had been for a significant period of time (two years), so her role in this setting had very much determined how she viewed the community, its children, and the environment in which the after-school program took place.

“Katie’s” subjective and normative-evaluative truth claims in her interview, as they related to her affective responses are apparent. The objective claims that she makes are “these children do not have access to educational opportunities.” This is considered supported objective claim, as it can be triangulated by various other access points of information. The subjective truth claim attached to the objective claim is “the lack of access for these children causes me to feel sadness and sympathy.” Her possible normative-evaluative claims and their meaning fields are “poverty is bad,” “all children should have access to educational opportunities,” “children should not have to deal with what my students have to deal with.” The perspective that “Katie’s” narrative offers is one that in order to more fully see or understand the structure of this program, her story is necessary.

New Experiences and Learnings

I honestly had no idea that area existed and was so close to where I go to school everyday. I knew that the area surrounding UH was a low-income community, but I never went to explore it. One of the things that stood out to me was that I saw someone there that I knew. At one of the restaurants on campus that I visit frequently, there is a woman who works there that is the nicest person I may have ever encountered as a consumer. She makes me feel like a person, not just another customer. She is very good at her job, and she is incredibly kind. I saw her there at [the community center], walking

into the community center with her uniform shirt still on from the restaurant at UH. It, all of a sudden, made all of it seem real. Those houses weren't just buildings anymore. Those people and those children were no longer just a statistic. Seeing that woman there, knowing now where she lives and getting a little bit of insight in her life was overwhelming.

The second emergent theme discovered in this case study was *New Experiences and Learnings*. All of the data collected, even if not explicitly stated, contained the presence of this theme. It is almost impossible to avoid new experiences and learnings when enrolled in a teacher education program that emphasizes community engagement experiences (Mule, 2010). In one such publication, a professional development supervisor for student teachers wrote in *The New Educator*, “A fundamental requirement of the clinical model in this constructivist, social-justice-oriented program is for student teachers to cultivate professional agency by embracing opportunities that connect them with others both in and outside of school and to show evidence of being reflective practitioners who recognize and evaluate the effects of their assumptions, choices, and actions on themselves and others” (Klehr, 2015, p. 277). This program’s purpose is mirrored in the “Community-University Partnership Program’s” purpose to give student teachers the opportunity to work outside of the classroom, and with students and an environment they are not accustomed to in order to grow their reflective and professional skills. The subthemes that fell under this category were: *Community Experiences and Learnings, Managing Personal Mindsets, Unexpected Connections, and Validation of Career Choice*.

New Experiences and Learnings in Monological Data. This reflected the evolutionary nature of this case study, as what I was able to learn and experience from participating in the Community-University Partnership Program. In the early stages of my graduate assistantship, every new responsibility contained a new experience and learning, as I was taking on tasks which I had never had access to before this point. When I was approached by “Dr. Thames”, “Dr. Smith”, and another teacher education professor about being the student teacher supervisor and liaison for a community engagement program designed to enrich student teachers’ professional skills with urban students, I was initially quite excited at the prospect. Being a part of a program that was going to engage student teachers, as well as elementary and middle school-aged children thrilled me. After all, I am a middle and high school educator, by trade. However, when I met with “Katie” for the first time, she told me of her after-school program’s struggle with classroom management and counselor training.

Community Experiences and Learnings. Before student teachers were sent to participant in the program, I went to observe the routines and behavior of the children, counselors, and “Katie,” herself, in this social setting. Before the official start date of student teacher arrivals in the after-school program, “Katie” requested that I come and observe, so as to gain some insights into the routines of the program. I find it most appropriate to report my first interaction with this social site under the theme of *New Experiences*, as this was my first, therefore “newest” experience with the community center. In my first observation and visit, I reported the following:

Upon my arrival, I realized some of the problems they were having were due to a lack of understanding about pedagogy as well as simple classroom practices.

- *Counselors eating around children*
- *Sign in sheet not ready*
- *Worksheets for kids that do not have homework and not a lot of choice reading*
- *Perhaps, different activities to choose from?*
- *This room should be theirs (the students)*
- *They need a lot more structure*
- *Read out loud to groups*
- *Chaotic- they need to know where to go and what needs to be done as soon as they walk in*
- *Are there clear rules and consequences?*

In these nine bullet points, my understanding (or lack thereof) of the community, the children, this after-school program, and the employees is overwhelmingly apparent. It is almost painful to look back at these notes that I took, and see how much my understanding of the community and this program has shifted. In this very short list, the amount of normative-evaluative claims far outweighs that of any subjective claims. Since I was the person to report such “findings,” I can undoubtedly state that some of my normative-evaluative claims at the start of this program were: “Counselors should not eat around children. This action indicates unprofessionalism. Educators should be professional,” “Materials in a classroom should be prepared ahead of time” “Children are given ‘busy work’. Children should not be given ‘busy work’,” “This program is chaotic. Programs for children should not be chaotic.” My complete lack of understanding for the context in which this program functioned that day is almost too

telling of my deficit thinking at the start of this program. It would take months of working closely with “Katie” and the other counselors at the community center to understand that the lack of resources and support for this particular after-school program had left them underfunded and without the structure that most other after-school programs similar to this one actually had. Looking back and analyzing my initial experiences and reactions to this program, evokes feelings and subjective claims of shame and embarrassment.

Managing Personal Mindsets. Much later in the program, when my understanding of the setting advanced to a more complex and complete picture, I was able to see the value of the partnership between this community and the college. After weeks of investing time with the same people, in the same community center, I was beginning to take ownership of the kind of experiences being had in this space. On March 3rd, 2016, I recorded the following experience:

Today was such a relief. I needed today. We had two... student teachers for the day and not only did the kids immediately connect with these two guys, [the students] connected back. They got right in there. They were excited to be there. They worked hard. They played with the kids. These two guys just blew my mind and it was still chaotic, it is always chaotic. What I have learned now is that it's an after-school program so of course it is chaotic. It takes a lot of energy to be able to do this job, but these two guys not only did the kids see them and connect with them based on the fact that they were being represented by the authority figure, but they completed connected and they wanted to be there. It made me so happy and it was such a relief to see these student teachers be in their element. They were really in their element and it made me super happy and the

kids were happy. There were a couple of fights here and there, normal behavioral junk, but overall it was a fabulous day and I honestly couldn't have asked for it to go better.

The overall tone of this journal entry is telling of the kinds of experiences I had become accustomed to, as well how I had grown to view the after-school program. Based on my use of words like “refreshing” and “takes a lot of energy,” I can draw the conclusion that my average experience in the community center began to include student teachers whose anxiety and discomfort with the newness of the space practically pulsed through them. I had grown accustomed to the chaotic nature of how things functioned. My mindset shifted from carrying strict expectations of silent, obedient children to an expectation of “controlled chaos”.

Unexpected Connections. Originally, when I was given this assignment, I had little expectation for my own growth. I never expected to be accepted as a member of that particular social site. The staff and the children seemed to like me well enough, but I was still a stranger in their eyes, but ever so often, relationships were fostered between the community center’s staff, the students, and myself. Towards the end of my first semester of my role as the supervisor for the Community-University Partnership Program, I reflected on a moment that, although seemingly small, hinted towards an unexpected connection. On December 10th, 2015, I reflected on the following:

So, today was actually a nice day. It was pretty calm, not many kids. One of the students, Marcus, that kind of had, I don't want to call it a breakthrough or anything, but I had a meaningful experience with him. I did his homework with him at the beginning of the session and then at the end of the session I was helping another student with

something and he just came up and patted me on the back. I just thought that was a nice warm moment today.

First, although I do not explicitly recall this moment, I do remember Marcus. He was around eight or nine years old and could be described as smart, but hard to reach. He was wary of my presence. I admittedly enjoyed the days when he was present. He loved to make jokes and definitely kept his distance from me most of the time, which was why I felt the need to record the moment. In spite of the fact that I plainly stated that I did not want to, “call it a breakthrough or anything,” I used those words and felt the need to record the moment in my field notes and refer to the event as a “memorable moment.” My possible normative-evaluative claims and identity claims at this point were “I am a good teacher,” “Good teachers build relationships with their students,” “I am beginning to build a relationship with Marcus, so I am a good teacher.” The subjective claims attached to this entry are “being a good teacher makes me feel happy.”

In various stages of my experiences, I felt as if I was beginning to develop relationships with the students and counselors in the community center and the after-school program. It is difficult to locate the evidence for this claim, but a few pieces I can identify to support my subjective claims are present. I was not a member of the community, but people who *were* members of the community were becoming habituated with my presence there. Many people who worked outside of the after-school program were starting to recognize me when I walked into the community center three times a week. Although, I cannot claim that I developed lasting, meaningful relationships with the counselors or students in the after-school program, I can claim that meaningful educational moments took place.

New Experiences and Learnings in Student Teacher Reflections. While many of the student teachers who attended the Community-University Partnership Program claimed to have had impacting experiences, many of the written reflections indicated that even if they were unaware of any transformative or informative lessons, their subjective and value claims, it was still arguable and supported by some evidence that insights were gained. Since many of these student teachers have moved on, or graduated from this institution, the ability to complete member checks for these “learnings” cannot be completed. That is not the purpose of this theme, or this research, really, but rather to report their own words and speculate as to their meanings. The subcategories that fell under the umbrella of *New Experiences and Learnings* were community experiences and learnings, managing personal mindsets, unexpected connections, and validation of career choice.

This [Community-University Partnership] project was a very enriching experience. I got to work with kids who were from a different socio-economic level, background, culture, and race.

Community Experiences and Learnings. It was interesting to analyze this portion of the data, as what I found was closely connected to another theme, self-awareness. While many of the student teachers outright claimed to have had an “enriching experience,” as like the one in the opening vignette, still many other refused to admit their experience had yielded any benefit for their educational experience. Many of the claims associated with this were associated with what they qualified as a negative experience in the community center. The connection between a negative experience and a claim of nothing learned was a strong one. However, reflections that reported having a

negative experience also contained a report of taking ownership for planning. Many reflections were similar when reflecting on community learnings by saying things like, “Overall, the activities went very poorly and it was an extremely chaotic afternoon... If I had to do the [Community-University Partnership Program] project again next semester I would plan a lot differently. I would take in consideration the group of students I am dealing with and plan activities that hold their interest for a longer period of time.” The use of “I” statements, indicates a strong correlation between a negative experience to their own planning and personal responsibility.

Other written reflections reported almost epiphanic connections concerning the community. While not a regular occurrence in the data, but still worth noting, some student teachers revealed they had never considered teaching in a community like the one the Community-University Partnership Program existed in. One student teacher reported, “the volunteer project is a great chance for us to see more of the Houston areas where we may not have come from or ever considered teaching at the future.” Many claimed that they had never considered the idea of teaching in an area in which the demographic was not closely matched to their own, and that this experience had planted the idea for consideration.

So I guess I can say that without thinking it, I predicted that these students were going to have zero motivation. I was extremely happy that to see these students motivation. I was also extremely surprised to see that the smaller students (4-5 years old) behaved a lot better than the older kids!

Managing Personal Mindsets. The problem, however, when analyzing the reflection data associated with community learnings and experiences was that I found strong support and numbers of student teachers who were operating and interacting with the community center's children from a deficit mindset. These particular reflections suggested that although they reported having an overall positive experience in the community center, they felt it was in spite of the conditions the children lived in. Even still, there were students who reported having these thoughts and then catching themselves in this mindset, and discussing how they were able to alter that state of mind. The question to consider for this subtheme is how and where did those thoughts originate? Many of the student teachers reported that they really did not know what to expect when coming to work in the community center, but at the same time claimed to have an idea about what to expect from *these children*. There was a persistent occurrence of subjective claims of surprise and delight at the sight of well-adjusted, average children had dashed their preconceived notions.

It, all of a sudden, made all of it seem real. Those houses weren't just buildings anymore. Those people and those children were no longer just a statistic. Seeing that woman there, knowing now where she lives and getting a little bit of insight in her life was overwhelming.

Unexpected Connections. At the beginning of this section, a vignette was included in which a student teacher reflected upon her transformative experience (Askew & Carnell, 2011), not with the elementary-aged after school students, but rather with one of the parents dropping her daughter off for the after-school activities. More so than any

other reflection, this caused an entire room of academics to stop and listen to its words. When I asked “Dr. Thames” to describe to me when she felt like the program was fulfilling its mission, she recalled this reflection almost immediately by claiming, “They were getting it. It may not be perfect and we may not have it all worked out but some of them... are getting it, whatever the 'it' is. That there's empathy or compassion.” This reflection, although having nothing to do with anyone who developed, designed, or ran the program contained in it the most convincing evidence that this one student had made one incredible, unexpected connection to the experience.

Many of the reflections claimed to make connections to the community and to the children in the community center. They made declarations that implied how they carried certain expectations into the community center concerning the students or the people of the community, but then were exposed to something totally different to what any Internet search yielded concerning the community.

This experience gave me a chance to realize my assurance of wanting to teach middle school and not elementary. Elementary students are too hyper and full of energy for me; I personally enjoy my [sixth] grade. Also I felt an assurance of knowing becoming a teacher is the career I want to continue to pursue.

Validation of Career Choice. The numbers of student teachers who were training to become elementary certified teachers and the numbers of those who were not is data I wished would have been a part of the reflective experience, but since this is archival data, I only have access to the qualitative data provided. However, based on this qualitative data, I can easily determine which of the student teachers was not training

to become an elementary certified educator because when asked what they learned from this experience, they reported an affirmation of what they wanted to do, and working with elementary-aged children was not it. The presence of this subtheme was not existent in the majority of reflections, but its mention was frequent enough to correlate the student teachers training to become middle or high school teachers.

New Experiences and Learnings in Dialogical Data. As recent trends in education have become more social justice oriented (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, Lahann, Shakman & Terrell, 2009), many teacher-training programs have posed the question of how to meet that demand. One powerful approach that many universities have employed is through the development of meaningful relationships and partnerships between schools and communities (McDonald & Zeichner, 2009). This model has proven to be more democratically constructed and therefore more able to meet the needs of a diverse student body. The administrators and creators of this Community-University Partnership and Program were aware of this, therefore their decisions to participate in the execution of the program was informed by their knowledge of the powerful nature of creating bridges between the university and the community hosting it.

[The local high school was] the most highly adjudicated high school in Texas. So, last year 110 kids out of their 700 kids were involved with the court system, and out of those 110 kids, they had 510 interactions with the courts. So, these are kids who are just constantly going through the system. Anyway, [the principal of the high school said], "We have these negative behaviors. I know it's not bad kids, I know some of it's coming from-", and he would talk about some of the struggles at [the local public housing],

because [they] really poor, and the kids are dealing with the trauma of being in really high poverty. He said, "We do not have resources to figure out why they are behaving negatively so we just suspend them". You know, when you suspend a kid once, their chance of graduation goes down like, 70%. So, we were trying to work on that problem... But, you know, they are under resourced, which is starting to change.

“Dr. Smith”, *The Informed Educational Architect*. In the section describing “Dr. Smith’s” affective responses to the Community-University Partnership Program, he described his motivation and passion for education that involved the community, and vice versa. He stated clearly his value claims support the idea that “people living in a community should participate in that community.” Aside from his normative-evaluative claims and affective beliefs about people who live in a community and how universities should interact with the communities that hold them, he firmly supports those value claims with the objective claims of facts and figures. A possible normative-evaluative claim in the above monograph is that education and educational change should be data-driven (Yoon, 2016). When “Dr. Smith” discovered that the community in which the program would serve had specific needs, he made sure to know exactly what those needs were by researching the suspension rates, graduation rates, and did this through conversations with a local school administrator. “Dr. Smith” reported in his interview that through his relationship with this school administrator, he learned more about how to better serve the needs of a community.

Aside from his knowledge of the statistical data that drove him to seek out the community center in which the Community-University Partnership Program would run, he points out several time throughout his interview how institutions and schools which

are underfunded face multifaceted problems. Discussed in chapter two and mentioned here by “Dr. Smith,” the numbers of students who face suspension or the court system in underfunded schools is a problem that is patterned all across the United States (Alexander, 2011). While undoubtedly this trend was not a new learning for “Dr. Smith,” his relationship with the community allowed him to have a more contextualized view of the community in which the program functioned.

Experiences with [communities like this one] makes a big difference. [When] you're really listening or observing or paying attention and leaving your judgy pants in the car...that makes the difference. And if you haven't [experienced it]... when you don't know something, I think sometimes you blow it up into a proportion and you create a story around something that's way worse or more dramatic than maybe what the real deal is.

“Dr. Thames”, *The Growing Administrator*. As someone who had to deal with the semantics of sending the 257 student teachers into the community for this experience, she reported to me learning quickly about how she learned from reading through the student teacher reflections how “experiences with [communities like this one] makes a big difference.” Although, her new learnings concerned the educational needs of the student teachers, when I asked her when she felt the program was successful and fulfilling its mission, she confidently responded with, “When we were reading reflections, for sure.” Her new learnings, although much of them having to do with the improvement of structure of the project and programmatic issues, were closely tied to the

reflections written by the student teachers. It would prove to be interesting in a future study to delve more deeply into her subjective claims while reading the reflections.

I assigned the role of “Growing Administrator,” to “Dr. Thames” as a means to describe her growth and further understanding of how powerful community partnerships and experiences are for student teachers.

Learning about what were some of those needs in the community and how. And learning that, to impact the child there was a need to involve the families and connect with the parents. And knowing that...it was multifactor...”

“Katie”, The Experienced Collaborator. At the beginning of her interview, “Katie” told me a story about her experiences working in a program that assisted, in her words, “at-risk youth” in the South Bronx in New York City. She shared with me that she had participated for a year in this program and this was where she learned, “about what were some of those needs in the community and how... to impact the child there was a need to involve the families and connect with the parents.” She was able to carry these lessons into her career as a community engagement supervisor for the after-school program. She emphatically told me that the issues facing the “at-risk” kids in the South Bronx were multifaceted and more complicated than the layperson would understand.

It is important to note that aside from her many experiences working in communities of need, her mention of subjective validity claims such as, “there were so many things within the community that the children didn't have access to... it's just sad,” reveals evidence of a deficit mindset. This mindset, nevertheless, did not stop her from collaborating and growing relationships with various organizations throughout the

community. In one partnership she formed with an urban gardening project, “Katie” felt she had provided the most significant educational experience because, “we... started the garden I mean and it’s still in existence today. And as you know, through that garden, there is that educational component so that's how we were so fortunate to have [the gardening instructor] there. And then to me, the greatest one was with the University of Houston and how, you know, that's how you and I met. That probably was the most significant collaboration...” “Katie” reported having created and forged relationships with various organizations that helped her to fulfill the lessons she gained in her first experiences with the Community Engagement Project she took part in in the South Bronx.

Later into the 2016 academic year, “Katie” left employment at the community center. She did not leave the community center’s employment on her own, she told me that she was laid off from the after-school program due to a lack of adequate funding.

Programmatic Suggestions and Reflections

In order for any program, institution, or educational body to grow it must learn from its mistakes, as well as its strengths. After reading through the student teachers’ reflections and suggestions on how to improve the Community-University Partnership Program, their words yielded interesting responses. Additionally, the interviews with the administrators of the program helped me to more fully understand how it all came together “behind the scenes” from the start of the program to the very end.

The following section lends some insight into why the program ended and perhaps how to move on into the future of this teacher education program’s connection to the community, as well as, its desire to maintain community engagement programs that

are meaningful for everyone involved in their function. In the next section, while I will reflect on my organizational experiences in the Community-University Partnership Program and my views of those experiences, I must qualify my recommendations of how to improve the program by stating these are simply my own opinions based on my limited subjective value and identify claims. My observations are to be considered within the context of my narrative and not to be considered as the whole truth, but only a part of truth. As a reminder Carspecken states, “facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription” (1996, p. 5).

Programmatic Reflections in Monological Data. The summer of 2014 was the first time I was introduced to the idea of a program that would send student teachers off campus to a local community center where they would be charged with the task of creating activities for the elementary and middle-school aged children enrolled in an after-school program that ran out of that community center. “Dr. Smith,” “Dr. Thames,” and another administrator had asked me to be the contact person and representative for the student teachers. I was to act as an intermediary between the community center (which for the most part was “Katie”) and the student teachers. After hearing about the initial design of the program, I was worried about the prospect of sending student teachers into a high-need area of the city for just one visit. “Dr. Thames” shared in my worry that perhaps a one-time visit to this community center could risk the reinforcement of stereotypes, and that fear was unfortunately realized. Later, in the *Safety Concerns, Fears, and Anxiety and Reinforced Stereotypes* subsection of Perceptions of Students and the Community, I describe the presence of this perspective from all three data sources.

Although this was my biggest worry about the program and its design, the program's leaders assured me that they shared this worry.

Despite what I saw as a flaw of design, I did firmly believe that this program was a solid starting point for a community-university relationship that would eventually evolve and better itself. Perhaps, my emotional attachment as exhibited by my affective responses while reading negative feedback spoke to the ownership I took because I had contributed to not the design of the program, but the assignment in which the student teacher would have to carry out.

Another programmatic observation I came to see was that there seemed to be inconsistency in how the program had been communicated to all the people involved. Many of my own personal reflections indicated that there was lack of adequate communication between the people working for the community center and the administrators on the university side, and some student teachers felt we (the university side), had done a wonderful job in communicating and supporting the student teachers. For example, one student wrote in her reflection, "I was greeted warmly, I was given an amazing list and break down of what to expect and when. I was told exactly what my role entails. I was told what to look out for and my preconceived notions about the area, the kids, and the whole experience was explicitly addressed. Haley was very reassuring. She was an amazing authority figure and she served almost like a bridge for the kids to go from her to us as smoothly as possible." However, many student teachers felt they were not sufficiently prepared for the task.

Programmatic Reflections in Student Teacher Reflections. There was no lack of programmatic reflection and improvement suggestions from the student teachers.

They offered an array of suggestions for how the program could be improved, but one in particular haunted me and gives insight into how one student truly felt in a moment of vulnerability. I want to use as little and low-inference analysis for her narrative so as to be true to what her perspective of this event was, therefore I will use her own words.

This student teacher described her experience at the community center as the following:

I am unable to discuss my experience with the children as much as I wish I could. That is because I spent the entire evening dealing with phone calls and police reports... A little boy approached me and stole my phone. Now you would imagine that I would have known to take better care of myself, but the truth is that while some people see it as not being "street smart," I saw it as putting into practice what I have learned throughout my college career and accept every race, social class, sex, etc. So I did. When I heard a knock on my window and realized a little boy was begging for a phone call to his mom, many things crossed my mind. You could tell I did not belong in that area simply because I had to ask where the community center was (to the same little boy). I could have turned on the car and left. Well, what if nothing was really happening and UH did not understand the situation? My grade would have obviously suffered. What if I tried to leave and others were waiting for me to hurt me? What if the little boy was armed? Even worse, what if the little boy really did need my help, and I was denying it to him? ...[The] little boy yanked the phone out of my hands and ran off...The event was followed by calls to the police department and my family.

Before I had the opportunity to actually read her take on this event, my memory of this (which I was actually not present for, another university representative was that day) was formed by word-of-mouth from other students and university representatives

who assured me the event was taken care of, and that it really “was not a big deal” (cited from the interview with “Dr. Thames”). After going through this reflection and analyzing her value claims, I realize that she might have felt unsupported. Her normative-evaluative and subjective claims throughout her reflection indicated that, “good teachers should care about their students and young people,” “I want to be a good teacher, so I care about students,” “The teacher education program does not care about me as a student.” What does this say about the design of the program? How was this student able to cultivate such incredibly devastating subjective claims about the teacher education program? The reason I am able to make this statement is only due to the fact that she explicitly stated it herself in her written reflection. How can we learn and grow from this one student’s identity and truth claims?

If I were to teach this lesson again, I would opt for a longer getting-to-know-you session, because we did not know the students’ names. If I knew the names of the students that were having issues beforehand, I believe that I would have been capable of handling the situation with more confidence and structure. Above all, there would have been a trust between teacher and student, which would have assisted the learning process and addressed individual needs.

Improvement Suggestions. The stage two data revealed that although this was a wonderful starting point for the growth of community-university partnerships, there was most definitely room for organizational and semantic growth. Almost every single student teacher offered improvement suggestions, even when they reporting having a positive, career-affirming experience. The sign up process in the first semester was by in

large the most frequently mentioned needed improvement. We were able to address that issue, and the mention of sign up issues dwindled, if not completely dissipated in that following spring 2016 semester.

Another improvement suggestion frequently brought up by the student teachers was about the timing and placement of this assignment in relation to their enrollment in the teacher education program. Many of reflections requested that if the program was to continue, perhaps it would be more opportunistic and convenient for students in an earlier stage of their training, when their schedules were not filled with observations and field placements. One student wrote, “Perhaps if... students were offered a course during the Developing Teaching semester that addressed preconceived notions about the different student populations, this experience may have been worthwhile for others.” The context in which this student made this suggestion was because one of her takeaways was that, “The most important thing I learned about this experience was that many of my peers still hold antiquated notions about what it means to be a “child in the inner-city.” Perhaps the process of breaking down preconceived notions about communities of color needs more of an official addressing in the curriculum design of the teacher education program, as this student points out.

Lastly, the number of student teachers who suggested that more information concerning the community, the community center, and the students in attendance for the after-school program was a highly recorded programmatic suggestion for improvement. As I have mentioned multiple times throughout this case study, data-driven programs have a solid record of success that cannot go unnoticed. As one student noted, “before I went to [the community center], I expected a lot of students to be there. I also expected a

lot of structure and need for us (the student teachers) to maintain to that structure. We also thought there would be a huge room in which all the students would stay for the entire time where we would hold our activities.” This student’s expectations lend more insight into how the holes and lack of information provided about the organization and the community can only strengthen the mission and results of the program.

Programmatic Suggestions and Reflections in Dialogical Data. In the previous section, although many of the student teachers offered what they believed to be helpful insight into how to improve the program’s structure, they lacked the access to fully understand what actually went into the planning and development of the Community-University Partnership Program. The semi-structured interviews conducted with “Dr. Smith,” “Dr. Thames,” and “Katie” helped to inform the historiographical perspectives concerning the program’s inception as well as its infrastructure. One of the questions that I felt was most important to ask of each interview participant regarded their perception on why the program ultimately ended. I wanted to more fully comprehend why the relationship weakened and what factors contributed to the manner in which student teachers were no longer being sent to the community center for this experience.

You cannot have... a [graduate assistant] running programs. You know what I mean? If you are really going to do those kind of things, you have got to actually put resources into them eventually. That is where I think that rubber hits the road with some of the stuff the university wants to do... I think it would be a good pre- teaching experience. They teeth to these kinds of things, and I know this but I was not able to solve it is, you just need resources to do things well, you cannot do it on and idea and hope. You have got to

have infrastructure, and I did not ever figure out how to build that infrastructure. I hoped it would happen, I hoped other people would build it but I did not build it.

“Dr. Smith”, *The Crusader*. “Dr. Smith’s” role for this theme was “the crusader,” for as soon as I told him of the program’s end, he followed with a hopeful statement concerning a grant he had written. I asked him if he was hoping the program would be brought back to life. He responded, “I hope it does, and if we get the grant, it will be.” When questioning “Dr. Smith” about his perceptions concerning the structure of the program and which factors he felt made it successful and which led to its demise, I was shocked when he stated, “[Interestingly] enough, I did not know it ended” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). His response shocked me, because as to my knowledge the program had ended in the fall 2016. This interview was conducted in October 2017. His response to this question merits an inquiry into the structure of communication between the various roles in this program. Communication in the program was a subtheme that also emerged in stage two of *Programmatic Reflections and Suggestions*.

Much of “Dr. Smith’s” subjective claims concerning the infrastructure of the program surrounded the emotion of hope. He stated how he hoped the program would evolve itself and that people involved in the program would build a solid program. Another subjective claim found in his statements are “I had hoped, but was disappointed” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). Based on his complete statement and his reflection, he concluded that the reason for the program’s end had much to do with the lack of resources and the lack of infrastructure.

One interesting point brought up was the statement, “You cannot have... a [graduate assistant] running programs” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). He even made this claim with a hint of humor and levity, but seriousness. This statement was directed at me. Although the program was never meant for me to be taking on the majority of the day-to-day operations, the structure of the program evolved in such a way that I fell into that placement. The undertone, or rather in the background, of the statement referred to the mistake, not as one that pointed out some form of incompetence, but rather towards the temporary nature of graduate workers or assistants. Perhaps, his deeper meaning in the statement was intended to compare the nature of my temporary position and its contribution to the weakened structure of the program.

I will tell you this, it was not- it had nothing to do with [the Community-University Partnership Program] or with- the biggest reason why it isn't in student teaching right now is because of moving to sites. [We] had students everywhere with supervisors and we were controlling the student teaching class... What happened is we'd place them in larger groups with the site coordinator; they met weekly for student teaching. We were already pulling them out of the field to now meet for the student teaching course and they were kind of- they were everywhere still but in larger groups and it just wasn't the right place anymore for it... then “Katie” left and so the contact at [the community center] wasn't the same person anymore, so it wasn't as easy to like- and it was just kind of a perfect storm all at one time and here we are. But it didn't have anything to do with the experience.

“Dr. Thames”, *The Teacher Educator*. From a completely different administrative perspective, “Dr. Thames’s” claimed that it was not the structure of the

Community-University Partnership Program, which caused the end of the program, it was the structure of the *teacher education program* and its evolution that wilted the Community Engagement Project. “Dr. Thames” described to me that the nature and structure of the teacher education program had essentially broken the student teachers up into smaller groups that would exist in sites, or the schools they were placed in. She went on further to tell me that she no longer had access to the collective group of student teachers each semester (as the instructor) or how the student teaching course would be conducted or taught. “Dr. Thames” added that the end, so to speak, had nothing to do with the experience itself, but simply a change in programmatic design.

Another point brought up in her interview was the loss of contact with the community center when “Katie” was subject to her employer’s reduction in labor. When “Katie” was laid off, as she brought up in her respective interview, the relationship, which had been developed and grown over time in the context of the community center, was not necessarily lost, but rather moved. The educational connection the university had to “Katie” was still in tact, but the connection to the community through “Katie” had been lost. In the metaphor used to portray her perspective and opinion on the end of the program, she stated, “it was just kind of a perfect storm all at one time.” Perhaps, her use of this metaphor depicts the multifaceted nature of what took place in the semesters following the initial start up to cause the collapse of the Community-University Partnership Program.

“Katie”: *I really advocated for these kids but there was no one doing that anymore. I mean, when I left I provided as much information as I could, "This is what we've got*

going. We want to make sure this still happens" and it's just not happening. I, honestly, I don't even know who's in charge of [the after-school program] anymore.

Interviewer: *So the last you'd heard of the Afterschool Program, how was it functioning or was it functioning?*

"Katie": *It was functioning but not as a structured program like how we had worked so hard, within those two years, to get it to. I mean, there's still some of those pieces... The organization itself can have structure but if there's no structure, as you know, within a classroom then what are you? So, there was no structure.*

"Katie", The Sympathetic Planner. Throughout the interview with "Katie," her claims were similar to the replies and perspectives "Dr. Smith" had offered. Many of her responses' held subjective claims of sadness or disappointment. When "Katie" explained, "I really advocated for these kids but there was no one doing that anymore," she described how she had worked to collaborate with so many different people and organizations in the community. Her body language communicated exhaustion and disappointment, and even possibly loss or grief.

She offered her hypothesis as to the program's end. She stated it was due a lack of structure. Although, the difference in her explanation, from that of "Dr. Smith's" explanation was that the lack of structure existed on the after-school program's side. When "Katie" claimed, "The organization itself can have structure but if there's no structure, as you know, within a classroom then what are you? So, there was no structure," she was referring to her, then, employer. She explained to me that although, as an organization, the educational group was well structured in other sites, in this particular community center, there was not enough support for its success.

Perceptions of Students and Community

The last emergent theme in this case study was the discovery of how the students and community were perceived by the participants, including myself. In stage one, the monological data, my perceptions of the community in large were not included in my original field notes, but I did, however reflect on my thoughts and experiences concerning the children of the community center. In stage two, the student teacher reflections yielded three subthemes: *Misconceptions and Preconceived Notions*, *Moving from Task to Meaningful Experience*, and lastly, *Fear and Reinforced Stereotypes*. This emergent theme, although present in the dialogical data, stage three, was not as prevalent as in stages one and two. My supposition concerning this discrepancy is the lack of physical contact with the community center for “Dr. Smith” and “Dr. Thames.” “Katie’s” perceptions of the students and the community, although similar to the subthemes discussed in stage two, must be discussed in their own context, as her role differed significantly from that of myself or the student teachers.

Educational research is readily used across the spectrum to, “improve current educational philosophies, instruction and curriculum design, investment, and organization to meet the needs of,” (Yuan, 2017, p. 34) all students and special populations of students. Research has indicated strongly that perceptions of students, teachers, schools, educational philosophies, etc. can be utilized for this purpose (Hagenauer, Gläser-Zikuda & Volet, 2016). The analysis of this theme, although cannot speak to a quantitative measure of how to improve the Community-University Partnership Program’s design specifically, the perceptions of the participants in this case study will allow for similar

programs created in the future to understand some of the pitfalls and strengths of program like this one.

Perceptions of Students and the Community in Monological Data. In the following transcribed voice recording, I reflected on an event in which two of the after-school program's counselors had left their positions due to, what "Katie" described to me as, an argument with a parent. This entry could be regarded as my clearest and most descriptive entry discussing my perceptions of the students in the community. On March 2nd, 2016, I reporting having the following experience:

I got there today, and the kids were fairly happy to see me, they were fairly happy to be there. There were two new counselors there that they are not particularly familiar with, and it kind of reminded me of when kids are forced to move, or their parents are divorced, or they live-- You know, something unsettling happens in a child's life because I saw a lot of acting out today, and I knew why. I knew because they lost two people that they loved. Every kid freaks out or acts out when something changes in their life, because kids like structure, kids like the day-to-day routine. When that routine is interrupted, it's upsetting. It's heart breaking. So, as an example of this, two little girls who honestly are the sweetest little girls. They are good. I would never ever classify them as "problem children", or "trouble makers." They are good girls... these two little girls got in a nasty fight. They pushed each other, they started pushing each other back and forth, and before I could get them apart from each other, they already hand their hands grabbed on to each other's hair... they were going to pull each other's hair. These little girls are seven, eight, nine, and what is so shocking about it is that it was completely out of character. Not normal for these little girls and it completely shocked me.

But, after all of that happened and everything calmed down, I went up to the little girl that I know a little bit more personally. I pulled her aside and I said, "You are not in trouble I just want to talk to you just for a second". I got down my knees and I looked her in the face and I said, "I just wanted to tell you that I still care about you... and that you are a good girl, and I am really disappointed that you made a bad decision today, but that I still care about you". I wanted her to know that we make bad decisions and that we act out because we are upset, but it does not mean that we do not get consequences for those poor choices. Because it really did break my heart that she made that bad choice. But anyway, today was a little crazy but it kind of made it very clear that children are very different from adults. Children need to be disciplined differently than adults, children do not think the same way as adults, and they certainly do not function the same way. So, we need to recognize that.

My objective claims regarding the altercation between the two little girls can be confirmed and triangulated by “Katie,” and the student teachers that were in attendance that day. One student teacher wrote of the incident, “She was a sweet girl, and had a great sense of humor. It was not before long that they sent another student, a young boy, age 8, who also needed assistance with his homework. The boy sat down, introduced himself, and quickly stated that the girl had started a fight that day. Once he stated this, our attention went to her, and she simply responded, “That’s because she deserve it.”

My assessment of the cause of the fight seemed to connect the loss of the counselors to some sort of emotional distress, which led to cause the fight. I really had no reason to make this conclusion. I have no memory or recording that indicates I discussed the cause with either of the girls involved, but my normative-evaluative

identify claims here say much more about my perceptions of the students. Some possible truth claims in this instance were, “These children have experienced a loss. Children who have experienced loss will act out of character. My experience with these two children is out of character. They should feel and act as if they have experienced loss.” The logic that I formed between the counselor’s leaving the community center and the actions of the two little girls hints as to my deeper perceptions of the students and community.

Furthermore, my subjective validity claim that sadness and “heart break” are tied to the loss for these children, indicates one of two truth claims: children should not have to experience loss, or these children have already experienced so much loss, therefore they, especially, should not have to experience this loss. Interestingly, the first claim is founded in empathy, while the other, a deficit mindset related to sympathy. This discovery begs the question of how to adequately extinguish a deficit mindset in all educators, not just student teachers. The last chapter in this study discusses possible strategies and solutions for this query as seen in other educational research and organizations.

Perceptions of Students and the Community in Student Teacher Reflections.

For the purpose of significance and impact, this emergent theme is discussed last in this chapter. The notions, thoughts, and perceptions that student teachers reported in the written reflections spoke volumes to how the students of the community center and the community, itself were viewed by the student teachers. The subthemes that fell under the umbrella of Perceptions of Students and the Community were: *Misconceptions and Preconceived Notions*, *Moving from Task to Meaningful Experience*, and *Fear and*

Reinforced Stereotypes. Although the perceptions of the student teachers varying greatly from one to another, they all illustrated fairly vividly the community center and its students, which shed knowledge on how the Community-University Partnership Program was digested and processed by the student teachers. One student teacher emotionally stated, “when I think about my experience in [the community center] I feel like drawing a deep line in my heart that separates “before” and “after” [the Community-University Partnership Program].” In a study conducted by Rachel Endo (2015), she found evidence of twenty white pre-service teachers enrolled in a multiculturalism and diversity course showed evidence of developing more critical self-awareness regarding the reasons and effects of linguisticism in schools. In the next chapter, I will discuss this study and similar studies, which have implications for teacher education and diversity training.

My preconceived notions on what my experience with [the Community-University Partnership Program] would be was exaggerated and unfair.

Once I walked into the building the feeling of being scared had disappeared.

Misconceptions and Preconceived Notions of Students and Community. A large proportion of the student teachers reported having misconceptions about the program. Whether they reported misconceptions about the students, the facility, the community, or even the program, itself, or even when they did not recognize their perceptions as misconceptions, acknowledging this theme was unavoidable. Many counts of subjective claims resembling surprise was recorded when a student was able to complete their homework with ease, or when a student spoke or acted differently than was expected. Additionally, the types of responses associated with misconceptions regarding the children and the behavior they display, was followed by expectations for

what could be classified as negative, or unwanted behavior. Most of the time, when discussing their misconceptions linked with the children, they reported having a change in attitude towards the end of their stay at the community center. Later in this section, I will discuss how these misconceptions and preconceived notions transformed into a meaningful experience for many of the student teachers.

When their misconceptions turned towards the community, however, there was much less transformation of thought. In a small amount of written reflections, events were recorded in which the student teacher would interact with members of the community before or while walking into the community center, and report having subjective claims of fear, even if the only interaction was close physical proximity and not verbal contact. The question which rose to my mind and will be discussed further in the next chapter is how much of these misconceptions are originating in interacting with an unfamiliar environment, and how much of it is originating from the people of the community?

Because of this, I feel that it is extremely important for me as an educator to take the initiative by making steps to understand the situations of my students and the communities that they live in. This is why I found my experience at [the community center] to be very enjoyable and insightful.

Moving from Task to Meaningful Experience. In this subtheme, student teachers reflections showed evidence of shifting or changing perceptions from before their experiences to after their experiences. Much of these shifts were noticed to be in reference to the children and not the community or the community member, as many of

the truth claims in this subtheme resembled a notion that perpetuated an idea that the children were well-behaved, but were only so in spite of the area they lived in. Many student teachers claimed that when they physically entered the community center, they had brought insecurity, fear, and anxiety with them, but in a short period of time were able to shift their thinking towards, what one student referred to as her, “after [the community center]” state. Essentially, this “after” phase was typically accompanied by

However, still, some student teachers came to a different conclusion, which had much more to do with their own thought patterns and internal dialogue. As mentioned in the opening vignette to this section, one student recognized the importance for a teacher to know and understand personal information of his or her students. This student was able to make the connection that the responsibility of action was placed on the teacher, and not the student. The possible normative-evaluative claims for this collection of reflections could be, “good teachers know their students,” “I want to be a good teacher, so I should learn about my students background and personal family life.”

This experience taught me that just because you are in a very dangerous part of town, does not automatically mean that something horrible will happen to you. I must say however that I do feel very blessed to have made it home safely without my vehicle getting broken in to or anything happening to myself or my group members.

Fear and Reinforced Stereotypes. While analyzing this final subtheme of Perceptions of the Students and the Community, I found that my own emotions and subjective claims should be taken into account, as it may speak to how the data was

organized and analyzed. I found frustration and annoyance were frequently recorded as subjective claims, as I was realizing how often this seemed to occur in the coding stages.

Many of the references to fear and anxiety were connected to the area, or physical location of the community center, and while it would be fair to consider the question of how much unfamiliar territory would instill a feeling in anxiety in most people, it must also be considered, what exactly the student teacher stated they were fearful of whilst physically being in this area of the city. One student wrote, “[before] going to [the community center], as you can probably guess, I was nervous about the area.” What is noteworthy in this entry is the use of the expression, “as you can probably guess.” Most of the reflections that reported fear of the area also contained back-grounded notions of expecting the reader to agree with their fear of the area.

Another major issue that was brought up in the analysis of the reflections which contained fear or anxiety was the presence of reinforced stereotypes. As I previously discussed in a previous section, one of the fears that many of my colleagues and I had concerning the programmatic design of the Community-University Partnership Program was that since the student teachers would only be visiting the community center one time, there was risk of reinforcing stereotypes. Although this fear may have been realized, the number of student teachers who wrote reflections holding indication of reinforced stereotypes was in the minority. Some of these reinforced stereotypes were easily identified, but others still were subtle and backgrounded in what could be classified as microaggressions. Defined as, “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges, which are ‘put downs’ toward people of color” (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez & Wills, 1978, p. 66). For example, one student wrote, “[from] this

experience, I learned that even though an area may be unsafe, the kids are worth every moment of it.” Much of what the student teachers reported was they although there fears and anxieties had been assuaged by their interactions with the children, they took with them the notion that the community, which produced these children, was still considered unsafe or “bad”.

Perceptions of Students and the Community in Dialogical Data. As stage three was an investigation into the perceptions of the administrators and creators of the Community-University Partnership Program, the responses and perceptions concerning the community and the students of the community center were not nearly as based in affective response as the student teachers’ responses. However, as it was in Affective Responses, the responses of those who physically interacted with the area, like “Katie” and myself, were quite different from “Dr. Smith” and “Dr. Thames’s” responses. This subtheme speaks to the tone in which the program ran and was built to be.

Everyone loves their kids...I went there a lot, initially. I hung out with “Katie” there a lot and I would go watch what they did, and I would go help set stuff up and go hang out with the kids. I spent a lot of time there initially. One, I felt like everyone respected “Katie” and some of the other people who worked there. She would say stuff like, if some kid talked back to her some other adult there would yell at the kid. Not their parent but it was a community. So, people looked out for each other and it made me feel pretty comfortable with our kids going there. I feel like a lot of that is like, it's a primarily African American thing, and I think it brings up people's biases when they think about it. I didn't want to give in to people's biases.

“Dr. Smith,” *The Community Defender*. Unlike the rest of the participants, “Dr. Smith” reported that he had been working within and with the community for some time before creating a relationship with “the community center.” He told me that his relationship with the community had started by working closely with the local high school and school district. His experiences seemed to be more authentic, in the sense that he actually had invested a significant amount of time with the people in the community.

When I shared with him the presence fear as a theme in the student teachers’ written reflections, I also asked for his thoughts regarding it. He began to tell me about his experience of sharing the idea of the program with some colleagues and how they felt anxious considering the idea of sending student teachers to what has stereotypically labeled as a “dangerous area” of the city. After telling me this story, he concluded that he did not, “want to give in to people’s biases.” This is why I awarded him the role of the community defender, as I believed his possible value claims while sharing his narrative were similar to determination and tones of true experience.

So we're kind of like just being able to see people in a different setting that makes you maybe understand a little more, whatever that is. But also not assuming that everybody that lives around here is abused or- you know what I mean? Like there's also that, I think there are students that may think that a kid that lives in [community center] homes is miserable and uncared for and there's also not that either, all the time. Like they were able to see, no, there are plenty of parents there that are volunteering at the community center and that really care and I think sometimes...they do have challenges; the students

in that community possibly do have challenges that are beyond what [the student teachers] ever had to face. So, understanding them, I think makes you a better teacher, a better person.

“Dr. Thames,” *The Logical Realist*. In her interview, “Dr. Thames” demonstrated a realistic and critical point of view when discussing her perceptions of the community and the students who line the area. When I use the term critical, I am simply referring to a point of view that questions all possibilities of reason for an action, opinion, or thought. “Dr. Thames’s” perception of the community seemed to be one of context and not of delineated conditions. Once again, however, her perception of the community and the students in the community was contextualized through the experiences of the student teachers. The words that she used to describe the community, indicated that her mindset was oriented towards how the student teachers would perceive the experience she had helped to create for them. “Dr. Thames’s” seemed to be more concerned about the perceptions of her students, than her own perceptions of the community. Her concerns seemed much more centered on the educational and community experience that her students would consume, rather than worry for safety or the reinforcement of stereotypes.

I think to this day [the most positive memory I have is] the Community Thanksgiving Dinner. We did it those two years that I was there, where I was able to get donations from local community businesses and we successfully fed like about a 100, 150 people each time ...So we would do it that Tuesday evening and it was a hot meal. And so everybody in the community was invited, everyone lined up and it was so meaningful to

me because it looked beautiful and it wasn't just like, "Oh, here's just food and just kind of look like something we just threw together but it was nicely decorated. And the most meaningful thing to me was just seeing how invested the kids were and seeing how the kids were in the roles that they took. I mean, the kids were serving food, were ushering people to their seats, throwing their trash out, getting them signed in. We danced. We took pictures. I mean, it was just a perfect moment.

Interviewer: *And so, how did all of that make you feel?*

“Katie”: *In that moment it just made me feel like as difficult as their lives are because one of the biggest things was that I always remember, they don't even pay bills there yet and their lives kind of suck already. But what I can do in this moment in time while the four hours that they're with me is just trying to make it as memorable as I can. And in that moment, during that entire event, everything just was at peace. I just felt at peace. I just felt like it was going to be one of those memories that I knew the kids weren't going to forget.*

“Katie,” The Proxy Community Member. Although evidence suggests that “Katie” possibly operated and acted out of a deficit mindset, there is also evidence that she felt accepted as a part of the community. Through triangulation of her objective claims, “Dr. Smith’s” narrative corroborates this claim. She states in multiple areas of her interview how she was “invested” in the students and the community of the after-school program. She affirmed that she felt as an intermediary between this community and other groups or communities.

Furthermore, her perceptions of the students were far more evident than her perception of the parents of the students, but when she states, “they don't even pay bills

there yet and their lives kind of suck already,” may reveal some deeper thoughts and feelings concerning the community, and even possibly the parents. There was much more behind the meaning of this statement than this study would allow for. In spite of this, “Katie” depicted and showed that her perceptions of the students and community possibly operated through her affection and admiration for a community that she spent so much time and effort working for.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the results of the research questions were shown. The four themes, which emerged in the analysis phase, were *Affective Responses*, *New Experiences and Learnings*, *Programmatic Reflections and Suggestions*, and lastly *Perceptions of the Students and the Community*. Through the uncovering of these themes, I was able to recognize my own biases, as well as the responses and reactions of student teachers to the Community-University Partnership Program. Additionally, through semi-structured interviews with the creators and administrators of the program, the interworkings of the program were discovered. The next chapter, I will discuss what these emergent themes could possibly mean for the growth of future community-university partnerships for teacher education in the Houston area. Additionally, I will discuss the future of this research, as this case study is only the beginning of understanding learning.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

This study has provided the researcher and the reader with a comprehensive description of the perceptions, thoughts, and actions associated with the “Community-University Partnership Program” run through the Teacher Education program at the University of Houston during the 2015- 2016 academic year. The research data collected and analyzed for this case study must be discussed in order to understand how it makes sense and fits to answer the research questions posed in Chapters I and III. The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions and interpretations of the “Community-University Partnership Program” from the perspectives of those who participated in either its consumption or in its creation. These perceptions came from the perspectives of myself, a liaison to the student teachers; the student teachers, themselves, who were asked to partake in the community engagement experience; and lastly, the perceptions of the administrators who had created and implemented the program.

In the following section, I will discuss how each of the proposed research questions were answered based on the themes and subthemes, which emerged during the analysis stage of this inquiry. It is necessary to qualify the discussion of the research questions by stating that the emergent themes in this research do not provide the delineated answers for *why* any of the participants responded in manners with which they did, but rather answers more accurately how they responded to the experiences and questions concerning their thoughts, actions, and motivations. As a reminder, there were four major emergent themes in this research: Affective Responses, New Experiences and

Learnings, Programmatic Responses and Reflections, and Perceptions and the Students and Community.

Discussion of Research Questions

1. What were the reasons for creating, carrying out, and ultimately ending the “Community Engagement Project” and partnership as reported by the participants?

The first research question concerns mostly the third data source, the interview data, as the reasons for creating, carrying out, and the end of the program concerned mostly the administrative and organizational aspects of the “Community-University Partnership Program”. As it was discovered, in the results of the research, this program and its idea, as “Dr. Smith” stated was born out his value and identity claims that one who lives in a community, “should be part of that community” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). Therefore, if “Dr. Smith” had not held this value in such high regard, would the program have been created? Would the program have been implemented in other ways? My hypothesis, and his as well, was it would not as he stated later in his interview that, “I felt like a lot of people [in the college] were sitting in their office doing their research and not part of a community” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). How much of this statement was and is actually true, could be investigated, but that is not as important as “Dr. Smith’s” *perception* that this was a void needing to be filled.

Additionally, the execution of the program cannot be brought to life with simply an idea, but there had to be a population with which to work, a community with which to

connect, and educational value to weave into the fabric of this experience. This was where the relationship between “Dr. Smith” and “Katie”, and “Katie” and the community was engaged. This was also where “Dr. Thames” was able to provide the student teacher population as participants in this program. It is my understanding that the ultimate cause of the successes and start of the “Community-University Partnership Program” resulted from the investment of relationships. The professional relationship, which connected me to the stage three interview participants, allowed for the growth of this program and maintenance of the program.

Concerning the end of the program, all three participants had similar responses in that it was caused by a lack of programmatic organization, but they all differed in how that programmatic disorganization appeared. “Dr. Smith” claimed that a lack of resources was ultimately to blame, while “Dr. Thames” firmly believed the cause was connected to a change in structure in the teacher education program, and lastly, “Katie” stated that the lack of organization and seizure of the program had originated from the parent organization through which the after-school program was run. After reviewing all of their statements, the evidence seems to suggest no one was completely right and no one was completely wrong in their analysis, but rather it came down to what “Dr. Thames” described as a “perfect storm” of circumstances, which really had little to do with the actual experience and partnership between the university and the community center.

2. How were the experiences of the “Community Engagement Project” interpreted and conceptualized in reflections and interviews? What motivations, beliefs, and actions were evident of the participants’ reported experiences of the “Community Engagement” partnership?

As the majority of this research was concerned with the actual experiences had at the after-school program and community center, this research question raises a concern: what were the connections between the actual experiences had at the community center and their perceptions and interpretations of those experiences? While, I had privileged access to my own subjective and normative-evaluative identity and truth claims, I did have access to the student teachers' who could have spoken more clearly to their intentions and meanings when they originally wrote the archival data that were the reflections. This is why they were organized and coded into the four emergent themes, as these reflections were the closest I could get to understanding how they perceived what they had experienced and what they had felt going through the experience. In each of the emergent themes (Affective Responses, New Experiences and Learnings, Programmatic Responses and Reflections, and Perceptions and the Students and Community), subthemes were also uncovered which gave greater insight into motivations, beliefs, and actions of the student teachers and myself at the time of the program's functioning.

Recommendations

After completing this research, and researching into similar community-university partnerships, I have compiled a list of recommendations, based on the data collected and analyzed, which I believe could benefit or speak to the creation of similar community-university partnership programs in the future. My first recommendation is to have more cultural and identity reflective activities for the student teachers before they attend any community engagement program, as this will allow them to have a better understanding

of their own biases before they interact with a community or people they are unfamiliar with. Briefly mentioned in Chapter IV, one researcher found that through a diversity course for student teachers, she was able to implement activities, which strengthened their self-awareness concerning how discrimination in language has an effect on school environments (Endo, 2015). Similarly, I feel that course activities that focus on creating self-awareness in student teachers would result in more insightful responses to community engagement exercises. Some of those activities include, first asking, without judgment, what prior beliefs and conceptualizations students carry with them into classrooms, and then slowly work to bring them to state of awareness. After bringing them to this heightened state of self-awareness, the student is able to critically reflect on their actions and thoughts, therefore having a better chance to changing those actions for the better. Although, it should be noted that working to reduce biases and preconceptions concerning students and communities of color, “is a lifelong journey for all teachers, and moreover, that gathering information about prior assumptions and knowledge is essential to appropriately plan for a variety of carefully scaffolded and sequenced activities, experiences, and discussions that are meaningful and relevant to all class participants” (p. 211). Some of the activities that Endo carried out with her student teachers were: analyzing their own linguistic flaws and syntax errors by transcribing interviews of themselves, discussing as a class if there is in existence a “proper form” of written American English, and lastly, discussing how their own ability to speak in a manner that is linguistically perfect is unattainable, therefore, is unreasonable and even possibly hypocritical, to expect from diverse communities. Through similar reflective activities, I believe that the responses received from the

student teachers following their experiences with the “Community-University Partnership Program” would shift towards more understanding and critically self-aware responses.

Additionally, I recommend that the administrators and leaders in teacher education meet to discuss the timing and placement of this program and others like it. This recommendation falls under the emergent theme Programmatic Reflections and Suggestions. Considering that the design of the teacher education program requires a great amount of commitment and time from the student teachers, which can be stressful, it could be beneficial to offer community engagement experiences when the student teachers are in a more mindful state (Hartigan, 2017). I believe that if the administrative powers of the teacher education department were to discuss this issue, they would be able to find a solution as to the timing of participation in community engagement projects.

Another recommendation for the program has much to do with what “Dr. Smith” brought up in his interview, which is financial and infrastructural support. When discussing his opinions on how and why he believed the program was terminated, he began to share with me how he had applied for a grant which would bring the necessary funding which would put the proper supports in place to make sure the program functioned effectively and efficiently. He stated, “You have got to have infrastructure, and I did not ever figure out how to build that infrastructure. I hoped it would happen, I hoped other people would build it but I did not build it. So, the grant would build it. If we do not get the grant, I think we really need to brainstorm. Resources here are thin, we are not a rich college, we do not have a lot of extra money flying around. If I was dean I would put money into some stuff like this. But, it's your priorities, what are you going to put your money in?” (“Dr. Smith”, personal communication, October 10, 2017). As I

was also a participant in this program, I concurred with this conclusion. More financial support for community partnerships with the College of Education and Teacher Education program would mean organization and commitment to a mission and purpose, that simply put, was not in place at the start of the “Community-University Partnership Program”. While I do not have sufficient information to make a specific recommendation for the kinds of organizational and financial support necessary, I can recommend that the College prioritize community partnerships by meeting to officially discuss the future of community involvement in the teacher education program. Similar to my previous recommendation, the administrators and officers could strengthen the future of community-university partnerships by discussing and prioritizing these options.

My last recommendation for future community engagement programs that function through teacher education is to continuously look at the perceptions of participants, as this will allow for the improvement and strengthening that program. The purpose of critical educational research has always been to improve the field. As Carspecken resounds the words of Kincheloe and McLaren (1994), critical research assumes the following value orientations (as cited by Carspecken, 1996, p. 7):

- Research be employed in cultural and social “criticism” [i.e. we find contemporary society and culture wanting in many ways and believe that research should support efforts for change]
- That “certain groups in any society are privileged over others” [i.e. we are opposed to all forms of inequity]
- That “oppression which characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural or inevitable”

[i.e., reproducing inequalities over time is wrong; we should use research to uncover the subtleties of oppression so that its invisibility to those affected by it might be removed; so that oppression might become challenged, and changed]

- That “oppression has many faces” [i.e., researchers should not focus on one form of oppression only to ignore others; all forms of oppression should be studied and challenged]
- That “mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, part of the oppression” [i.e., critical researchers should practice their craft with different principles than mainstream researchers, because the mistaken principles used in mainstream research not infrequently contribute to cultural oppression]

Studies connecting the improvement of teacher education to qualitative research have strongly indicated that the perceptions of participants are a valid and reasonable tool for the enhancement of Community Engagement Projects and programs (Boersma, ten Dam, Wardekker & Volman, 2016; Kaplan & Virginia Univ., 1983; McAfee & Torre, 2015; Public & Kettering, 2014; Žibenienė & Savickienė, 2014).

Future Studies

This research, although fascinating, could be improved if I had had access to the student teachers' reflections promptly following the collection of the assignment in the fall and spring semesters of 2015-2016. This would have allowed me to go back to the students immediately after analyzing their words and interviewed them to gain further insight into their true value orientations and motivations for reporting what they did. I would have been able to triangulate more accurately into the deeper meaning of their

words. Knowing this, in future critical qualitative studies I will opt to gain the most recent information available to me so as to have ready access to the participants, and not just samples of their work or written reflections.

A study that I would like to begin following the completion of this work is to collect data and study the implementation of any upcoming Community Engagement Projects that the teacher education project decides to employ. While I feel that the analysis of perceptions of those who participate in Community Engagement Projects is essential to completing a whole picture of the research, I would like to find a more mixed methods approach in measuring how the students will have grown from before the community experience to after the experience. This manner of research will allow me to see more completely how student teachers learn from community engagement experiences and exactly what it is that they learn.

Studies that I believe would benefit the field of educational research would actually replicate the methodological strategy of this very case study. It would benefit various community-university partnership programs to collect, compile, and analyze the perceptions of student teachers, so that various deficiencies could be addressed, while strengths could be capitalized. I believe that this study could be replicated many times over, and based on the infrastructure and design of that program, the results could vary greatly from program to program.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to explore the perceptions, actions, and motivations of myself, the student teachers who experienced the “Community-University Partnership Program”, and the administrative and creative participants of Community

Engagement Project. I also asked of all of participants their understandings of what took place before, during, and after this university-community partnership. The reason for this was to draw a more complete picture of the benefits and pitfalls of designing the program in the manner with which it was. The research questions stated at the beginning of this chapter, although seemingly simple, and even vague were done so purposefully, as critical qualitative research, “it is best not to get too precise when formulating initial research questions” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 28). The research questions were analyzed using the three data sources and Carspecken’s three-stage methodological approach, and four emergent themes were discovered: Affective Responses, New Experiences and Learnings, Programmatic Responses and Reflections, and Perceptions and the Students and Community, which were used to make recommendations for future Community Engagement Projects for teacher education programs, as well as recommendations for future educational research projects.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

October 11, 2017

Haley Ford

hmgrimland@uh.edu

Dear Haley Ford:

On October 11, 2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Bridging the Gap: A Case Study Investigating One Community-University Partnership and Program in an Urban Context
Investigator:	Haley Ford
IRB ID:	STUDY00000503
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recru, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Interview Protocol, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Teacher Director Letter, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Informed Consent Form for Participants, Category: Consent Form; • Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol;
Review Category:	Expedited
Committee Name:	Not Applicable
IRB Coordinator:	Danielle Griffin

The IRB approved the study from October 11, 2017 to October 10, 2018, inclusive.

To ensure continuous approval for studies with a review category of “Committee Review” in the above table, you must submit a continuing review with required explanations by the deadline for the September 2018 meeting. These deadlines may be found on the compliance website (<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/>). You can

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Institutional Review Boards

submit a continuing review by navigating to the active study and clicking “Create Modification/CR.”

For expedited and exempt studies, a continuing review should be submitted no later than 30 days prior to study closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted on or before October 10, 2018, approval of this study expires and all research (including but not limited to recruitment, consent, study procedures, and analysis of identifiable data) must stop. If the study expires and you believe the welfare of the subjects to be at risk if research procedures are discontinued, please contact the IRB office immediately.

Unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB, use the stamped consent form approved by the IRB to document consent. The approved version may be downloaded from the documents tab. To document consent, use the consent documents that were approved and stamped by the IRB. Go to the Documents tab to download them.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Office of Research Policies, Compliance and Committees (ORPCC)
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cphs@central.uh.edu
<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/>

Appendix B

Student Teacher Reflections Approval

7 September 2017

Dr. Amber Thompson
Director of Teacher Education
University of Houston

I, Amber Thompson, instructor of the courses EDUC 4311 and EDUC 4313 Student Teaching and Integrated Technology, give permission to Haley M. G. Ford, the principle investigator of *Bridging the Gap: A Case Study Investigating One Community-University Partnership and Program in an Urban Context* to gain access to the "Community-Engagement Reflections" turned in as a course requirement during the 2015-2016 academic year. I grant Haley M. G. Ford permission to access these documents for the purpose of exploring any and all social constructions and experiences of the participants during the time period in which this particular "Community Engagement Project" was carried out. In order to complete this task, it is necessary for the case study to consider all social routines, social sites, cultural norms, subjective experiences, and participant narratives associated with this partnership to consider the benefits and pitfalls of the aforementioned urban "Community engagement project".

The manner in which Ms. Ford will only utilize these documents is for qualitative data analysis. The identities of any and all students, or any identifying attributes, will not be included in the study.

The associated parties have agreed to these terms.



Dr. Amber Thompson, Director of Teacher Education

9/13/2017

Date



Haley M. G. Ford, Principle Investigator

9/13/2017

Date

Appendix C

Interview Protocol Sample

Haley M.G. Ford

Interview Protocol

The following interview protocol would be used in interviewing all six participants of the study *Bridging the Gap: A Case Study Investigating One Community-University Partnership and Program in an Urban Context* independently of each other. The participants to be interviewed all had varying roles in what this research will refer to as the “Community Engagement Project,” which partnered the College of Education with a local community center to give student teachers experiences with students enrolled in that same community center’s after-school program. One of the first motivations for interviewing the participants are the various roles that each of them held while carrying out this program. First, I am interested in exploring each subject’s understanding of what their own roles were during the program and what experiences they had in relation to the program. I want to gain a deeper understanding of not only what took place during the events of this program, but also what kind of education environment was being cultivated by the inception of this program. I am interested in exploring if and how participation in this “Community Engagement Project” has affected their view of the roles that they play within various social environments. Secondly, I would like to learn more about if and how their involvement in this community-university partnership has had any sort of effect on how they can participate within their community (be it school, home, etc.).

Topic Domain 1: View of Social Roles

Lead-off Question

“Would you mind starting off by explaining to me your role in the “Community Engagement Project”?”

[Covert Categories: perceptions of self; perceptions of the community; perceptions of the school/program; views on observing and categorizing various human behaviors; motivations for participation]

Possible Follow-up Questions:

1. *Can you tell me about... (depending on the role determined) how you came up with this program? The first time you heard about this program? Your first interaction with the student teachers?*
2. *Why did you feel it was important to become involved?*
3. *What about this program was significant or meaningful?*
4. *How would you describe this program to someone who had never heard of it?*
5. *Can you tell me a story about a time when you felt the program was becoming successful? Failing?*

Topic Domain 2: Involvement/Participation within Community

Lead-off Question

“Many of the student teachers wrote about events pertaining to fear. Can you tell me what you believe caused these events to take place?”

Possible Follow-up Questions:

1. *I personally experiences and recorded a meaningful experience with*
2. *What were your hopes for this program?*
3. *Why do believe the program as ended?*
4. *What are some other actions that could have been taken to prevent its closure?*
5. *How do you think you might react if something similar happened to you? Can you tell me about what you would do?*
6. *How do you think your school/community would respond?*

Appendix D

Community Engagement Assignment for Student Teachers

Student Teaching 1: Community Outreach Non-Traditional Teaching Assignment

Your group will create FOUR 15 MINUTE Center Activities that are:

- o Differentiated for different age groups/abilities;
- o Engaging and enriching;
- o Based on the themes which are listed on the Sign Up
- o Able to be completed in the 15 minute time slot, so that each child can experience and engage in each center!

Remember to follow the WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT? format of all your reflections. I have included a link to this information on Blackboard.

Please answer the following questions (let them guide your thinking) about your experiences at Community-University Partnership Program (do not include these questions in your responses, please make these into a cohesively thought out reflection.

1. *What were your expectations before you went to Community-University Partnership Program? What did you think it would be like? What were you fearful of, nervous about etc...*
2. *What were your experiences like while you were there, which moments stood out to you? How did these conform to your preconceived notions? What did you learn that was new?*
3. *Now that you have had this experience, what would you say is the most important things you have learned about this experience?*
4. *What aspects about how this experience was designed were most helpful for you to have a successful experience? What do you wish you would have known before you went that you did not know?*