

**CULTURAL SOCIALIZATION PROCESS
OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS OF STUDENTS OF COLOR
IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

A Dissertation

by

PATRICIA MAY HENRY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2008

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

Cultural Socialization Process of Effective Educators of Students of Color
in an Elementary School District. (August 2008)

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The purpose of this life history study was to identify the experiences that influence the cultural socialization process of teachers and the factors that contribute to the effective instruction of students of color. Six female teachers who are currently assigned to third, fourth, or fifth grade students in elementary schools participated in this research project. Their experiences range from the second year in the classroom to thirteen years of teaching, and they have all had assignments as language arts teachers.

Data for this qualitative research was collected from two face-to-face interviews, principals' written descriptions about classroom environments, and participant observations. The interviews were transcribed from audio cassettes and the data was analyzed using Burke's Pentadic Analysis, Linde's Creation of Coherence and features from Spradley's Participant Observation.

Each teacher claimed unique lived experiences, but there were similar threads of high teacher expectation, meeting the needs of students and affirming the cultural

differences of the students of colors that were sewn together in all their narratives. The cultural socialization process of the participants was connected to pivotal events that were linked to creation of coherence in their lives. These epiphanies were identified in their earliest recollection and continued into their instructional practices.

The findings of this study indicate that there are deep layers that can emerge when teachers reflect on the events that influence their effectiveness with students of color. The conclusions are that effective teachers of students of color are guided by an agenda that includes the multiple roles that they have to assume in order to achieve the goal of success for all their students. Recommendations for further research and implications for theory and practice were also discussed.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my parents. My mother, Hazel Walters Henry, demonstrated extraordinary work ethic all her life. Her actions served as the catalyst for the effort and determination that I needed to complete this project. My father, Herbert Zachariah Henry, had such a special way of demonstrating sensitivity to everyone he met. His example has been a constant reminder that I need to view people and events through multiple lenses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have helped to shape who I am today. Some of these individuals I met only once and others interacted with me for extended periods of time so that I am familiar with their names and now, I publicly thank them for their love, guidance and support. Your names are etched in my mind, and your actions have been valuable contributions to my affective and cognitive process.

The list that follows represents the epiphanic relationships that frame the depth and width of this dissertation:

- My Heavenly Father with whom I continue to develop a personal relationship. This relationship defines who I am and helps me to remember to look for opportunities to serve others.
- My son, Jimmy Henry-Dempster, is the greatest gift that I have been given. The opportunity to guide him and listen to him has been the most challenging and rewarding experiences with which I have been blessed. I have been greatly strengthened by you, my son!
- My sisters, Cynthia Hamilton and Heather Genus, and my brother, Zadoc Henry have cushioned me with their encouragement and continue to support me in all my endeavors.
- Millicent Ferguson-Comrie has been my friend since I was in the first grade. She has seen me climb the highest mountains and fall into the deepest valleys. Thank you for always staying with me!

- Principal, Erwann Davis-Wilson has such high expectations of me. I was always so motivated, as a member of her staff, that I prepared myself to negotiate my way over and around all the hurdles that were placed in my path.
- Dr. Norvella Carter and Dr. Carolyn Clark, my committee co-chairs, have been the lighthouses throughout my doctoral studies. Dr. Radhika Viruru and Dr. Laverne Young-Hawkins, as members of my committee, have helped me find the pieces to make my research project comprehensive.
- The six participants and their principals who created time in their demanding schedules to meet with me for interviews and informational sessions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The attitudes and experiences that shape the cultural socialization processes of effective elementary educators of students of color – African Americans and Hispanics – are critical because of the direct relationship between teacher expectation and academic achievement of students (Good & Brophy, 2000). In an article describing the role of teachers in preventing school failure, Parsley & Corcoran (2003) emphasized the importance of a positive teacher-student relationship in achieving student success. Lumsden (1997) also stated, that “the expectations teachers have for their students and the assumptions they make about their potential have a tangible effect on student achievement” (p.44).

As an educational practitioner in elementary education for the past 20 years, my commitment to having high expectations of all students has been driven by 1) my personal experiences which have been framed by the words of praise or discouragement by my own teachers in elementary, high school and college, and 2) multiple discussions with and observation of teachers of students of color for the past 15 years. Collectively both have been the catalyst for my interest in investigating the attributes of successful teachers of students of color.

The beginning of my journey takes me back to my first grade teacher, Mrs. Ucando. She walked around the classroom emphasizing the high expectations she had

This dissertation follows the style and format of the *Journal of Educational Research*.

for all her students in the area of handwriting. She paused while raising her voice to another level, looked at me and said, “All of the members of this class should pattern their attention from this student. (Her eyes were on me continuously). She will be very successful in my class.” I felt so proud, and I cannot recollect ever taking my eyes off Mrs. Ucando for the remainder of the year because I wanted to make sure that her “prophecy was fulfilled.” During my teaching career, I have looked for many opportunities to outwardly recognize the students who were making the right choices, socially and academically. Additionally, I have been driven to create classroom environments in which students’ behavior and responses could be used as positive models for the rest of the students.

I am reminded of my years in middle school where I enjoyed tremendous success as an athlete. Every year I received the accolades that accompany repeated victories in track and field and other team sports competition against other schools. Mrs. Lacine, my language teacher, however, never failed to remind me that the only success that counted was that which occurred in the classroom. Although I was responsible for leading the school’s teams and implementing counter strategies against the opponents, Mrs. Lacine did not recognize how she could incorporate my strengths in classroom activities.

The above experience has frequently reminded me of teachers who use the curriculum of their school district as the only guide to instructing students. When teachers limit their instruction to the contents from the state or district guidelines, they are not exploring “multidisciplinary, multiracial, multinational...” opportunities to enrich students (Hilliard, 1991b, p. 13). As I reflect on my years mentoring teachers and

modeling instructional strategies in culturally responsive classrooms, the high expectation component is one of the qualities that I examine when teachers complain that their students are not being academically successful. An analysis of my discussions with teachers of low performing students usually reflect one or all of the following, 1) acceptance of a percentage of failures in their classes, 2) teacher frustration because they do not know how to instruct their students, or 3) supporting a deficit model that blames the students for their lack of academic achievement.

Another exposure that I had with low teacher-student expectation was in high school with Mrs. Norman. As I struggled to learn a foreign language, she commented, “I can’t understand why you are trying to learn Latin, you don’t even know how to speak English.” Those were discouraging words for a twelve-year-old student. I have painful memories of crying for three days as a result of that comment. Although I now speak three languages, my success was not achieved because I was shamed into learning the languages. I attribute my linguistic accomplishments to 1) my first grade teacher, Mrs. Ucando, who predicted that I would be successful, and 2) the success I experienced through my involvement in sports that motivated me to expand my horizons and work towards academic success in the classrooms. Educators who recognize the strengths of students provide the stepping stones for children who need encouragement in order to expand the success that they experience from one arena to another.

My reflective journey continues to the period that I spent pursuing a graduate degree. It was during that time that I was the beneficiary of high teacher efficacy from two of my college professors. Dr. Stromer, an elementary education professor, privately

interviewed each student and then would seize opportunities to highlight something special about each student with regularity. He enthusiastically shared my linguistic abilities and shared the research that affirmed how advantageous it was to be able to speak more than one language. Dr. Stromer also encouraged me to publish one of the research projects that I turned in.

Prior to enrolling in college mathematics class, I never thought that I was a strong student in that content area. My math college professor, Mr. Trendor, implemented differentiated instruction during which time I understood math concepts that were previously too challenging for me to grasp. He also spoke privately to me and shared that he was prepared to allow me additional time to complete my assignments because the high quality and detail of my work warranted more time in order for me to be successful. It was after those two college experiences that I fully appreciated how teachers could be empowered to help students be successful. Both college professors treated their students as individuals and as a result I, 1) was able to build on one of my strengths, and 2) was successful in my mathematics course because I was given the extra time that I needed complete my assignments.

The impact of the college professors' instructional decisions in my education has been affirmed by Gay, 2000 and Delpit, 2005. Teachers can be empowered to positively affect the success of students when they create a culturally responsive classroom in which the instructors identify, acknowledge and integrate all the strengths of their students. The experiences described above have framed my perspective of the different roles teachers have in effectively educating students.

The validation of students' cultural differences was demonstrated when a White teacher described her journey to "Get It Right," Pierce, (2005). She spent seven years trying to figure out why White students received more honor roll recognition and why more African American students spent time in the discipline management room. The strategies incorporated in Pierce's classroom included (1) encouraging students to feel comfortable with themselves, (2) allowing them to speak in casual language when they interacted with each other, if the instruction did not focus on using formal expressions, (3) integrating students' cultures and experiences throughout the year, and (4) teachers' reflection that questioned whether or not they were doing as much as they could to help the students. The implementation of these strategies was a result of one teacher's awareness that "...seeing culture and color and not ignoring it" (Pierce, 2005, p.49), was one way to validate the students who she taught.

During my discussions with teachers, who guide students primarily through the lenses of singular cultural experiences, they usually share information that suggests that they have not been trained to look at topics from different perspectives, or that all students should be brought together under one umbrella so that they may be successful on the standardized tests. These positions support an educational philosophy that marginalizes the education of one group of students while perpetuating the academic success of another group of students.

The theoretical framework of teacher efficacy explains the consequences of teacher-student expectations and informs this life history research. Bandura, et al. (2001) states that, "Unless people believe they can produce desired outcomes by their

actions, they have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficulties” (p.187). When teachers believe that situational factors in the lives of students are not the principal determinants of students’ success, the educators will rely on their own contributions, and take responsibility for the success of students in their classrooms. Therefore, the implications of teacher efficacy in the classroom provide a window through which the relationship between the academic achievement of students and teacher expectation may be analyzed, since educators occupy different places on the teacher efficacy continuum (Dembo & Gibson, 1985).

Warren (2002) studied the relationships between the degree of teacher efficacy and teachers’ own social belief, racial identity and social classes have been researched and identified. The responses of a diverse group of teachers from twenty-nine K-2 schools were analyzed by ethnic groups, school socioeconomic categories, individually and by total group. Many of the teachers shared that it was not the responsibility of the teachers to help students fill the gaps that students had, but that was the responsibility of the family. Some teachers did not value the culture of the students, but rather considered cultural differences as deficits. Other teachers had a) lower expectations of their students than for their own biological children, and b) doubts that, as educators, they could help their students to overcome barriers or differences. Finally, some of the teachers who taught in the poor urban schools sent their own children to private schools.

The above findings support the perspectives of scholars, such as (Banks & Banks, 2003; Gay, 2000; and Larke, Webb-Johnson, and Carter 1996) who agree with (Bandura, 1976) that there are advantages of acquiring a knowledge base of the needs,

characteristics and strengths of the diverse students so that there is no difference between the levels of efficacy teachers have when they interact with all students. Padron and Waxman (2002), in their research that addressed the needs of Hispanic students, also suggested that the low expectation of students influences the instructional practices of teachers.

Another project, that involved two hundred and thirty-four elementary schools, targeted the relationship between teacher efficacy and the ethnic background of students (Tasan, 2001). The findings included high feeling of efficacy between the teachers and the students who spoke English. This contrasted with the low feeling of efficacy of the teachers of second language learners. However, there were no differences between the levels of efficacy that teachers from different ethnic backgrounds displayed towards specific diverse group of students.

One of the reasons some educators fail to meet the specific needs of students of color is the cultural mismatch between teacher and student. Villegas (1988) linked the low level of achievement by minority students of color with the differences between the culture of students and their teachers. In responding to the needs of diverse students Geneva Gay (2000) has also suggested that the cultural disconnect between teachers and students in many schools might be one of the critical variables affecting the academic success of students of color.

This lack of connection between some teachers and students has been linked to the presuppositions and stereotyping that have been imbedded in the societal structure about students of color. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) engaged in sixteen years of

ethnographic study of Black urban poor families and communities in the inner city located in the northeastern region of the United States of America, and concluded that the degree of literacy and academic achievement was not significantly dependent on sex, race and economic status. One of the strongest points brought out by this research is that generalizations are flawed. The results further revealed that parents, who are classified as undereducated, showed a high level of problem-solving skills in order to survive extraordinary circumstances. The stereotypical beliefs about students who come from low economic environment do not usually include the positive problem solving skills displayed by the parents in the above study.

Henderson and Milstein (2003) stated that the minority population is usually portrayed as “troubled, addicted to drugs, in poverty, neglected, [and with] lack of access to basic human needs” (p 4). Lee S., (2004) added that negative stereotyping of Hispanics is also prevalent and has been determined as a variable that affects the alienation of these students of color from schools. Ethnic stereotyping and misconceptions are realities, according to Wlodkowski (1995), and the cultural experiences of teachers are factors that influence their beliefs and attitudes (Grisham, Berg, Jacobs & Mathison, 2002).

The emphasis on cultural socialization of teachers in this research is to examine the connections that teachers are able to establish when they recognize, value and integrate the cultural experiences of those who are the recipient of instruction in learning environments. Culture, according to Webster (2002) encompasses the values, beliefs, traditions, and worldview of a group of people. This definition is consistent with Banks’

and Banks' (2003) description of culture which is "... the values, symbols interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another ..." (p. 8). Socialization is the process that individuals use to learn the ways of a given society or social group so that they can connect and function in diverse environments (Elkin & Handel, 1962). Since the cultural radar of some teachers of students of color may not extend beyond the dominant White culture, some researchers argue that there should be an integration of cultural socialization and identity development into teacher training programs so that the presuppositions of some teachers do not determine the educational outcomes for children of color (Lee, Spencer, Harpalani, 2003).

As schools become increasingly culturally diverse, school districts continue to look for ways to close the achievement gap between White students and students of color (Knight & Wiseman, 2005). Although it has been approximately six years since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, according to Sanchez, (2005), there have been little noteworthy educational gains from this act. From the Nations Report Card (NAEP, 2003) the average score gap between White children and children of color, in reading, has "...shown no measurable change between 1992 and 2003 in both the fourth and eight grades" (p. 49).

The long term effect of this achievement gap has been school failure and high dropout rate of students of color. This educational dilemma contributes to unemployment, underemployment, and minimum wage earnings for Blacks (Jacobson, Olsen, Rice, Sweetland & Ralph, 2001). Padron and Waxman (2002) have also confirmed the increased crisis of Hispanic students attending public schools in recent

decades. They also have the lowest level of education and the highest dropout rate of any groups of students. As noted by Dr. Steve Murdock, Texas' State Demographer..." by the year 2040 only twenty percent of the students in Texas will be White" (D. Anthony, personal communication, January 24, 2005). Delpit (2005) argued that "... those with good intentions say that they want to create an educational system that would be best for 'my' children because what's best for 'my' children will be best for everybody's children...The difficulty is that all children don't have exactly the same needs" (p.2).

The work of both Geneva Gay and Gloria Ladson-Billings inform my research. on the cultural socialization process of teachers. Gay's (2000) culturally responsive approach to teaching explains the nature of the cultural connections between teachers and students. Ladson-Billings' work (2000) focuses on successful teaching of African-American children and contributes to "a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy that is applicable to all classroom settings" (Willis & Lewis, 1998 p. 61). Both researchers support the creation of culturally responsive learning environment in order to help students in diverse classrooms to be successful. These students also need teachers who can be found on the high end of the teacher efficacy continuum. Since the role of the teacher is so critical, school districts should have information in order to identify the experiences that help prepare effective teachers of students of color.

Statement of the Problem

When teachers leave the walls of teaching training programs and venture into their own classroom, they take with them many experiences. Influenced by an educational process that begins with caregivers and ends with teacher educators' and

methods courses, the majority of teachers tend to develop educational philosophies that assume that their instructional strategies should pattern their own individual experiences (Gross, 1996). The ideal vision of effective instruction collapses when teachers face the reality of the teaching in their own classrooms (Pike, Bradley & Mansfield, 1997), as they are exposed to the choices of pursuing a traditional viewpoint as opposed to one that meets the needs of the students in their classes (Witcher, Sewall, Arnold & Travers, 2001). As a result of the above issues, Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1994, 2000) propose continuous training and support for experienced as well as new teachers so that they can develop a shared context with the students of color in their classrooms. Consequently, there is a need to explore the socio-cultural processes of teachers and the factors that contribute to effective teaching.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the experiences that influence the cultural socialization process of teachers and the factors that contribute to the effective instruction of students of color. This study will contribute to the body of research that supports the relationship between the socio-cultural awareness of teachers and the academic achievement of students of color.

Significance of the Study

Since school reforms have generally failed to "...change persistent values and principles that have served as the foundation for education for over 100 years," (Caruthers, Thompson & Eubanks, 2004, p. 36), educators' beliefs and assumptions may provide information regarding the "reculturing" of schools so that every child may be

educated successfully. Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District grew from the fifth to the third largest school district in 2005-2006 as the student population increased beyond the 85,000 students that was projected (D. Anthony, 2005). This study will provide information to school districts and administrators so they can recognize the cultural construction of educators most likely to be effective in teaching students of color. The characteristics of these successful teachers 1) may be included as part of the criteria to be considered in recruiting teachers, and 2) may be considered in planning staff development for experienced teachers in school districts with diverse student population.

Research Questions

This study examined the life experiences of six teachers of students of color and the interaction and instructional practices with their students. The study addressed the following questions:

1. How do teachers account for their effectiveness with students of color?
2. How is a culturally responsive learning environment demonstrated in the student/teacher interactions?
3. How do teachers perceive their cultural socialization process as a factor in successfully teaching students of color?

Definitions

- 1. Cultural socialization** is being used in this study to frame the personal and professional process that influences the cultural values, beliefs, and traditions that are evident in educators' instructional decisions. (Elkin & Handel, 1962; Webster, 2002; Banks & Banks, 2003; Achinstein, Ogawa & Speiglmán, 2004).
- 2. Culturally responsive teaching** is the recognition, acceptance and integration of the values and culture of all ethnic groups in the instructional strategies implemented in classroom instruction. The positive teacher-student interaction (Webster, 2002) that is consistently present in a classroom is described as "culturally responsive teaching" by Gay (2000). This may also be reflected in the perception that students have of being validated by the teacher.
- 3. Students of color** is a term typically used to refer to non-Caucasian people, which is understood to include many cultures, such as, those of Africans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians (Banks & Banks, 2003). The two groups of students who will be considered for this study will be African Americans and Hispanics.
- 4. Effective teacher** is used to describe an educator (1) whose classroom has been identified as an environment in which culturally responsive teaching occurs (Gay, 2000), and (2) whose students passed the TAKS reading test with scores of seventy percent or higher (TEA, 2005).

Assumptions

One assumption is that the participants will be agreeable and responsive to being interviewed, observed and to interact with the researcher in order that a positive rapport may develop. I also assume that the cultural socialization process of the teachers has influenced their educational practices with students of color. My third assumption is that as an educator who has continuously worked with second language learners, students of color and their teachers, I recognize that my biases might affect the interpretation of the experiences of the participants.

Summary

The interaction between teachers and students in this chapter that included my own personal experiences as well as the description of my observations of teachers in classrooms suggest that the student-teacher expectations is a critical component in the successful education of students of color. The journey that I have taken in my personal educational process has been the catalyst for my interest in discovering the context and meaning of lived stories of effective educators of students of color. How and why educators create culturally responsive classrooms may add to the research that support successful educational environments for all students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There is a quality that separates effective teachers from others in their profession. Teaching degrees and years of experience represent only 3% of the meaningful connection that educators contribute to the success of students (Foster, Lewis & Onafowora, 2005). “The remaining 97% is associated with what researchers refer to as “elusive qualities” (p. 3). This study will examine literature concerning 1) cultural socialization process of teachers of students of color, and 2) teachers’ effectiveness with students of color, and 3) the professional preparation of teachers. These interests are catalyzed by my experiences working with students of color and coaching their teachers. It is important that all students feel that they can be successful in school, and also that the teachers believe that these students can achieve academic success.

Cultural Socialization of Teachers

McIntosh (1990) created a list of experiences that are stored in “invisible knapsacks” of privilege and power. Gallavan (2005) incorporated some of these conditions as part of an activity in a multicultural education course for both experienced and teacher trainees to demonstrate the sociocultural contexts that may dominate many classrooms in the United States. The following two statements are included in McIntosh’s (1990) list of experiences that White middle class students can count on as part of their school experiences:

1. When I am told about our national heritage or about ‘civilization,’ I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
2. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race” (p. 31).

The rationale for considering the above experiences is to heighten awareness of the dominant cultural lenses through which many middle class educators look, and the impact an Anglo cultural perspective may have on students in diverse classrooms. Many of the students in Gallavan’s (2005) study shared that they were unaware of “...their own wealth of cultural characteristics (or those of the people around them...” (p. 39). In Pang’s (2001) discussions regarding a “Caring Centered Reflective Approach to Teaching,” she suggests that “culture shapes who you are and also who your students are” (p.4).

Ford and Dillard’s (1996) recommendations for the phases of “becoming multicultural” suggest how all teachers, those who are representatives of students of color and others who are from different cultural groups, can connect culturally with their students. In order to effectively develop, practice and guide others to view events and experiences through multiple, cultural lenses, individuals should become involved in “interactive and recursive phases that characterize a truly grounded self” (p. 232). Two of the four stages in Ford and Dillard’s conceptual model address the formative steps of the process to become multicultural. These are (1) construction of self as object, and (2) deconstruction through critical self-reflection.

In the first stage, socialization is the process that determines the development of one's ethnic identity which forms the basis of the core self. According to Ford and Dillard (1996) the struggles against a dominant White culture and the lack of exposure to positive models that represent their own ethnic groups are critical in the construction of the self concept of people of color. This negative cultural socialization cannot be changed in schools, if teachers do not embrace a culturally relevant approach to teaching. This means that teachers need to go through the first phase - looking at their own cultural socialization process as well as the second phase - deconstruction through critical self reflection - in order to recognize that people of color have been marginalized because of over exposure to dominant Eurocentric curriculum at the expense of those experiences that validate their own culture. Teachers may become culturally sensitive because they make sense of their own cultural construction and are then more inclined to understand and respond to the cultural role of others rather than relying on stereotypical information.

Four teachers of second language learners in Florida recommended the avoidance of stereotyping in order to empower educators for a culturally diverse world (Bagby, Cunningham, Lyall & Shille, 2003). They contended that presupposition defines individuals from different ethnic groups, and educators need to be aware of their personal, cultural parameters that frame the expectations of the students in their diverse classrooms as the presuppositions emerge. "Understanding our own culture provides a point of reference by which we can more readily understand other cultures" (Bagby, et al. 2003, p. 49).

More specific examples of the presuppositions that have perpetuated about people of color are that many African Americans are “lazy, low achieving and culturally deficient,” and Hispanic females are “...boy crazy, uninterested in school and uneducable” (Lee S., 2004, p. 121-2). There is also a pervasive construction of Latino males as criminals who constantly attract surveillance of members of the police force (Sleeter, 2004). According to Ladson-Billings (2000), one of the reasons for the low expectation of students is the consequence of the portrayal of African-American culture as a “corruption” of White culture. Thus, the background experiences, language and values of African-American students are devalued. Teachers, who are armed with these presuppositions, emerged from a teacher preparation programs that failed to provide them with theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in communities that are culturally different from their own (Ladson-Billings, 2000). The following statement frames one of the recommendations for novice teachers:

Socialization and teaching experiences for novice teachers in diverse school settings would assist those in need of eliminating stereotypical beliefs about learners from various culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse backgrounds do so; allow for positive socialization experiences; and improve communications between these groups. This would at the same time encourage novice teachers to confront any misconceptions about teachers and learners from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Burden, Hodge, & O'Bryant, 2004, p. 181).

The professional environment may also affect the framework for sociocultural

awareness of educators of students of color. Teachers can be influenced by educational policies, school district and school environments (Achinstein, et al. 2004). The professional culture that is supported by the local and state policies may either a) limit the instructional control of teachers, or b) encourage diverse instructional strategies. When teachers work in environments that support “prescriptive instructional” policies rather than focusing on a “flexible knowledge” base, their efforts are neither student centered nor culturally relevant (Darling-Hammond, Wise, Klein, 1999). In most of our urban schools, where there is a diverse student population, the students’ values are often not integrated in the curriculum as the beliefs and practices are aligned with that of the mainstream culture (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999). Professional culture, as described above, contributes to the creation of teachers who perpetuate inequities that lead to achievement gaps along lines of race and social class, and influences the students’ access to educational success and power (Nieto, 2002).

Summary

When educators reflect on their own social construction, they can open up the doors to understanding their reactions to stereotypical beliefs about students of color. The professional cultures to which educators are exposed also contribute to maintaining environments that support, 1) cultural deficit learning environments, or 2) ineffective pedagogical practices.

Cultural Mismatch between Students and School

If the professional environment does not support the framework that all students have knowledge even though this knowledge may be different, the stage is set for

clashes between the school culture and that of the students of color (Pang, 2001).

Chamberlain (2005) has described seven domains that teachers need to recognize as contributing to the cultural clashes between students and teachers. The first is communication differences which can lead the students of color to believe that the way they communicate is inferior in school settings. The teacher may expect the student to communicate using a direct communicative style while the student is accustomed to use indirect communication that reflects the cultural practices of the family. The misunderstandings that occur can be traced to the systems to which different cultural groups are exposed in learning to speak the same language. One of the reasons for the cultural communication conflict is the "...internalized assumptions about what 'behavior' means and how communication should develop or unfold" (Mavrelis, 1997, p. 31).

Another contributor to cultural clashes is the difference in cognitive processing within culturally and linguistically diverse students. The following observations were made in a Los Angeles school in which the majority of the students were Latinos and most of their teachers were of Euro-Americans (Chamberlain, 2005). In response to the teacher's question to describe an egg, one student's reply explained how eggs were prepared and eaten in the home. Another student, however, chose to detail the color and composition of the egg. The teacher ignored the first answer and validated the second child's response. When students' thought processes and personal connections are repeatedly rejected, they tend to withdraw from participation in classroom interaction because they internalize that their way of communicating is not accepted by the teacher.

The circumstance, which guided the student to answer the question by including the function of an egg, was an opportunity for the educator to build on the background experiences of this student.

Effective educators need to have a broad view of what constitutes knowledge (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). When only the cultural values of one of the students is affirmed as demonstrated in the example above, "...a deeper kind of understanding – of social ideals, values and behavioral standards that shape approaches to child-rearing and schooling, first in one's own culture and then in the cultures of one's students," is missing (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, 2001, p. 11). A partnership, called Bridging Cultures, between educational researchers at WestEd, University of California, and seven public school teachers of Latino students and their families, has contributed to an understanding that the source of the teachers' bias is ingrained in their own cultural biases and expectations of the cultural orientation of the Latino students. This professional development program was designed to improve cross-cultural communication in the classrooms in the United States.

In the domain of language, the conflict between the culture of the teacher and the students of color may occur in oral development, literacy and writing styles. For example, oral language is described as having a more functional role for students of color versus the emphasis placed on testing the knowledge of students in classrooms in the United States. In literacy, story telling, an integral part of the values of families of students of color is emphasized in contrast to the skill of reading and writing in their classrooms which has been the organizational pattern for the prevailing culture in the

United States. The mainstream culture of the United States also focuses on topic centered narratives, while a topic-associative style of writing is usually identified in other cultural groups (Delpit, 1995). Students whose cultural context is encouraged during the choice of topics will generally be more successful in writing assignments.

The culturally sensitive attitude may not be encouraged in all teacher education programs as described by a first year teacher. Grant (1989) stated:

During my first year at DuSale, an urban high school in Chicago, I was frequently very anxious and frightened. On occasion, I even had nightmares about the place. I despaired of even understanding or accepting the students' behavior and attitudes that were so strange and threatening to me. I experienced what anthropologists and sociologists have termed "culture shock." (p.317).

Based on the above reaction, it appears that the personal and professional socialization process of this teacher might not have created a cultural radar that included the diverse culture in which some teachers will eventually teach (Hopkins, Hoffman and Moss, 1997).

The expectation of a teacher regarding the behavior of students of color was identified as another domain in which cultural conflict might occur. Larke, Webb-Johnson & Carter, (1996) have pointed out that in the United States culturally, linguistically, ethnically and economically diverse students are disciplined more in schools than students of other racial groups. Students should be guided to follow general school and classroom rules, however one of the recommendations for effective classroom management in diverse classrooms is to "...respect, teach and modify

behavioral expectations from a learner centered perspective. Students should not be expected to “behave” at the expense of denying who they are as vibrant cultural beings” (Larke, et al.1996, p. 46). In Monroe’s and Obidah’s (2004) study on *The Influence of Cultural Synchronization on a Teacher’s Perceptions of Disruption*, one of the findings was that when teachers were able to use the same form of wit as well as linguistic expression with which students were familiar in order to redirect behavior, students tended to be less disruptive. The teacher did not have to relinquish the role of the person in control while incorporating culturally responsive disciplinary procedures in the classroom. When students’ behaviors are misinterpreted, they suffer the consequences of being marginalized twice - loss of instructional time and lack of acceptance of conduct that would be accepted within their own cultural context.

Another source of cultural conflict in the classroom emerges when teachers, who represent the mainstream values of the United States, support the competition and individual achievement of students as opposed to the collectivism and social relationships that are part of the cultural legacy of some families of students of color. (Trumbull, et al. 2001 & Chamberlain, 2005). Students from many Hispanic backgrounds, for example, are brought up in home in which “...helping the weak and cooperating with others to get a job done” (Pierce L., 1991, p. 10) is a valued practice that cultivates a psychological and physical closeness among this group. Teachers, who are not culturally sensitive to this practice, might interpret the gesture of students to help others during assigned work as an attempt to cheat. Such behaviors should be addressed while taking in consideration the individual’s background so that students can

understand that the difference between the actions valued at home and at school. Delpit (1995) recommends that teachers should build on the strengths of social relationships and cooperative learning before introducing alternative ways of achieving success in diverse classrooms.

The students' and parents' interaction to teachers, as authority figures, in the diverse classroom is another challenge that the teacher of children of color encounters. Chamberlain (2005) describes the "high-power distance cultural" background that drives the expectations of the parents of some diverse students. That is, the teachers are to educate children about academics, while the parents educate the children about their conduct and responsibilities in their homes. Since the mainstream U.S. culture interprets parental involvement as an indicator of the interest of adults in the children's education, this "hands-off" action of parents may be interpreted as a lack of interest by parents.

Erickson (2003) analogizes culture to the computer software that educators use to structure the "default" instructional strategies in their classrooms. It is the expectations of educators and the reasons behind the expectations that pose the greatest cultural clash for students of color in classrooms. When students' "funds of knowledge" are not reflected in the assessments administered in schools, they are considered to be deficit in knowledge and skills. The resulting low expectations of the teachers lead to poor instruction, and Chamberlain (2005) argues that it is the educational process that is responsible for the failure of the students because teachers are not prepared to integrate the knowledge that students bring to the classrooms.

Summary

The lenses that frame the cultural socialization of teachers contribute to the cultural clashes between teachers and students of color in many classrooms. This cultural mismatch adversely affects students' access to educational success and power.

Culturally Responsive Classrooms

All educators should be the instruments through which students receive culturally responsive instruction, and therefore teachers should make every effort to become aware of and implement multicultural components and approaches in their classrooms. Gay (2000) recommends that culturally responsive teaching should be (1) validation for all students, (2) comprehensive, (3) multidimensional, (4) empowering, and (5) transformative.

When teachers incorporate the culture and address the learning styles of their students in the instructional curriculum, the students feel validated because they are able to make meaningful connections with their home environment and the material presented. In the same way that curriculum materials that support European values have helped White students to be successful, students of color will undoubtedly benefit from material and activities that support what is meaningful to them. A student that is exposed to culturally responsive instruction will develop socially, emotionally, politically and intellectually. Gay (2000) describes this second component as "comprehensive" because the whole child is being taught. Students in classes should learn to develop not only responsibility for themselves but also for the other students. (Ladson-Billings, 2001) also adds to this body of research by recommending that multi-ethnicity and

multiculturalism should be the focus of curriculum because it is within this framework that students may be exposed to meaningful educational experiences. When success is achieved, it can be attributed to caring, sharing resources and working in cooperative groups.

The third evidence of culturally responsive teaching is its multidimensional component. In this environment, a variety of “cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions and perspectives...” (Gay 2000, p. 30) are shared, and the content of the curriculum is examined through the lenses of students. This strategy helps students to recognize the errors and omissions of cultural contributions in the mainstream curriculum. As teachers acknowledge and include the achievements of individuals from different ethnic groups, they embrace pedagogy that negates hegemonic practices supporting only the contributions of individuals from the mainstream.

Banks and Sleeter & Grant (1991) agree that cultural pride that emanates from the awareness that contributions have been made by people from different ethnicities is the precursor to a sense of empowerment - the fourth consequence of culturally responsive teaching. A “transformative” stage then follows during which students are able to see the injustices meted out to different ethnic groups, analyze these inequalities, decide not to support them and actively try to effect change. Students who participate in the “transformative stage” may then become the beneficiaries of the fifth principle of culturally responsive teaching according to (Gay, 2000).

The processes described above support the validation of different culture and were demonstrated in a case study of the personal experiences, beliefs and instructional

practices of two effective Title I White reading teachers of African American students (Honaker, 2003). The conclusions of this study pointed out that the White teachers had experiences that helped them bridge the cultural gap with their students. The early educational interaction with students of color prepared the teachers to create culturally responsive classroom environments for their students. These two White teachers shared that they had always been highly motivated to teach the African American students. Cole, a student of Vygotsky – a sociocultural theorist, explained that when individuals interact and share cultural experiences, higher mental functions emerge (Cole, M. & Wertsch, 1996). When teachers are aware of the dynamics of this type of relationship, strategies might be incorporated to allow students to share meaningful information in order to increase their knowledge. This pedagogical decision justifies the importance of the cultural validation for human development (Pang, 2001).

Although classrooms are becoming increasingly more diverse, 90% of teachers in the United States represent White middle class European Americans (Chamberlain, 2005). Ford and Dillard (1996) argue that while “...the inclusion of ethnically diverse teachers as models for students of color and others is one response to the diversity of the classroom” (p. 232), the assumption that teachers who represent the ethnic groups that they teach will guide students to gain multicultural perspectives might be flawed. Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994 and Nieto, 2002 also argue that students of color do not require teachers that share similar ethnic backgrounds in order to be academically successfully. Nieto (2002) stated that:

The proof is growing that all teachers – regardless of race, ethnicity or gender –

who care about, mentor, and guide their students can have a dramatic impact on their futures, even when these students face tremendous barriers related to poverty, racism and other social ills. (p. 9)

Kordalewski (1999) supports the creation of classrooms in which students are given the opportunities to (1) examine the biases of the dominant culture, and (2) discuss race relations. These instructional strategies encourage students to have their voices heard and go beyond the classroom in order to effect social change (Sleeter, 2004). This is a direct contrast to the classroom environment that is framed by standardized testing. Gustafson (2002) explained that the methodology of instruction geared towards teaching to state mandated tests incorporates the presentation of information that represents decontextualized fragments for some students of color rather than knowledge. Hilliard (2000) also argued against the marginalization of quality instruction at the expense of high-stakes standardized testing. In the classrooms of teachers who succeed “...regardless of circumstances, in raising the achievement virtually of all children to levels of excellence, not merely competency,” (p. 294) high stake testing was not the instrument that was incorporated into instruction in order to guide students to academic achievement. Rather, the outstanding educators create learning environments that help students to make meaningful cultural connections.

Warner, an effective educator from New Zealand used material from the children’s environment as well as the children language to effectively teach them. Suzuki, an outstanding Japanese teacher of music, operated “on the assumption that the genius is there for all children” (Hilliard, 1998, p. 128) and it is the “nature of the

nurture” that is the key to successfully educating individuals. I believe that Mann, a professor out of San Francisco State University, captured how culturally responsive educators help students of color in the following statement:

The human brain innately tries to make connections. You don't have to ask it to do that. It wants to do that....The brain is in a constant search for meaning. That's what it is doing....That meaningfulness, when things mean something that is a sense of connection. When emotions and cognitions come together, that's what we mean by meaning and that's what the brain wants (Hilliard, 1998, pages 131-132).

Culturally responsive teaching environments also allow students of color to concentrate on the content areas in different disciplines. They are able to do so because the feelings of inferiority, that generally exists in monoculture classrooms, no longer prevents them from focusing on and improving their grades in academic courses. They have the tools to question, analyze and look at issues from a variety of cultural perspectives. Boykin, 1983 and Pang, 2001 also argue that the most damaging cultural classroom environment is one in which students from underrepresented groups are regarded as coming from communities that do not prepare them to be successful in schools. Pang challenges the use of words such as “disadvantaged” when the performance of students of color is connected to the students' background and color. Students are only placed at a disadvantage because the instruction of the teacher reflects the experiences of one set of students over the other.

Summary

The classroom environment reflects the cultural, personal and professional socialization of teachers who honor the differences in their diverse classrooms. There are other educators who also perpetuate inequities that continue to enable achievements gaps along lines of race and social class.

Effective Teachers of Children of Color

Research on effective schools suggests that it is probably unlikely that there would be an effective program for students of color within an ineffective school (Pierce, L., 1991) One assumption that has emerged out of effective school research describes the people who run them as, “Men and women who possess the capacity to do better” (Lezotte, 1989, p.18). Lezotte further adds that the people inside the schools are in the best position to contribute to the process of change, not new approaches to classroom management nor new curricula. Pierce, L., (1991) agrees that the issues that affect the academic success of students of color include (1) instructional practices that do not permit access to equity and excellence, and (2) the roles of the ESL, bilingual and regular teachers in the classroom. Thomas (1998) also proposes that teachers can be instruments through which students of color are successful, if the teachers know how to value the experiences of these children and connect their experiences to the new learning. Ladson-Billings (2001) states what effective teaching in diverse classrooms should look like:

Teaching well, in this instance, means making sure that students achieve, develop a positive sense of themselves, and develop a commitment to larger social and

community concern. Such teachers are inspiring and admirable, but their ranks are decreasing with each passing school year. The question facing most urban school districts is how to ensure a faculty of effective teachers when there is high teacher turnover and relative inexperience (p.16).

Teachers who show respect for the language and culture of their students within their classrooms are positively impacting the self esteem of the students, creating stimulating learning environment, and hence directly influencing their effectiveness as instructors (Pierce, L.,1991). The student expectations are also aligned with the professional culture of the educational environment to which the teachers are exposed (Johnston & Wetherill, 2002).

Effective instructors of students of color should also have a true understanding of multicultural education if their goal is to be instrumental in preparing both themselves and their students to live and work effectively in a society in which there are people with diverse backgrounds. Banks and Banks (2003) have provided a working definition from which a multicultural curriculum should be developed.

Multicultural education is also a reform movement designed to bring about a transformation of the school so that students from both genders and from diverse cultural, language, and ethnic groups will have an equal chance to experience school success. (p. 25)

The above framework does not support token multiculturalism generally demonstrated through programs that showcase clothes, foods and festivals. Although such gestures may encourage tolerance and demonstrate differences, exposure to cultural

clothes, foods and festivals does contribute to the transformative focus of multicultural education that is designed to produce critical thinkers and socially active members of society (Gorski, 1999 & Trumbull, et al. 2001). There are specific components that should be evident in a multicultural curriculum according to Banks (1991). Students should be given opportunities to develop a sense of self as cultural learning styles are encouraged as part of the classroom community. In addition, while a multicultural education is continuously integrated in the curriculum, the teacher should guide students to understand the conflicts between the ideals and realities in society.

Effective teachers of students of color have been highlighted in educational research have demonstrated and emphasized that teachers of diverse students need to go beyond the courses that are offered in teacher training program in order to teach children how to (1) be proud of their ancestry, and (2) make connections to the content presented in traditional curriculum (Delpit, 1995). The successful academic achievement of poor children and children of color include the Nairobi Day School in East Palo Alto, California where African American Students scored three levels above the national standard. Also, in a Latino community in Los Angeles, a teacher has helped many of the Hispanic students from the poorest section of the city to enter classes, such as, advanced calculus (Delpit, 1995). Although this teacher was very knowledgeable in the content area of mathematics, his students were successful because he motivated them to believe in themselves so that they had the desire to be successful.

Haberman's (1995) research also describes many teachers of successful urban students. These teachers are referred to as "star teachers." The characteristics of

successful urban programs include (1) outstanding administrators and teachers who value the cultures of the diverse students, (2) teachers who know how to effectively connect with students, (3) the community inside and outside of the school sharing a common purpose and vision, 4) differentiated evaluation methods, and 5) a recommendation for de-escalation rather than escalation of student behavior problems (Haberman, 2005b & Kunjufu, 2006).

In Love's (2003) study of the relationship between the beliefs of teachers' of African American students and academic achievement, she assessed 1) teachers' belief about knowledge, 2) teaching practices, and 3) social relationships in and beyond the classroom. The data analysis revealed that the students' achievement was significantly related to the instructors' beliefs regarding the importance of students' cultural identity, individual needs and instructional strategies.

Paley (2001) detailed a personal account of her experiences teaching in an integrated kindergarten class in a predominantly White middle class neighborhood in Chicago. She wrote of her uncertainty in labeling the behavior of Black children and their intelligence, and as a result she made a decision to talk to the Black children frequently in order to make them feel comfortable in a White environment. Although she admitted that she was more comfortable pretending that all Black children were White so that she did not have to address the differences, she finally concluded that "...all the children have more in common with one another than any one of them has with me. The major source of incongruity is between their thinking and mine" p. 136.

Six White female teachers, who were considered to be aware of race and racism,

were nominated to be part of study that analyzed a) their racial awareness, b) the conceptual changes, and c) the socialization process that resulted in the rejection of color-blind perspectives towards race in both their personal and professional lives. The teachers were nominated by “expert” diversity trainers, college professors who taught courses in multicultural education, or district coordinators of multicultural education (Johnson, 2002). The teachers’ rejection of a color blind perspective support Banks and Banks’ (2003) argument that a color-blind position assigns certain groups to an insubordinate position in society based only on their color. These teachers recognized that embracing a color blind position was to deny the diversity of experiences that different racial groups encounter in society.

One of the participants shared the following view when asked about her perspective on color-blindness:

Before I had that liberal mentality, that mentality where everyone is the same. Well, that’s not true. This person’s experience may be very different than mine, and I need to understand that before teaching them or before engaging them in conversation (Johnson, 2002, p.161).

The analysis of the narratives of these teachers focused on three themes that explained their effectiveness as teachers of students of color. These were 1) personal experiences that exposed them to inside perspectives of different racial groups, 2) working as social activists in interracial organizations, and 3) empathizing with marginalized groups because of similar personal experiences.

In addition to interviewing the participants, Johnson (2002) visited their

classrooms in which there was either evidence of culturally relevant instructions in the form of multiracial images in posters and children's art work, or interaction that confirmed the teachers' focus on the needs and cultural backgrounds of the students. Based on the above experiences, effective instruction of students can be achieved by teachers who do not share their same ethnicity as the students they teach.

One of the topics addressed during a study conducted in two biracial (African American and White) junior high schools in a southern school district over a two year period, focused on teacher initiatives that addressed low-achieving African American students (Lipman, 1994). In both schools, many of the teachers perpetuated a "deficit model" in their instructional strategies for the African American Students. The teachers linked stereotypical, negative, cultural traits with the failure of students.

However, there were three African American teachers who were successful in teaching African American students. The first teacher, "set high standards for all students and then found ways to help them meet those standards" (p.204). The second teacher believed that a curriculum without challenge was not preparing students for opportunities, and stated that, "Children would learn if teachers established relationships of trust and concern for students and families" (p.205). The third instructor welcomed students who other teachers labeled "trouble." She was very critical of the teachers who appeared unable to connect with the cultural experiences of these students. The researcher concluded that teachers who support and incorporate culturally relevant practices in their classrooms should be part of the essential component of educational

reform because they value students of color, and that is critical for their academic success.

The lives of the six individuals, who range between the ages of early 20's to early 40's, shared a common experience - lack of high expectations from their own teachers who did not expose their students to the contributions of people who looked like them. They also had a common goal that contrasted with the role of the teachers by whom they were taught. All six participants believed that their teachers were “gate keepers” who determined what they should learn based on whether or not students were considered “smart” or “dumb.” In their roles as teachers, however, each of them became a “gate opener” who “...keeps a watch at the ‘doors,’ but looks for ways to let people in; perhaps opening up the routes to success in school, access to middle class, finding a route for teacher certification” (Hulsebosch & Koener, 1993, p. 10). With this “culturally aware” stance, these educators believed that they could contribute to the redefinition of the standards of teacher behaviors that are based on White middle-class criteria; not only in terms of academic achievement, but also cultural behavior reflected in language and dress (Hulsebosch, & Koener, 1993). They were consumed with a motivation that would prevent their students from being marginalized in the educational institutions.

In order to identify the “human element” in successful teachers of students in some urban schools described as lower socio-economic, Towns, Cole-Henderson & Zerweranji (2001) described instructors who went the “extra mile” to ensure the academic success of students. The additional steps taken by the teachers from four

elementary schools representing a variety of regions in the United States included, (1) attending courses to improve their teaching skills, 2) showing respects for students, and 3) having high expectations for all students. The findings from this study suggested that all four schools practiced the correlates of effective schools, which include “strong administrative leadership, high expectations for achievement, monitoring students progress, discipline and order, an emphasis on skills and homework, teamwork, and parental involvement” (p. 9). The four schools were different in terms of the neighborhood, principal styles, disciplinary focus, and access to resources. Since all schools were described as “successful,” in spite of the differences, there was an “intangible quality” - all the stakeholders in the schools had a common vision to do what it took to ascertain that all students would achieve academic success.

Taylor, Pressley & Pearson (2000), in their contribution to the body of research on the instructional and organizational factors that frame the success of students of color, reported on data from five large-scale studies on moderate-to high-poverty elementary schools during the years 1997-1999. Although the schools participated in packaged reforms (Hope for Urban Education, CIERA Beating the Odds, Successful Texas School-wide Programs), “the common denominator *for success* [italics added] seemed to be commitment and hard work which focused on the classroom-level and school-level practices consistently identified in the research as important in helping students achieve at high levels” (Taylor, et al. 2000, p. 15). The common practices of these effective urban schools included, (a) putting students first, (b) improving student learning, (c) strong building leadership, and (e) teacher collaboration.

Summary

There is evidence in research that one of the keys that open the door for academic achievement of students of color is the high expectation of their educators. Effective teachers do not have to share the same ethnicity as their teachers, and all stakeholders should support educational environments that open doors for students to achieve academic achievement.

Professional Preparation

There are two fundamental perspectives regarding the preconceptions in learning to teach (Carter and Doyle, 1995). The first is that potential teachers begin acquiring teaching strategies while they are students in elementary and secondary education. The second preconception is that novice teachers are initially preoccupied with themselves, and then progressively shift these concerns to instructional content followed by the students' concern. Of the two perspectives, the experiences that potential teachers have had when there were students are more influential in shaping their own teaching practice. Based on this observation, Carter and Doyle (1995) suggest that "It is quite unwise to continue to ignore preconceptions and attempt to educate teachers as if they were blank slates or pliable lumps of clay" (p. 190).

A strategy called "cultural timelines" was incorporated in the training program of potential teachers as a reflective means of looking at their childhood and educational experiences (Gallavan, 1998). The information that emerged included 1) geographic profiles, 2) personal profiles, and 3) students' cultural assumptions, values and beliefs about themselves and others. The third profile was reported to be the most powerful

learning tool since many connections emerged during this process. One of the students concluded as follows:

This was one of the most rewarding assignments I have been given in the teacher education program. I have learned many things about myself, what I value in life, and what I believe about teaching. I know this will make me a better teacher as I reach out to all children helping them to understand themselves and others (Gallavan , 1998, p. 45).

Another example emphasizing the importance of teachers understanding themselves before embarking on a career in education was documented in a case study that captured the experiences of Westin, a European American male, during the first five years of his teaching in an urban school district. Mark taught in an elementary school in which the ethnic demographics were 89% Latino/a American, 8% African-American and 3% European American. The most profound comment that Mark made about the first year of teaching was, “But really, it didn’t have to be so hard.” (Worthy, 2005, p. 391).

There were other critical comments that explained why Mark shared that his first year did not have to be so challenging. He did not believe that teacher preparation experiences prepared him for the “complexities” of classroom life. One recommendation was that prospective trainees should have multiple in-school experiences that discourage “idealistic” teachers from continuing in the teacher training programs. Secondly, there were many challenges that emerged because of the gaps between how he was planning to teach and respecting and targeting students’ needs. As a result, Mark discovered how to teach out of the box and planned experiences, like visiting theme

parks, and skateboarding activities. He integrated those events with his mathematics and science lessons. Mark weathered the storm, became a successful teacher in an urban school, and was not included in the statistics of the 29% of teachers who leave education within the first three years after graduating from teacher training college (Heller 2004).

Mark's reaction supports the research on the impact of teacher training programs on student achievement (Williams & Scott, 2003). Professional Development Schools (PDS) programs are an alternative to traditional teacher training programs. They began in the 1990's in order to prepare teachers to work effectively with (a) diverse population of students, (b) the parents of these students, and (c) the schools' communities (Schwartz, 2000). PDS have been established in every state in the United States of American and function in collaboration with teacher training colleges and school districts. These PDS not only established partnerships between the teacher training institutions and the facilitating schools, but also functioned as a test of educational theories and practice in realistic school settings (Cantor, 2002).

As PDS evolved, the participants were exposed to extended internship periods in urban schools as part of the educational reform movement in the 1970's and 1980's (Grisham et al. 2002). During this time teacher trainees were given the opportunity to participate in instructional as well as non-instructional activities. Although PDS' were not equal in terms of their focus, many of them were designed to expose students to more authentic learning experiences (Hopkins, et al. 1997; Reynolds, Ross, & Rakow, 2002; and Cowart, Maxwell, & Fuller, 2003).

Haberman (2005a) has contributed to the argument against traditional teacher education programs which do not prepare teachers for urban schools, and has proposed an alternative certification program for mature adults. Haberman also recommended the hiring of “mature” teachers since educators who are thirty years and older are more developmentally ready to “...apply abstract concepts such as equity and justice, when the teachers’ cognitive and affective development becomes the crucial determinant of success” (p. 22). As a result, the “mature” developmental stage of older teachers allows them to rely less on the limiting, direct instruction from the curriculum. This is in direct contrast to the dependence on instruction from the curriculum guidelines by younger teachers.

In a study conducted by Walling & Lewis (2000), elementary education students from the University of Texas in Tyler participating in both traditional and professional development programs were asked the same questions regarding their beliefs, attitudes about teaching and teaching profession. The students were questioned during the first semester of their internship, at the end of their third semester, and then at the end of their student teaching experiences. In response to the question that addressed the most significant issue facing American education, the areas of concern for the majority of student teachers included “... diverse background, illiteracy, low motivated students... who learn at different levels” (Walling & Lewis, 2000. p. 67). At the end of the student teaching experience, however, the students who participated in the professional development program showed more concern about the problems in the educational system. Issues, such as, funding, standardized testing, and poorly educated and diverse

students were now part of the student teachers' daily experiences.

In order to evaluate the long term effectiveness of a PDS, 900 graduated teachers, in their fifth year of teaching, participated in a survey designed to determine how satisfied the teachers were about the teacher preparation program (Whitney, Golez, Nagel & Nieto, 2002). They were asked to give suggestions to improve PDS programs. Two of the suggestions were (1) the trainees would have greatly benefited from classroom management and parent communication practice, and (2) future teachers should have experiences in classrooms in which they would eventually teach.

In addition to the suggestions identified above, Grisham, et al. (2002) also found that risk taking, continuous learning and reflective thinking were the core elements of a PDS program that continued to impact teachers even after 15 years after graduating from their teaching training programs. Thirty-four graduates, who were part of a partnership between San Diego State University and the Cajon Valley School District, participated in three focus group interviews. The results demonstrated that some of the graduates continued to use their personal judgment to make decisions that were not consistent with the philosophy of their district or colleagues.

When Sandholtz and Wasserman (2001) conducted a comparative study between a traditional teacher training program and a PDS, they focused on the experiences of the student teachers after they completed their four year undergraduate program. Some of the major differences between the two training programs were that (1) the PDS students were assigned to a school for the whole year and were required to attend the faculty activities while the traditional program required the students to follow

the university calendar, and (2) the student teachers connected to the PDS received feedback and evaluation through a variety of methods. These included videotapes of classroom teaching, reflective journals and exit interviews with the cooperating teachers. This intensive PDS program allowed the students to have experiences in schools for an additional six weeks during the year. The teacher trainees from both program rated their experiences as positive and agreed that one of the strengths of each program was the acquisition of the ability to "...relate effectively to diverse ability of students" (Sandholtz, and Wasserman, 2001, p. 57).

An enrichment program, Learning Through Teaching in an After-School Pedagogical Laboratory (L-TAPL) was designed to address the underachievement of African American students, and the preparation of teachers who can work successfully with these students (Foster, et al. 2005). This program lasted for a duration of three to six months and took place in three urban school districts in California and New Jersey. Master teachers, who demonstrated the ability to teach low-income urban students, were paired with inexperienced teachers. At the inception of the program, the inexperienced teachers blamed the disruptive behavior on the low socio-economic status of the students and disorder of the communities for the disruptive – factors out of their teachers' control. During the partnership, the inexperienced teachers observed that (a) the master teacher stayed calm and treated the student with respect, (b) students were receptive to the master teachers' strategy of using disruptive behavior as a teachable moment, and (c) students spent the majority of the time on engaging and stimulating activities. By the end of their observation period, the

inexperienced teacher patterned their interaction and instruction from the master teacher and demonstrated that they too can be effective teachers. Since there was a lack of negative student behavior, the inexperienced teachers' expectation of students changed. The results demonstrated changes in their own teaching practices.

In another study to identify the changing attitudes regarding beliefs about diversity (Winitzky & Barlow, 1998), teacher trainees were interviewed both prior to and at the end of their teacher preparation program. Although the participants commented that they were not familiar with teaching diverse students at the beginning of the program, by the end of their internship experience, their attitude had changed as a result of exposure to diverse students. These teacher trainees became advocates of multicultural education practices. The cultural experiences outside of their own culture appeared to have made an impact of these potential teachers.

Since teacher preparation programs that include exposure to cultural diversity represent the critical component for the effective development of educators of students of color (Johnston & Wetherill, 2002), some researchers have recommended that instead of the traditional programs with general guidelines, teachers whose attitudes reflect a commitment to successfully teach students of color should be trained with "specialized criteria" (Carter & Larke, 1995). These training programs would guide trainee teachers to examine how students construct their knowledge through their own cultural experiences and would prepare educators to teach more successfully in schools with diverse student population.

Summary

I have included a body of literature that I believe is relevant and supports my study of the cultural socialization process of effective teachers of students of color. The cultural socialization process demonstrates the experiences individuals have that shape their cultural radar. Effective teachers tend to teach “outside of the box” and this strategy promotes the examination of critical issues that are not addressed in scripted curriculum guides. The majority of teachers of students of color come from backgrounds that are different from their students. Notwithstanding race, ethnicity or the socioeconomic status of teachers, professional training that exposed trainees to the dynamics of diverse school communities, have been instrumental in heightening the awareness to the needs of students of color.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Elementary school teachers from Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD) located in the northwest section of Houston, Texas were selected to participate in this qualitative life history research in education. Qualitative research “...involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world *in which* [italics added] the qualitative researcher may study things in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense and interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning that individuals bring to these events” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 p. 3). When participants are observed in the natural setting of classrooms, the analysis and interpretation can contribute to making sense of the dynamics between teachers and students in successful classrooms with students of color in the Cypress Fairbanks ISD.

In investigating the type of research that provides information about the lived experiences that separates exemplary teachers from average teachers, Trifonas (1995), describes the explosion of qualitative approaches in the study of “...phenomena in pedagogical contexts” (p. 81). Stainback and Stainback (1985) also argue that the research questions should drive the choice of research methodology. The research questions 1) how teachers account for their effectiveness with students of color, 2) how a culturally responsive learning environment is demonstrated in the student/teacher interactions, and 3) how teachers perceive their cultural socialization process as a factor in successfully teaching students of color are best answered through qualitative research.

Freebody (2004) commented that the acculturation process of individuals and their resultant behavior should not be considered as “chance” experiences. The participants’ accounts will be shared in order to demonstrate that meaningful inclusion of different cultural values into teaching a) affects the context in which learning occurs, and b) creates a classroom environment in which multiple realities and rationales are encouraged. Parsons (2003) describe this as “culturalizing” instruction. The responses of the participants in this research can provide insights into the (1) possible consequences of integration or exclusion of culturally relevant teaching, (2) level of teacher efficacy, and 3) effect of teacher expectation on students of color.

Understanding the depth of these responses required some degree of empathy and connectivity between the researcher and the participants (Josselson, 1995). Cole & Knowles (2001) also recommend a reflexive researcher whose empathetic awareness facilitates the “...experiential understanding of what it means to be the researched” (p. 43). During the interaction with the participants, I established emotional connection with the stories that emerge, since I have many experiences in my own teaching career that highlight my personal interactions with students. An “empathic stance” is one that leads to the “...unearthing of what we did not expect. This becomes the paradigm for discovery,” (Josselson, 1995, p. 30).

I chose to use a qualitative life history research in order to focus on (a) what shapes the social and cultural context of teachers and how they come to “...walk, talk, live and work within that particular context” (Cole & Knowles, 2001. p. 11), and (b) the educational practices that are reflected in the life stories of these teachers. The choice is

also supported by the assumption that the analysis of life stories can contribute to a general understanding” (Coles & Knowles, 2001. p. 20) of the differences between effective and ineffective teachers of students of color.

According to Chase (1995), the accomplishments of the narrators during the sharing of life stories are culturally shaped. This suggests that the participants may reveal the cultural events or experiences that contribute to the type of interactions that they generate with students of color. Tierney (1998) also adds that in life history studies “...the search is to understand the powers of culture to define those particular ways that enable people to act and not act in specific ways” (p. 55). The theoretical position of conducting narrative studies is also supported by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zibler (1998) who advocated that:

“...stories imitate life and present an inner reality to the outside world; at the same time, however, they shape and construct the narrator’s personality and reality. The story is one’s identity, a story created, told, revised, and retold throughout life. We know or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the story we tell (p. 7).

Since the interaction between students and teachers is multi-layered as evidenced by many decisions regarding instructional materials, topics, student groupings, assessments as well as responses to students’ affective needs that are made daily in classrooms, life history inquiry is a method that facilitates the exploration of the complexities involved in the decision making within the lived contexts of each teacher (Cole & Knowles, 2001). I believe life history research is a powerful tool that will

highlight the personal and professional development of the participants. A naturalistic constructivist paradigm was used to guide this qualitative research. Consequently, the meanings of the narratives were not discovered, but constructed (Crotty, 2003) through the experiences that shaped the practices of exemplary teachers of children of color. The voices of educators were instrumental in highlighting how they created environments that encouraged students to make their own meaning.

As the defining moments evolve during the process of describing their lived experiences, the participants reflected on the connections between their cultural experiences and their effectiveness with students of color. The underlying theories, teacher efficacy and culturally responsive teaching, that frame this research project, facilitated the emergence of the teacher-student expectation and the influence of cultural and social phenomena in the teaching practices of the participants. These educators were empowered to understand the significance of their experiences in affecting the learning environments for their students.

The District

During the latter half of the 20th century, the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD) has evolved from a rural farmland to a growing suburb (CFISD, 2007a). Cypress-Fairbanks ISD is considered one of the fastest growing districts in the United States of America, and it is the third largest district in the state of Texas. The 87,000 students were housed in 8 high schools, 14 middle schools, 42 Elementary schools and 2 Special Program Facilities for the school year 2005-2006 (CFISD, 2006). The ethnic breakdown of the district for the 2005-2006 school year was: African

American 13.6%, Asians 8.5%, Hispanics 32.9%, Whites, 44.7%, and Native American .2% (TEA, 2006b). Currently, there are approximately 97,000 students enrolled in CFISD. There have been approximately 39,000 new students over the last 10 years, and the demographics for the year 2007-2008 are: African Americans 15%, Asians 8.6%, Hispanics 37%, Whites 39%, and Native America .3% (CFISD, 2007b).

Although this school district is located outside the city limits in the northwest quadrant of Houston, the demographics of many of its schools reflect that of an urban school district. Diverse students in the district over the past decade have been greatly responsible for the increase in its student population by 33,000. The district demographics have changed from being 67% White to approximately 44.7% White. Table 1 shows the demographic changes over this 10 year period (TEA, 2006a).

Table 1. Change in Demographics in Cypress Fairbanks School District over a 10-Year Period

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>1995-1996 Percentages</u>	<u>2005-2006 Percentages</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Whites	67	44.7	-22.3
Hispanic	16	32.9	+16.9
African American	9	13.6	+ 4.6
Asian American	7	8.5	+ 1.5

The district's over 8,000 employees include 6,101 classroom teachers (CFISD, 2006-2007). The demographics for the classroom teachers are as follows: 7.1% African American, 8.3% Hispanic, 82.8% White, .3% Native American, and 1.5% Asian/Pacific Islander (TEA, 2007a).

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has consistently ranked among the state of Texas' highest performing school districts, and its "Accountability Rating" was either "recognized" or "exemplary" during the 1999-2002 TAAS standardized-test school years (TEA, 2002). In 2003-2004, the first year of TAKS standardized test, TEA introduced an accountability system that was similar to that used for the TAAS test, but contained fundamental differences. One of which was that in order to obtain a ranking of "Recognized," at least 70 percent of all students in each of the defined "subgroups" - African American, Hispanic, White and Economically Disadvantaged had to pass Reading, Writing. The ranking was based on passing Reading, Writing, and Mathematics in designated grade levels and Science in the fifth grade as well as meeting the base indicators. Table 2 shows the requirements for each category (TEA, 2006c).

Table 2. Texas Education Agency - Requirements for Each Rating Category

	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
Base Indicators			
TAKS (2005-2006) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Students • African American • Hispanic • White • Econ. Disad. 	Meets each standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading/ELA...60% • Writing.....60% • Social Studies...60% • Mathematics.....40% • Science.....35% <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> meets Required Improvement	Meets 70 % standard for each subject <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> Meets 65% floor and Requirement Improvement	Meets 90% standard for each subject

The district maintained its rating as the largest “Recognized” school district in Texas for the school year 2003-2004 (Berry, 2004). During the school years 2005-2007, Cypress-Fairbanks was ranked “Academically Acceptable” by the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2007b). Figures 1, 2 and 3 show the breakdown of the TAKS reading results for grades three, four and five based on student demographics. The data reflects an average of 12, 16 and 17.5 percentage points difference between Whites and African Americans for the years 2004-2007. There is also an average of 12.75, 18.5 and 19.5 percentage points difference between White and Hispanics in grades three, four and five respectively for the years 2004-2007 (TEA, 2004; 2005; 2006a).

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) 2004-2007 Reading Accountability Scores Grade 3

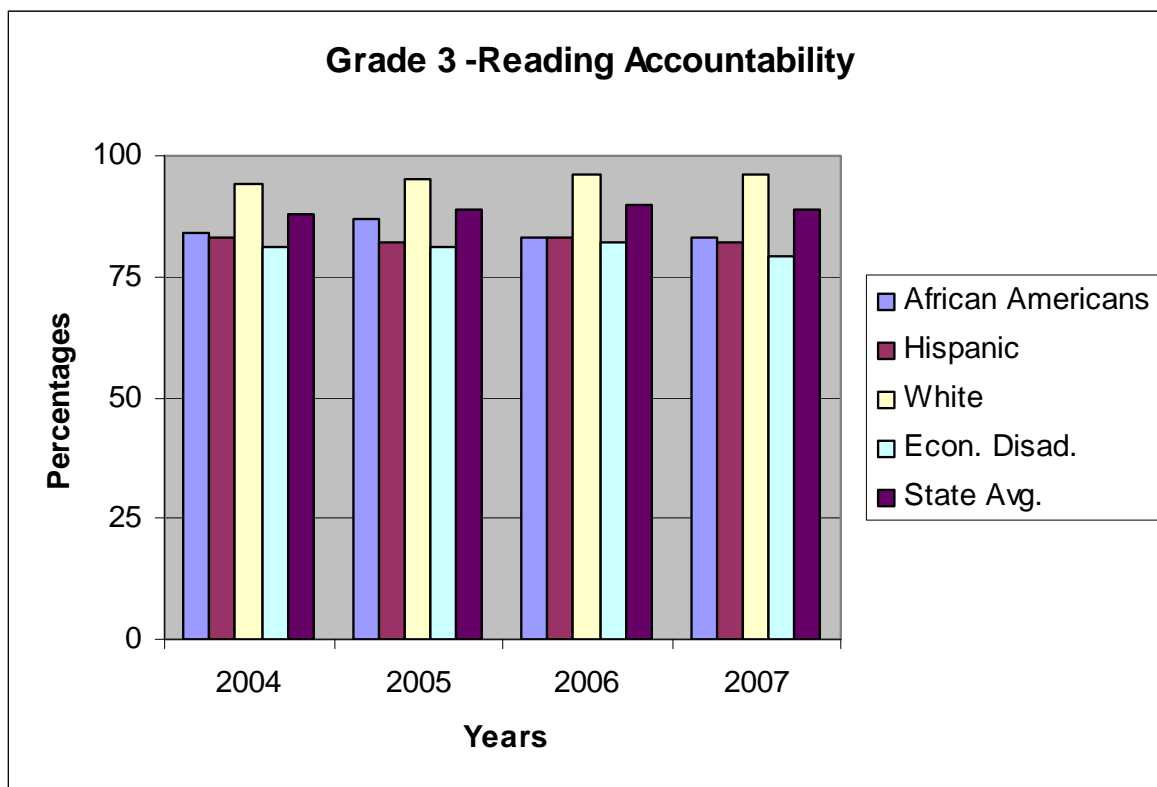


Figure 1. The Achievement Gap between Ethnic Groups in Reading – Grade 3 (TAKS) 2004-2007

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) 2004-2007 Reading Accountability Scores Grade 4

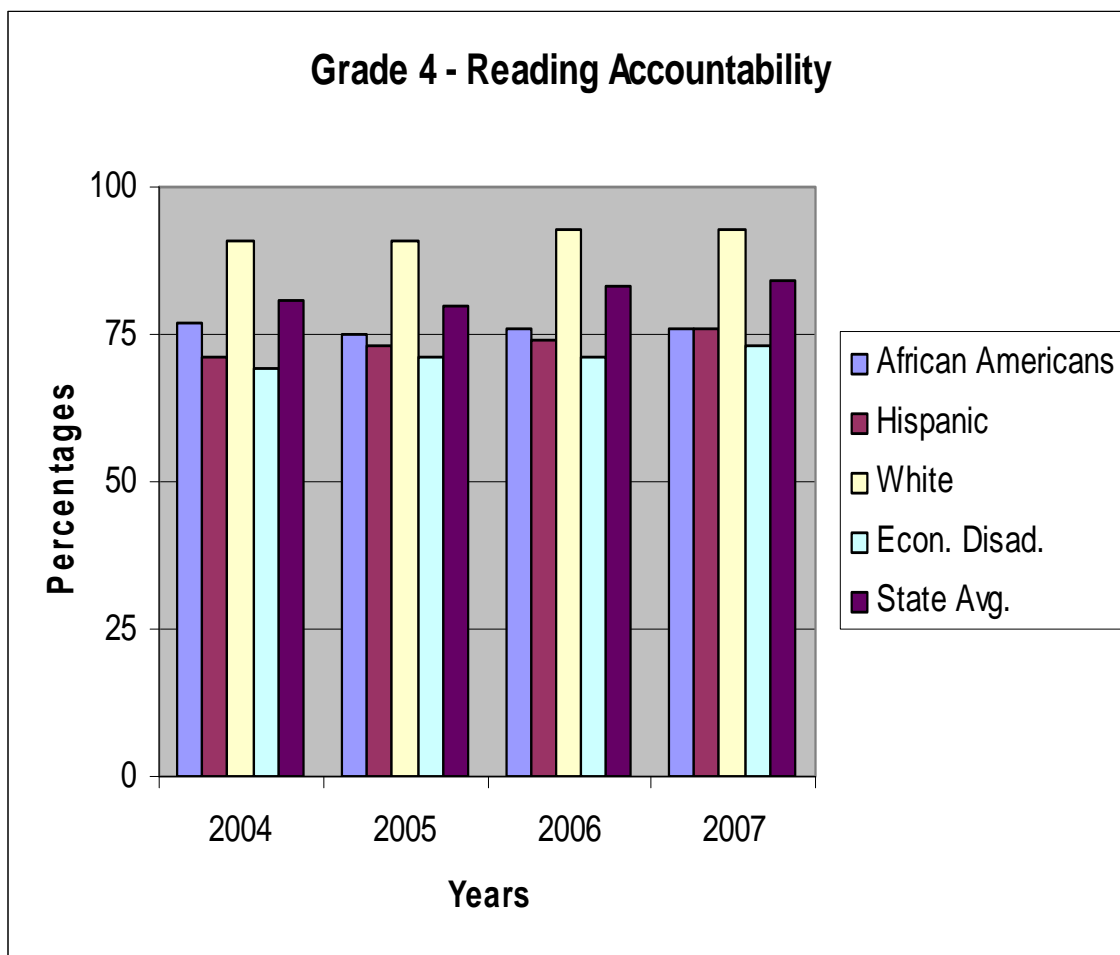


Figure 2. The Achievement Gap between Ethnic Groups in Reading - Grade 4 (TAKS) 2004-2007

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) 2004-2007 Reading Accountability Scores Grade 5

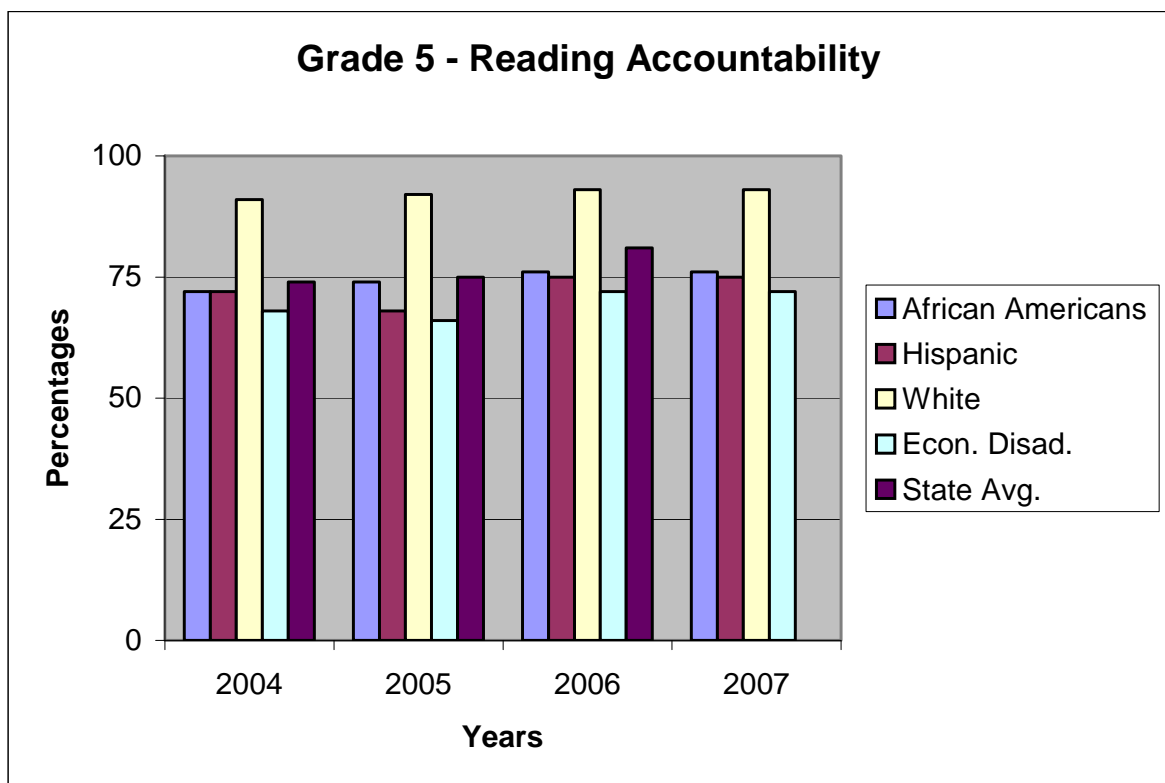


Figure 3. The Achievement Gap between Ethnic Groups in Reading - Grade 5 (TAKS) 2004-2007

Purposeful Sample

My initial goal was to invite only teachers who taught in Title I campuses where there is a majority of students categorized as “economically disadvantaged” (CFISD, 2005-2006). During the 2005-2006 school year, 17 of the forty-two schools were included in the Title I program which is a federally-funded program intended to increase student achievement by focusing on reading and math. From these 17 elementary schools, the schools that fell within the 36% to 70% range of economically disadvantaged students were chosen. Educators from ten of these 17 elementary schools that served bilingual and African American students were identified to participate in the first interview. I also focused on targeting schools where there was the highest percentage of students of color. Table 3 shows the percentage of Ethnic Distribution enrolled in the 6 elementary schools from where the six participants were selected (TEA, 2006).

Table 3. Percentage of Hispanics and African American Students in Targeted Schools during the 2005-2006 School Year

School	AA	H	W	Asian/Pacific
A	14.2	21.1	53.2	11.3
B	18.3	44.7	26.5	10.0
C	27.5	47.5	21.3	3.4
D	8.3	72.2	14.0	5.5
E	9.4	65.1	19.2	6.2
F	20.2	57.0	15.5	7.1

There were eleven teachers who were asked to participate in the first interview (see Appendix A). Nine of those eleven teachers expressed interest in continuing as participants in the research project, and they were interviewed for a second time. After I listened to the tapes of all nine participants, I chose four White teachers, one Black and one Asian as the final participants because I 1) identified fittingness between their stories and the phenomenon of cultural socialization of effective educators of students of color, and 2) chose depth over the number of participants because of the extensive interview process required in life history research.

Since the teacher demographics for classroom teachers in Cypress-Fairbanks was 7.1% African American, 8.3% Hispanic, 82.8% White, .3% Native American, and 1.5% Asian/Pacific Islander for the 2005-2006 school year, my goal to include a more ethnically diverse sample was challenging (TEA, 2007a). This statistics is consistent with that from the report on “The Condition of Education” for the year 2003-2004. Table 4 shows a comparison between the national demographic breakdown of teachers in 2003-2004 and Cypress-Fairbanks ISD during the 2003-2006 school years (NCES 2003-2004). If we consider the trend reported for Cypress-Fairbanks for the following two years, then this district will continue to mirror the national demographic breakdown for teachers in public schools.

Table 4. Percentage of Full-time Teachers by Ethnicity in Public Schools - Comparison between National and CFISD

National/ School District	Year 2003-2004				Year 2004-2005				Year 2005-2006			
	W	B	H	A	W	B	H	A	W	B	H	A
National	83.3	7.8	6.2	1.6	N/A				N/A			
CFISD	84.8	6.3	7.4	1.3	84.6	6.4	7.5	1.3	82.8	7.14	8.3	1.5

W - White:

B - Black

H - Hispanics

A - Asians

In Merriam's (1998) discussion regarding the number of participants that should be interviewed in a study, she suggested that "...the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, *and* [italics added] the resources" (p. 64) should be the determining factors. One of the participants was chosen from a non-Title I school, but she taught in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom in which 34% of her students were Hispanic and Black. Her selection was based on my observation of the content of her presentations during professional development sessions offered by the district. Her topics consistently centered on creating learning environments that were caring, and her examples were replete with outstanding authentic work for the students she taught. Although a racially-diversified sample is not represented in the participants, I support Irvine's (1999) position that culture can be learned, and there is evidence that students of color have been effectively taught by teachers from different ethnic groups (Paley, 2000; Pierce, 2005).

Teachers with a minimum of three years experience were initially considered for participation in this study because according to Haberman (2005b), effective educators are those who work for sustained periods in low-income schools with culturally diverse students. The rationale for inviting teachers who have worked in-district for three more years was based on the assumption that a) even the most experienced teacher need time to become acclimatized to a new school district in order to acquire district specific skills and build on a base from which they can interact with students, and b) the experienced teachers have been linked with student performance (Beaudin, 1995).

During the interview process I chose two participants with two years or less experience teaching. I recognized that they had the qualities of effective educators who, according to Ladson-Billings (2001), represent the novice teachers in urban school settings who will respond to students of color with innovative strategies that include cultural validation. Freebody (2004) defines a “purposeful sample” as representing the best from an established criterion being investigated. The sample selection of participants in this study represented effective teachers of students of color. All the participants chose their own pseudonyms.

Table 5 shows the participants' demographic information:

Table 5. Participants' Profile

Participants*	Total Experience	Experience at CFISD	Current Grade	Gender	Ethnic Group
Chinere	1	1	4	female	B
Rita	5	2	3	female	A
Jane	6	6	5	female	W
Craig	6	3	4	female	W
Rachel	8	7	3	female	W
Diane	13	8	5	female	W

B-Black:A-Asian:W-White.

The common criteria used to select all teachers were based on the results of a survey with detailed descriptions (see Appendices A and B) completed by building principals. Participants were selected if principals recorded evidence of the frequent use of a) multicultural literature during instruction, b) affirmation of cultural heritage among students, c) connection between home and school experiences, and c) connection between content and cultural realities of students during instruction. During my visit to the participants' classroom, I looked for the consistency between the principals' description and my observations. Another criterion used was a 70% or higher passing score, after the first administration, on the 2005-2006 reading TAKS results for Hispanic and Black students in third, fourth and fifth grades classes of the participants. A 70% passing score is the minimum standard required in order for a student to pass the

reading TAKS in the state of Texas.

The components on the Principal Survey were selected from Gay's (2000) "Descriptive Characteristics" of culturally responsive teaching (p. 29) (See Appendix B). These topics were included because there is research supporting high academic achievement when students are taught in a culturally relevant teaching environment (Ladson-Billings, 1994 & Pang, 2001). In addition to completing the Principal's survey, principals also provided detailed information as evidence in order to clarify and legitimize their answers (Appendix A).

I chose to examine the reading scores of the students in each participant's language arts class because I have 16 years of personal teaching experience with the reading curriculum and 8 years of coaching reading teachers at Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. I was able to identify whether or not teachers were incorporating culture, prior knowledge, and incorporating the styles of the ethnically diverse learners in their learning environment rather than teaching only from district guidelines or the teacher editions of the state adopted texts books

The standardized test scores results were not considered as a critical criterion in choosing the participants. There is much debate regarding the consequences of "high stakes" testing. Teachers are often steered to teach to the test at the expense of creative testing (Uriarte, 2002 & Ehrenfeld, 2001). Standardized tests are only one measure of a student's achievement, and create environments that are "far too rigid and fundamental to allow low-SES students to excel" (Gustafson 2002, p. 60). In Hilliard's (2000) comparison between "Excellence in Education versus High-Stakes Standardized

Testing,” he identified the source of excellence in education as 1) lack of preoccupation with standardized tests, and 2) providing teachers who guide children to reach high standards. I included the results of the TAKS reading test because it is the standard by which students’ success is measured in Texas.

There are three administrations of the TAKS reading tests in the third and fifth grades. Data from the first administration of the reading test were the only data considered for the participants because there are subsequent interventions that contribute to instruction of students who fail the first administration of the TAKS test. For example, reading enrichment teachers, building instructional specialists, and helping teachers from the local schools are usually asked to assist, as part of the interventions, for students who are required to retake the TAKS tests. The results from the first administration usually reflect only instruction of the responsible language arts teacher.

Positionality

I was the primary instrument to collect and analyze data in this qualitative research study, and the interviews were the principal source of information. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989)

Humans collect information best, and most easily, through the direct employment of their senses; talking to people, observing their activities, reading their documents, assessing the unobtrusive signs they leave behind, responding to their non-verbal cues, and the like (p. 175).

This position fosters considerable flexibility for both the researcher and the respondent and sets the stage for a “...participatory as well as participant driven”

research (Bishop, 1998, p. 120). The exchange between the researcher and the participant is therefore spontaneous, and the human instrument can capture and evaluate the meaningful context within which the interactions take place.

The competence of the researcher also adds credibility to the research (Tuckett, 2005), and I spent four years interviewing individuals for training positions in home instruction programs for pre-school children. In addition I have been on the interviewing teams for teaching and administrative personnel for ten years.

Since qualitative research is more flexibly organized, there were many opportunities for me to assume an interactive role with the respondents. During these times, we interchanged ideas as I reflected on and shared experiences that were similar to theirs. I was quite determined to be in tune with the participants' concerns as educators and individuals. When it became evident that both the respondents and I shared a common interest in the topic of the social culturalization of effective teachers of students of color, I did not think that I could become an effective part of the research process if I assumed a position of authority (Tuckett, 2005). Such a position might have marginalized the close relationship that encourages the dynamics of mutual information during the interviews.

As I read the description of the essential characteristics of effective qualitative researchers 1) tolerance for ambiguity, 2) sensitivity, and 3) communication skills (Merriam, 1998), I prepared myself to sieve through the ambiguity of responses by looking for clues from the data to put the pieces of the participants' stories together. I was also very attentive, and I a) allowed the participants to pause and reflect, b) probed

for clarification, or c) facilitated conversations to intersperse any sensitive conversation and situations. The effective communicator trait was demonstrated when I took advantage of the many opportunities to listening for extended periods of time, so that I could focus not only on what the participant said, but also what was not being said. It was during those times that my empathy antenna was very high. This was often followed by questions that produced detailed information and elaboration about the lived experiences of the participants.

As a researcher of life stories, my position was to be a facilitator who listened to the voice of the participants, validated their comments, or looked for opportunities (Bishop, 2005) to probe so that I would be invited to enter the rooms with previously closed doors in the respondents' lives.

Data Collection

Good research practice requires the researcher to use multiple methods to support the construction and explanation of the phenomenon being studied (Mathison, 1988; Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006). In order to fulfill the requirements of good research techniques, I incorporated multiple methods of data collection and multiple sources of data. The methods included descriptive surveys from the principals, face-to-face interviews with the participants, observation of classroom environments, and the TAKS data that reflected the reading scores of the students.

Principal Descriptive Survey

The principals were one of the sources that provided information about the culturally responsive educational environment of the participants. During the first visit

with the principals, I received permission to do research on their individual campus. I explained the purpose of my research and asked them to complete the survey. It was during this time, that the building principals also shared their experiences with the potential participants as educators. All the principals were enthusiastic and cooperative in granting permission to interview their teachers. The interest in the research project and the rationale behind the research were also high, and they all requested to be kept abreast of the findings of my life history research. The initial principal survey (see Appendix C) was created to allow the principals to choose what would best reflect evidence of culturally responsive classrooms. The selections were, 1) frequently observed, 2) sometimes observed, 3) seldom observed, or 4) never observed. The following were the five criteria that the principals rated:

1. The incorporation of multicultural resources and activities in classrooms
2. The teachers' role in encouraging intercultural recognition and praise
3. Differentiated instructional strategies
4. The teachers' role in incorporating the background experiences of students in instruction
5. The teachers' role guiding students to make meaningful connections to abstract presentations

Using the scale did not provide the descriptive evidence to support the principals' choices. I visited with the principals a second time and requested that each principal provide detailed description to document the evidence of culturally responsive classrooms environment of the participants (see Appendix B).

Participant Observation

I also gathered field notes as a passive participant. I am informed of the practice of gathering data as a participant observer who did not interact with the students or the teacher during the visit to the classroom by Spradley (1980), who explained this method of collecting data with the following analogy of a “grand tour” of a facility:

Having someone shows us around their house, place of business, or school.

Friends come for dinner, and as they stand in the entrance to my home they say, “My, what a nice place you have. Would you like to see the rest of my house?”

I ask politely, “Sure that would be great.” And we begin that route from one room to another (Spradley (1980, p. 79).

While visiting the classrooms, I examined the features of the room and recorded the experiences I had while observing the activities, environment and teacher-student interaction. Some researchers argue that it is not always feasible or desirable to participate, and that there are limited opportunities for participation in school setting (Powell, 2006). I chose to be a passive participant because in this role, the observant can learn about the patterns and behaviors by assuming the role of a spectator (Spradley, 1980). I was able to get more information through observation rather than actively participating in the classroom activity.

The three major features that I chose to observe were the place, the actors and the activities. This focus guided me to look for answers that would provide a detailed overview of the space, the acts, the events and the feelings of the actors in the classrooms that I visited. I observed an instructional session between the first and

second interview so that I could have follow-up questions during the second interview about the observed behaviors.

The Interview

Interviewing is a tested method of eliciting information from individuals when the behavior and feelings cannot necessarily be captured from observation only. Merriam (1998) describes “Interviewing *as* [italics added] the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individual” (p.72). As noted by Stainback and Stainback, 1985 “An individual’s own words are the only way we can hear first hand, unfiltered through the analyses and the understandings of professionals, how life appears to a person” (p. 333).

As I went through the process of deciding how to frame the questions for this life history research, and discussed my upcoming journey in the lives of the participant, I decided to conduct one pilot study with a recently retired teacher who specialized in teaching students of color. This process helped me to exclude, refine and include the questions that would be critical for the recommended open-ended format of my interviews and would help in capturing the life stories of the participants. One of the participants contacted me three times in the space of two weeks and indicated that she hoped that I would include her in my research because she had a story to tell me. Her enthusiasm added to my motivation to begin interviewing. This interview process, including my visits with the principals, took four months.

Teachers were interviewed one-on-one to capture the personal perspectives, past experiences and professional training that influenced their instructional practices. There

were two interviews, and all the participants chose to meet me in their classrooms before or after school. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by me. During this process the life stories of the participants became an integral part of me. I listened to these interviews repeatedly, and took the opportunity to do so during my daily commutes to different places. These stories are deeply embedded in my thoughts.

The life story interview itself affects both the researcher and the participant. Atkinson (1998) explains that the researcher is often permitted to interact with the personal thoughts of the participant. I assumed an interactive role by sharing with the interviewees my interest and continuing focus on facilitating success for students of color. Ellis, Kiesinger and Tillman-Healy (1997) suggest that an “In depth and intimate understanding of the [participant’s] experiences” will be achieved when the interviewer shares an interest in the topic that is being investigated (p.121). Toma (2000) adds to the support of close relationships between researcher and participants involved in qualitative data because “These connections allow for the rich description of contexts and experiences that are the essence of good qualitative research” (p. 177).

Through the process of telling their life stories, Linde (1993) has suggested that individuals may be able to better understand the development of their own lives and how the experiences have guided: teacher expectations and teacher efficacy, cultural connections, teacher-student relationships, and the decision to teach beyond the adopted curriculum.

During the interview, I carefully formulated questions (Chase, 1995) to create a catalyst so that the participants will tell their life stories. The broad, semi-structured

questions were designed to elicit the unique perspective of the interviewees. Cole & Knowles (2001) refer to interviews in life history research as “life history conversations” and recommend that questions should not be so vague that the participants are unclear about what is being asked, but should be broad enough that the responses reflect the framing of the individual’s personal story.

Atkinson (1998) has also recommended that the researcher should be sensitive, responsive, flexible and actively listening. All of the participants were women and Anderson and Jack (1991) offered suggestions for ascertaining that female participants are comfortable telling their stories. For example, their language will be richer when they are allowed to explain and clarify the meanings in their own terms. Researchers should be attentive to “What women implied, suggested, and started to say but didn’t. We need to interpret their pauses and, when it happens, their unwillingness or inability to respond” (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 17). In addition, to the above, researchers should incorporate listening skills that can identify the “moral language,” or the standards that the participants use to judge themselves. The “voice” of the participants can also be more effectively identified through keen attention to “meta-statements” which manifest themselves during the times that the interviewees appear to be monitoring their speaking or watching what they own thinking. Another recommendation for effective listening to women was “logic of the narrative.” The task of the researchers is to identify the critical assumptions and beliefs that frame the logic of the life history.

The initial interview focused on the teachers' careers and backgrounds, and the second interview (see Appendix E) targeted how the participants perceive the connection between their teaching strategies and the success of their students. I have drawn from Atkinson's (1988) suggestions for doing the life history interview to formulate the questions in addition to those that evolved as a result of the direction of the participant's narrative. Questions were also framed based on my own experiences and interest. The background questions included (a) what the participants know about themselves, b) their cultural and education backgrounds, and c) the participants' recognition of how their lives have been constructed. The questions in the second interview were framed to elicit a) an awareness of the interaction with students of color, b) whether teacher training or other experiences have facilitated culturally responsive classrooms, and c) the learning experiences that have validated the culture of students. Additional questions evolved as a result of the answers given by the participants and were not limited to the questions on the Interview Protocol (Atkinson, 1998).

Another guide that I used during the interview was the recommendation from Spradley (1979) to incorporate questions that would effectively guide the participants to construct well developed responses. The interview consisted of descriptive questions that enabled me to recognize the interviewees' language as well as structural questions that provided information regarding the domains, which are the units in which the participants organize their cultural knowledge. Contrast questions were also incorporated to highlight the "Dimensions of meaning which the participants employ to distinguish the objects and events in their world" (Spradley, 1979, p. 60).

Data Analysis

The data, collected from in depth multiple interviews, provided me with enough information that should compensate for size of the sample. Since the information that emerged during the interviews was from six different participants, unique and rich information evolved for analysis. The questions and the resulting teacher narratives will be examined to determine whether or not teachers have gone beyond the cultural system of the mainstream group – European Americans – in order to break the cycle of “...mainstream ethnocentrism and hegemony” (Gay, 2000, p. 208). This will allow for comparison and contrasting within the analysis of the life stories shared. The data included: descriptions of classroom environments from building principals, tape recording, field notes from my observations, and feedback discussions with participants. Data analysis was done using the following:

- Burke’s Pentadic Analysis
- Linde’s Creation of Coherence
- Spradley’s Participant Observation Features

I tried to establish connections between the respondents’ life experiences and their success as teachers of students of color. (Mishler, 1990, p.429) stated that there are linkages “between data, findings, and interpretation,” and these become apparent when tape and the transcripts are examined. Narrative analysis, as a method of inquiry, was used as an interpretive tool to examine the emerging themes and gain insights into the “...cultural values and personal subjectivities” of teachers of students of color (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. x). Both the categorical and holistic approaches in narrative analysis

were used in this life history study, since the researcher investigated the shared themes that might emerge from the stories of all the participants as well as the developmental process of each participant (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1988).

Burke's Pentadic Analysis

In order to understand the motivation that evolves from the lived experiences of the participants, the components of Burke's Pentadic analytic tool were incorporated to guide the framework for this analysis. Burke assumed (Foss, 1989) that "...humans develop and present messages in much the same way that a play is presented" (p. 336). That is, the life stories can provide answers to: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how it was done (agency) and why it was done (purpose)." The five terms are called a "pentad, "and Burke uses the terminology 'dramatism' to describe the study of human motivation through the five dramatic terms above.

The use of the pentad may reveal experiences that the narrator consider as "...an appropriate response to various human situations" (Ling, 1970, p. 345). One of the questions that this research project seeks to answer is how the participants account for their effectiveness with students of color. The pentadic analysis may reveal the real motive to be an effective educator since, "Motive is often unconscious; rhetors may believe they are engaging in an act for one purpose, when they actually have quite a different – unknown to them – reason for performing that act" (Foss, 1989, p. 338). Fox, 2002 supports that argument when she states that, "At the core of dramatism is Burke's pragmatic intent to offer a logical method for understanding human motives." (Fox,

2002, p. 369).

The pentadic approach will also facilitate the identification of the participant's (1) freedom or choice, (2) purpose or will, and (3) motion with action – the three conditions for action at the heart of dramatism established by the pentad (Foss, 1989). The dominant term of the pentad will be the driving force behind identifying the motivation of the participants and their philosophical orientation. An analysis of the influence of the dominant element on any evolving themes was also incorporated through Burke's Pentadic framework.

Linde's Creation of Coherence

Analysis of the participants' life stories will also be examined through Linde's (1993) creation of coherence by examining order, causality and the continuity of the life stories. In determining the method for analyzing the life stories of the participants, I chose to identify the principles of construction and coherence that were connected to their cultural socialization process.

The major characteristics of self, according to Linde (1993), are "...maintained and exchanged through language" (p. 100). These characteristics are (1) the continuity of self through time, (2) the relationships of self to others, and (3) the reflexivity of self. During this analysis, the continuity of self may explain how the participants' past is not only relevant to but is also related to the present. The emergence of a "self" that is unique but simultaneously related to others may give some insight into, a) the bubble which teachers claim for their separate "selves," and b) also the interaction that the teachers have with their students. The third characteristic of self which occurs during the

process of narrating identifies the emergence of a functioning social self that “can be reflected on or related to as an other” (Linde, 1993, p. 105). According to Linde (1993), the audience helps to determine whether or not the narrative is about the self as it relates to the ‘self’ or ‘other.’ This process may contribute to the connections that both the interviewee and the participants make between the life stories and the construction of their identities.

Participant Observation

The experiences shared by the participants, particularly those that provide descriptions of the interaction with students and the classroom activities, justified the use of participant observation as another analytical tool for the data. Spradley (1980) informs the choice of this analytical tool by suggesting that the phenomena being investigated in physical situations may be observed by the “participant observer.” My role was as a “passive participant” who would observe and record the classroom activities.

Ethical Issues

I adhered to the considerations offered by Muchmore (2000) Cole and Knowles (2001) and Gates, Church and Crowe (2001) regarding the ethical issues in life history research. The foremost considerations during the life story interaction are that the researchers should 1) acquire the formal consent of the participant, 2) allow time for trust to develop between the participant and the researcher, 2) respect the participant, and 3) adhere to the request to exclude possible embarrassing information (Muchmore, 2000). Cole and Knowles (2001) provided detailed discussions regarding other ethical

issues to be addressed during life history research. These include the dilemma of the complex and personal relationships that might develop between the participant and the researcher. If this relationship is not recognized, the interviews might end up being conversations between two friends.

While friendships are inevitable when individuals spend extended time with each other, the researcher is cautioned to remember the participant should be given the “authority” line, or active role in the interaction, (Cole & Knowles, 2001). This is very challenging because the researcher’s role is that of reassuring the informants that ownership of the narrative is their responsibility (Chase, 1995).

It is also critical that the readers are informed of the kind of relationship that exists between the researcher and the participant. The researcher should acknowledge and make public the interest that spurred the topic being researched so that the readers understand the perspective of the analysis and conclusions. Cole & Knowles (2001) describe this as the “reflexivity in research” which leads to “...heightened awareness of self, other, and the self-other dialectic” (p. 30). It is during this process that the researcher develops the critical components of sensitivity and responsiveness.

Gates, Church and Crowe (2000) suggest that life history research is built upon the foundation of ethical relationships. They also identify 1) autonomy, 2) nonmaleficence, 3) beneficence, and 4) justice as four principles that contribute to ethical relationships. Throughout my research I respected the autonomy of the participants. This began when I contacted them, explained my research project and invited them to participate. When we met for the first interview, each participant had

already signed a letter of consent and asked for further clarification of their role in the research. The participants' autonomy demands that the researcher and participant should agree to the manner in which the findings are represented.

Nonmaleficence dictates that the researcher share the potential risks and suggests ways to avoid or reduce them. Each participant was reassured that only information to which they agreed would be included in the research. During the interview process, there were timely reminders that responding to any question was at the discretion of the informant.

Beneficence is an understanding that the work will be mutually created and rewarding for both participant and researcher. I was very forthright in sharing my interest in the cultural experiences of teachers and its impact on effective teaching of students of color. The criteria for the inclusion of teachers in this study were explained so the interviewees were well aware of the interest in garnering relevant information from their life histories.

The treatment of the life history of the participant should reflect justice.

According to Gates, Church and Crowe (2001)

Justice relates to fairness that is reasoned, informed and equitable. Justice entails credible, believable treatment of the life histories that include some transparency of the researcher's perspective. The researcher and the participants invest considerable time, and justice also requires the researcher's findings provide a return for that time and attention (p. 155).

I informed the participants that the findings would be shared with the school

district, and recommendations would be made to recognize the advantages of having experiences that might contribute to the participants' success with the students of color in their classrooms.

Fidelity, another important component of ethical relationship, was established in order to provide a low-anxiety environment for the participant. I created the trusting relationship for the cocreation of knowledge based on mutual respect, and this was frequently evidenced by the warm greeting, laughter, and close proximity during the interview and the promises to keep in touch by both participants and interviewees. It was in this safe environment that authenticity of life history emerged (Gates, et al. 2000).

Qualitative Standards

During the process of my life history research, I incorporated the qualitative standards of collection, organization and interpretation of material from interviews or observation (Malterud, 2001). This method has been supported by Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) transferability, dependability and confirmability, and credibility in qualitative research as criteria for the validity of qualitative research. The following describes how each of the components evolved and was addressed.

Transferability

The analysis and findings of this life history research supports the possibility of transferability beyond the study setting. The rich, thick descriptions of the experiences of the participants provided detailed information that may contribute to the relevance of other educational institutions (Merriam, 1998 & Malterud, 2001). I do not state that the findings of this study can be unilaterally transferred to other educational settings.

However, the onus is on the readers of the research to determine whether or not there is a “fittingness” or relevance of the findings between analysis of the participants in this study and those with similar demographic and contextual backgrounds.

Dependability and Confirmability

The dependability criterion was met when I described how the study was conducted: 1) definition the role of the researcher 2) explanation of the criteria for selecting the participants 3) description of the context under which the participants were interviewed, and 4) outlining the method of data collection and analysis (Almasi, Palmer, Gambrell, & Pressley, 1994 and Tuckett, 2005). This is consistent with research strategies for trustworthiness in qualitative research. The verbatim accounts of the participants are the principal criteria that support the confirmability of the data.

Member Check

Merriam (1988) describes “member check” as “Taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from who they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible” (p. 204). Since there were two interviews with each of the participants, I checked the accuracy of the transcripts of the first interview during the second interview with the participants. After the second interview, each participant received a copy of the typed transcripts with a request to respond if there were discrepancies.

Triangulation/Crystallization

When multiple sources of data or multiple methods are used in qualitative research, an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question is being attempted

from different realities. This is a validation of qualitative research because rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth have been added to the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Triangulation suggests the phenomenon being studied may be validated in three ways. This would be similar to shooting from three different points at an object. A counterpoint to this argument is that the “crystallization” process offers more than the three sides of the triangle because crystals grow and change in an infinite amount of ways (Richardson & St. Pierre, (2005) and thus is a more accurate description of the process of collecting data from the multiple perspectives of the participants.

Summary

A qualitative research was chosen to gain insights into the lived experiences of elementary educators. Since the complex interactions are clearly not at the surface level, the life history technique was chosen to bring out the deep-seated meanings of the participants’ experiences. The six female participants were chosen because, after both interviews, similarities and differences in their backgrounds and experiences began to emerge. The ethical issues and standards in qualitative research for interviewing and data collection were considered and adhered to in this life history research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: A WALK WITH THE PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

In this chapter I present the life stories of six female educators who teach in elementary schools in CFISD. The analysis of their stories were first channeled through Burke's Pentadic framework so that the influence of the dramatic elements - their acts, the scenes, the agency and the purpose in their lives - may explain the effect of the cultural socialization process of the participants, or agents, on the academic achievement of students of color.

The participants' lives were then were examined through Linde's Identification of Self. The continuity of self explained how the participants' past was not only relevant to but also related to the present. The emergence of a "self" that was separate but simultaneously related to others will give some insight into, firstly, the interaction that the teachers have with their students, and secondly, the bubble which teachers claim for their separate "selves."

The teacher-student interactions were also analyzed in order to look at the convergence, inconsistencies, and even contradiction (Mathison, 1988) of the shared stories of the participants. The three major features of Spradley's (1980) Participant Observation technique, the environment, activities and teacher-student interaction were examined in order to connect the observable activities with the experiences described by the teachers (Spradley, 1980).

Burke's Pentadic Analysis

Procedure

Burke's Pentadic Analysis consists of three major steps: (1) identifying the five terms of act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose in the rhetoric; (2) application of the ratios to discover the term or element featured by the narrator and (3) naming the motive from the featured term. The motive is what an individual is doing and why (Fox, 2002, p. 369).

There were four major themes identified within the six participants' interviews (1) high teacher expectation, 2) multi-role teachers, 3) meeting the needs of students, and 4) respect and acceptance of cultural differences. The themes will be discussed in detail and are illustrated in Figure 4.

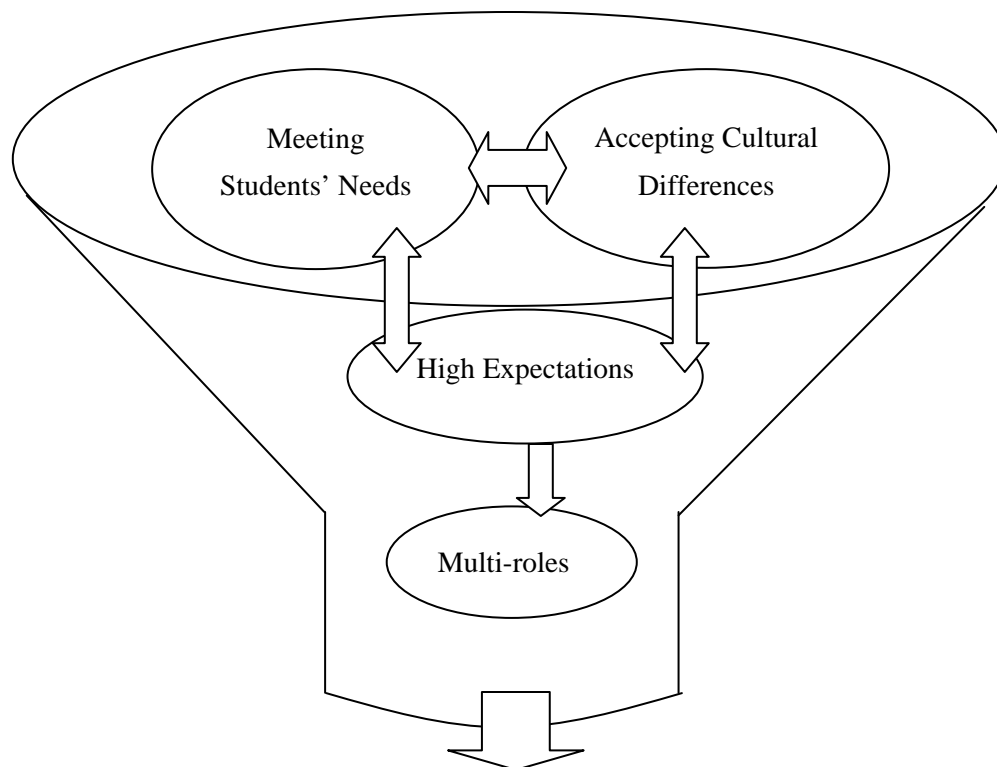


Figure 4. Themes - Effective Teachers of Students of Color

I focused on these four themes by making connections to them within the framework of Burke's Pentadic analysis. This approach facilitated the identification of the participants' a) freedom of choice, b) purpose or will, and c) motion, with action – the three conditions for action at the heart of dramatism, or the study of human's motivation through terms derive from the study of drama, established by Burke (Foss, 1989, p. 335-336).

Application of Ratios in the Pentadic Analysis

The five principles of the pentad are 1) the act, what took place, 2) the scene, when or where it was done, 3) the agent, the person, 4) the purpose, why the act was done, and 5) agency – how it was done. These elements were used in order to analyze the motive of the participants. The next step was to figure out the ratios, or the relationship between the five terms (Foss, 1989). “All five principles must be understood in conjunction with another of the principles; that they must be understood as “ratios” such as act-agent, act-scene, and act-purpose, act-agency (Fox, 2002, p. 369). See Table 6. The most critical argument is that the ratios should facilitate the understanding of the symbiotic relationships between the different elements. See Figure 5 for a Representation of Burke's Pentad (Fox 2002).

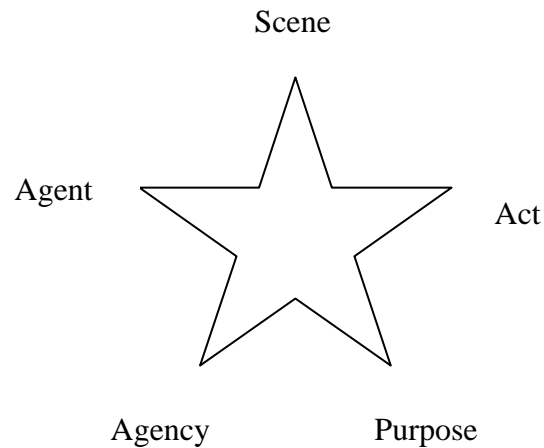


Figure 5. The Pentad

The next step in the pentadic analysis was to pair two of the elements in order to discover the relationship between them and the effect that each has on the other. See table 6 for the ten possible ratios, or pairings in the Pentad. Each of the five elements was then put together with each other to form these ratios. I looked for the significant relationship between two elements and did not focus on connections that were not determining factors.

Table 6. Ten Possible Ratios, or Pairings, in the Pentad

Scene ↓	Act ↓	Agent ↓	Agency ↓	Purpose
1. act	5. agent	8. agency	10. purpose	scene
2. agent	6. agency	9. purpose	scene	act
3. agency	7. purpose	scene	act	agent
4. purpose	scene	act	agent	agency

Life Stories

As I share the life stories of these six participants, I hope that the singular and similar events that frame their life stories will capture the lived experiences that evolved during the interviews. My goal was to allow these women to tell their own stories. I will summarize these stories through the lenses of the three tools described above and include only those parts of the stories that contribute to the identified themes. I recognized that my life story was the engine for this study, but all of the participants a) contributed with their educational expertise, b) demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment, and c) await their possible contributions to this research project.

Jane's Story: Different from My Parents

Jane's six years of teaching experience has been in the CF ISD as a fifth grade language arts teacher. She is one of four White participants in this life history research. Her current teaching assignment includes second language learners in the bilingual education program. She was a strong advocate for her students and was very persistent in requesting that I consider her as a participant in my research project. Jane thought that she had a story to share. Her animated personality was evident in the intonations and inflections that were consistent with the emotions she displayed during the two interviews.

“Well I always liked school. School was like an oasis for me because of my background I was abused and so I was the kid who never wanted to go home on Friday and didn't want holidays to come because I didn't want holidays to come because I didn't want to be home.” This was the beginning of Jane's life story.

High Expectations

During the conversation regarding the role of education, the following was captured:

Q. I know that you talked about your parents' role in education. Did you buy into that? They always told you that education was the way to go. What is your view?

A. I try to build them up and encourage them so they will feel successful. You know, they are not necessarily rocket scientists, brain surgeons, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they cannot be successful, and feel good about something.

Jane described her involvement in the process of recommending a struggling student to be evaluated and given special services:

Don't you ever let anyone tell you are not smart! I almost cried. I mean you are smart!..I just try to encourage them, because if he doesn't believe in himself, I think that he needs a teacher who says I believe you - you can do it, you can do it, and you can do it!

Her persistence in seeking support for this student did not mirror the type of encouragement that she received in school. As a follow up, I asked:

Q. The encouragement that you gave him seems as if it is different from what you received – right?

A. I was told that I could do it – but there was also put downs a lot. So I do try to build them up where I can. He is – up until now, has literally fallen into the cracks. So we now at least have services in place where he is going to middle school – that sort of thing – we got them this year to get that help.

Q. What about your expectations?

A. I expect them to do their best, and I will give them a hard time if they haven't.

When Jane shared information regarding the most meaningful course which she

took during teacher training, I asked her to elaborate on any possible transfer that was evident in her classroom management technique.

- A. Yes, because I think – you know because there are so many strategies that you can use. But I think it gave a name to what I do that I hadn't really realized. You know, I think I do it naturally, I just did not know there was a name to it. And just having a good climate in the classroom is how I get them to behave for me. It doesn't always work. But I try to get them to want to be successful. Try to develop a bond with them so that they don't want to disappoint me.

Multi-role Teacher

During the first interview when I asked Jane to share anything that she believed we had not covered, her response demonstrated the roles that she had assumed with her students.

Long story short – I relate the prison ministry (in which I am involved). I talk about it with the kids and share with them what I have seen because I see these kids –some of these kids - they are going down that path. So I try - I mean, I do what I can (sighing deeply), but it would be horrible I am sure that it will happen in some point in time- not that I want it to happen. But someone will go down the wrong path. And I will probably run into someone at some point in time. Like I know I have a few students who, like four years ago or whenever – I heard that they were in gangs. Like you go into prisons and you see a lot of it is drug related, you know, a lot of gang-related, abuse situations. So I try to help the kids, but I don't have any kids specifically this year that are needy like that – they are needy academically.

I had a child who disappeared – she ran away – a real horrible situation. I almost took her in.... I was told I needed to stay out of it for law suit protection. It was

very hard, but I just base my whole life, on – especially with kids, we need to get them on the right path. So I do whatever I can to encourage that, but there are a lot of factors out of my control.

Meeting the Needs of Students

Q. Can you share any information you use to guide instruction?

A. (Thoughtful) Really, that's because the district is so structured as far as what we are assessing. It's - you know, it's just - I kind of look at what they do and what I know as a teacher, and what I can move up – you know what I need to stress. But, in language of course, the area of language – it's very open ended. We have the scope and sequence. But some things the kids need more than others. You know, we are doing quotes rather than prepositions. Because, you know, they are going to apply the quotes a whole lot more than be able to identify prepositions. So I make a lot of teacher tests.

Q. Tell me about a time you took the opportunity to allow students to incorporate their strengths in order to complete their assignments.

A. I mean, I am thinking of this – I am thinking of this one student who did not pass 4th grade TAKS, and did not look as if he was going to pass 5th grade. And I think that I talked about him the other day. His thinking is so awesome, but he jumps to the wrong conclusion and he does it too quickly...He tended to just go off on a tangent and think – and it was not that his thinking was wrong, but he was having to apply the choices that he was given. Within those constraints, what would be the right answer? And so his strength is thinking and thinking outside the box, and so I let him do that, but then I had to redirect (chuckle) that to the given answer choices.

Jane's conversation often included the experiences she had in meeting the needs of the students by "teaching the whole child:"

And then as a social studies teacher, the topic of religion over history comes up, and I am very - I try to be very sensitive about that - but give them the information that they need. Like we just talked about the Holocaust, and so I explained, you know, about the Jewish people, and I will bring it back to modern times and try to get the kids to understand. I mean I just don't stick with only the content what's on the test.

I probed more with the following questions:

Q. How do you handle teaching the Civil Rights?

A. I think that you have to be very honest. Because when I teach Social Studies, try to teach the kids that when we are learning about the past, we are looking at it. You have to be careful not to be completely judgmental, because our sense of right and wrong and our sense of (pause) and our culture and everything is totally different now versus 500 years ago. You know-their way of thinking. So, we have to teach them when we are learning about it to be very cautious.

Q As far as?

A. When we learn about it, we are going to realize that it was very wrong and then I try to explain through – that was the way of thinking and parents their kid kids to belief certain ideals and so all year long we look at the Native Americans – the African American and then anyone of the different race. And so, I always bring that up. I talk about the tough topics because I think that it is important... You are skewing history! You know if you only gloss over the surface. Of course there is a lot to cover, so we so in depth - more in depth on certain things. But I just, I can't, I couldn't live with myself, if I don't talk heavily about it. So I do a lot on it – I do a lot on slavery, did a lot on Native American – that's ongoing – the history. I do a lot on World War II. And then I'll do a big thing on Civil Rights. And, it's – I don't care how many questions are on the test, I just see it as I am planting the seed. They are not going to remember all the facts and details, but we are planting the seeds, they take 8th grade TAKS/Social Studies. But, they need to have the foundation, and how can we create a rounded individual, if I don't take the time to teach – because it's not on the test! I have such a problem with that – I really do! (with conviction)

Q. What about other races? How do they react?

A. The kids - all through history – all this entire year – the kids have – you know society has changed, and it is very accepting, and we are telling the truth, we are not hiding the fact that our country did some really bad things. And the kids have responded all year as not just judging people not – every time they learn something that's disturbing in history, they have the appropriate response –“Oh that was terrible!!” And it 's you know,-they understand that certain ethnic groups, you know that, those are more - you don't hear about the White people being discriminated against. You know like you hear about the other races, but they just - are very sensitive. I just always start from the get-go of history to try to help them to understand so when we get to Civil Rights movement, they are analyzing it, from a - not like a group being targeted. They understand the process of – there are people in the position of power who abuse their power, and people without power and government protection, and how do they overcome that. So that's how we look

at everything. How do you overcome that?

- Q. So based on the style that you have, you have been integrating. You are preparing students to?
- A. I just want them to be well-rounded, fair. I want them to treat people with dignity. That is my entire focus. That we are not going to repeat history. You know, and I always relate it back to the playground – always. How do you treat the kids that are different? How do you treat the kid who looks different, acts different? I always bring it back to the playground. Then I talk about middle school, and I talk about how middle school you go there next year. The groups - the jocks, the nerds. All the different groups where you are going to see a lot ethnic people, you know, gathering by race, and so I talk about that.

Respect and Acceptance

As Jane talked about her childhood and the relationship she had with her parents, the following story unfolded:

My parents lived in - they lived in a bad part of town, and my parents were prejudiced, which I never liked...From a very young age...I had a sense that my parents were ignorant...I didn't follow what they said because I knew it was stupid and like - I was well read...like they might say, "you are no good" just very hateful and I would, in my head, I would tell myself well "you are ignorant, you are stupid, you are not educated," and that was how I kind of taught myself I guess a protective mechanism(elevated, animated voice), so I wouldn't believe what they were telling me.

- Q. Do you have any values as an educator that you wouldn't compromise?
- A. And you know, I think kids should be treated fairly, I don't think that they should be (thoughtful) beaten down in spirit – even the kids who are troubled and struggle, you know, I think we have to very careful how we treat them.
- Q. Have you developed strategies to teach students of color? I know that you have said that you teach to what they need.

- A. With additional information that isn't there that they need to know...
I talk about why we say African-Americans, and why we say Mexican-Americans, and I told them, you know, we are honoring their culture. We are distinguishing their ethnic background. It's an honor; it's not a derogatory term. So none of that is in the books (elevated voice/chuckle). I just think it is important to talk about, you know and talk about not lumping kids - all race as one.

Jane's Analysis

The Pentadic analysis of Jane's rhetoric showed that when all the elements were paired to discover the relationship between them and the effect that each on each other, the "purpose" had the most impact on the other terms because Jane repeatedly shared and demonstrated why she was effective with students of color.

- 1.Purpose-Act: Why Jane chose to teach?
- 2.Purpose-Agent: Why Jane feels she has high expectations for children of color?
- 3.Purpose-Agency: Why Jane makes a difference in the student's academic success?
- 4.Purpose-Scene: Why Jane's classroom validates her students' culture?

Purpose-Act: Why Jane Chose To Teach?

Jane decided to teach because she was convinced, even from an early, age that the prejudice that her parents showed towards children of color was based on their ignorance.

I had a sense that my parents were ignorant...I didn't follow what they said because I knew it was stupid and like - I was well read...

Purpose-Agent: Why Jane Feels She Has High Expectations of Children of Color?

Both at school and at home, Jane experienced "put downs." There was no bond between Jane and some of her teachers and her parents. So as a teacher she felt that one of her goals was to develop a bond with her students so that they would not want to

disappoint her. Her strongest feelings, however, came from her response to the question about values that she would not compromise as an educator.

Q. Do you have any values as an educator that you wouldn't compromise?

A. And you know, I think kids should be treated fairly, I don't think that they should be (thoughtful) beaten down in spirit – even the kids who are troubled and struggle, you know, I think we have to very careful how we treat them.

The high expectations that Jane has for her students are further demonstrated by statements, such as:

Don't you ever let anyone tell you are not smart! I almost cried. I mean you are smart! I just try to encourage them, because if he doesn't believe in himself, I think that he needs a teacher who says I believe you - you can do it, you can do it, and you can do it!

Her students are expected to do their best, and they know that she will give them a “hard time,” if they fall short of her expectations.

Purpose-Agency: Why Jane Makes a Difference in Students' Academic Success?

Her role was not limited to being an educator of academic subjects. Jane's recognizes that there are distractions that prevent students from being academically successfully. She includes sensitive subjects such as gang involvement and incarceration in discussions and present alternative options that can be achieved through education. She demonstrated her commitment to her students' success when she shared the story of a desire to “take in” a child who was considered a run-a-way.

Purpose-Scene: Why Jane's Classroom Validates Her Students' Culture?

Jane's classroom activities were replete with (1) exploring deeper into the mandated curriculum, and (2) making meaningful connections with the students of color:

And then as a social studies teacher, the topic of religion over history comes up, and I am very - I try to be very sensitive about that - but give them the information that they need. Like we just talked about the Holocaust, and so I explained, you know, about the Jewish people, and I will bring it back to modern times and try to get the kids to understand. I mean I just don't stick with only the content what's on the test.

Her commitment to developing the whole student was also demonstrated when she commented:

When we learn about it (Civil Rights unit of study), we are going to realize that it was very wrong and then I try to explain through – that was the way of thinking and parents taught their kids to believe certain ideals and so all year long we look at the Native Americans – the African American and then anyone of the different race. And so, I always bring that up. I talk about the tough topics because I think that it is important...You are skewing history! You know if you only gloss over the surface.

Jane meets the needs of her students by targeting instruction to which the students can make connections.

We have the scope and sequence. But some things the kids need more than others. You know, we are doing quotes rather than prepositions. Because, you

know, they are going to apply the quotes a whole lot more than be able to identify prepositions. So I make a lot of teacher tests.

Freedom or Choice, Purpose/Will, Action

Jane demonstrated her freedom to choose to teach students of color. This was in direct opposition to her parents' support of prejudice against people of color. Her purpose, or willingness, to make a direct impact on success of her students was demonstrated by her validation of their culture. The roles that she assumed, in addition to being a classroom teacher, were evidence of the actions that were taken to contribute to the academic success of her students.

Rita's Story: Teaching All Children

Rita is a third grade teacher in her mid 30's whose class consists of second language learners. She is Asian and is the only participant that was born outside of the United States of America. She has worked a total of 5 years in education. She has spent the last two and one half years in the CyFair ISD. Previously, she worked as a volunteer in elementary schools, a pre-k teacher and a reading intervention teacher. She is currently assigned to teach math and science, but taught language arts the previous year. Rita is an assertive, confident participant, who searches for answers to accurately reflect the events and her recollections.

Rita recollected how she became a teacher by describing the conditions under which she went to school and then drawing a comparison with schools here in the United States.

Like I said, I pretty much went to system which was like a boot camp, which

was not very motivating at all, and if you didn't bring a paper, you would pretty much be sent out. You had to kneel outside the classroom. You had to be outside the class room – very extreme. I was very sensitive, and when I watched the classrooms here – it was at the other end of the spectrum – the other extreme. So I just – those were some things that motivated me to become a teacher.

Rita also reflected on her experiences during the time when she was involved in volunteer work in her son's school:

I fell in love with teaching and I realized that I was good at teaching, and I was getting a lot of feedback from other parents, and the class room teacher who was watching me while I was doing volunteer work. She said, "You are a natural – you need to get into it." So that's how I started 'getting into it.' And here – it's like more hands-on, the kids are walking around. The teacher is so much fun to work with, and approachable. And so, it's like - wow, I want to be in a classroom like this, and teach and make a difference in the kids lives!

High Expectations

Rita's high expectations were connected to the strengths that she observed in her students of color. She identified students who were leaders or who were quiet and she placed them in groups so that they would complement each other:

That goes a long way when I do some grouping work. If I am grouping and I know they are leaders, then I may give them a leadership role in a grouping activity. If I know they are very quiet, then I may pair them up with a buddy

who is more vocal and able to lead the group. So their personalities would go a long way – and it would take time for me to know them really well – a couple of months at least. Then once I know them, it would definitely help me when we work as a team, or as a pair – that’s one way that I would incorporate their strengths and weaknesses – absolutely!

Multi-role Teacher

There was considerable discussion about “disadvantaged” students and the impact of being disadvantaged through Rita’s lenses. If the student did not have parental support, lacked resources or lived in homes where there may be domestic violence, those were conditions that qualified students to be described as “disadvantaged.”

- Q. So how does that (disadvantaged) impact how you teach them?
- A. Well, if I know that a child is at a disadvantage for those reasons, then it’s up to me to be kind of “all-in-one” - a package - a teacher, mentor, a confidant, a parent- “all-in-one” - not just a teacher because the burden falls on me, and I end up doing everyone’s job as a teacher. So it’s definitely more work on the teacher and very challenging too (chuckle).
- Q. When they come in and you learn that they are “disadvantaged,” does that affect their ability to learn? What is your perception of that?
- A. Choosing – the administrators really have to take the time to choose really good teachers. Good teachers are really essential, especially in schools like these. We don’t need teachers who are burnt out. We do not need teachers who do not have patience or do not have the understanding to deal with these kids. Because, like I said, a teacher’s role is more than a teachers’ role in schools like these. And for these kids to be successful and to be happy, and to be where they are and to show their full potential, a lot of this is up to the teachers in these schools.

Rita acknowledged that her role as a teacher was a challenging one, but voiced her acceptance of the many responsibilities which have accompanied her chosen

profession in a school where students need more than academic support.

Meeting the Needs of Students

Rita recognized that the needs of her students are different, but she was quite enthusiastic because she had contributed to the academic success of both the advantaged and disadvantaged students.

Q. What has it been like for you when you teach students of color?

A. It's not this child or that child – it's just working in a school like this and being successful and being able to reach all the kids – just makes me proud of myself as a teacher. I feel very – for choosing this career, I feel fulfilled...Their average for the benchmark and the average of the advantaged kids – which was a small minority – but their averages were the same. And I said – hey, “I have been able to reach them all.” That was the proof that I got.

Respect and Acceptance

Q. What is the most important lesson you have had to learn for yourself as a teacher of children of color?

A. We are going to accept everyone – no matter what they are. As a Social Studies teacher, I had more time to dwell on that, and talk about it and it tied in more with the subject that I was teaching. And maybe because I come from a diverse culture – a diverse background, maybe I feel strongly about that. Acceptance - I think that a lot of what is going around the world is because of lack of understanding, lack of acceptance, and diverse does not mean that you are weird. Diverse just means - it's them - they are different. Don't treat them like they are weird or strange – learn about them and accept them (with passion).

Rita reflects on her experiences in a “diverse” culture and was very passionate about her support for the acceptance of everyone.

Rita's Analysis

The pentadic analysis of Rita's story showed that when all the elements were paired to discover the relationship between them and the effect that each on each other,

the “agency” had the most impact on the other terms.

1. Agency-Act: How Rita chose to be a teacher?
2. Agency-Agent: How Rita manifests her feelings about her educational expectation of students of color?
3. Agency-Purpose: How Rita makes a difference in the student’s academic success?
4. Agency-Scene: How Rita’s classroom validates her students’ culture?

Agency-Act: How Rita Chose to be a Teacher?

Rita was very sensitive to the harsh treatment that was meted out to students in schools in her native country. She was motivated to teach in an environment in which teachers seemed to be kind to students. While Rita volunteered in her son’s school, she shared, with great emotion, how she admired a teacher who was “approachable and fun to work with.”

Agency-Agent: How Rita Manifests Her Feelings about the Educational Expectations of Students of Color?

There is a sense of excitement in Rita’s voice when she described her feelings about teaching students of color. “I am so proud of myself at this time – that I have been able to reach all kids...working in a school like this... Nothing can stop me now from bragging about myself (laughter).”

She also felt strongly that all students should be accepted for who they are.

“I think that a lot of what is going around the world is because of lack of understanding, lack of acceptance...”

Agency-Purpose: How Rita Makes a Difference in the Students’ Academic Success?

Rita had an assignment that required her to pull students of color from their recess in order to offer additional reading help. This was how that segment of Rita’s

story unfolded:

Eventually down the road, once TAKS was over, and some of them exited out of the extra help program because some of them had passed. I said, “OK, you get your recess back, you don’t have to come to me any more.” They go, “No, we want to come back.” They were begging me - like three or four girls they were begging me to come and see me during their recess time, which I thought that was really awesome because, you know, I don’t know if I was doing what I was supposed to be doing effectively or not. Of course I had the TAKS results in front of me, but other than that - reaching them and motivating them – that’s something very hard. It’s not something that we can really see – it’s not tangible.

The students’ unwillingness to reclaim their recess back was evidence that Rita had guided them to success which they did not want to trade for recess. This was an extraordinary accomplishment on Rita’s part because most elementary students show great reluctance at the thought of giving up recess.

Agency-Scene: How Rita’s Classroom Validates Her Students’ Culture?

It was during our discussion about the definition of an effective teacher of children color, that Rita requested some time to respond to how she validated her students’ culture during instruction:

Whenever it is an at-home project, the children just love to do it....But they have control over their learning, when they get to do it at home, or when they get to bring things from home to show. So I really believe that authentic experiences go a long way in motivating the kids.

Rita's strategies to have students include what was meaningful to them at home and sharing this with their classmates is an example of how she validates the diversity in her classroom. This exposure to "differences" supports her strong feeling of acceptance of all of her students.

Freedom or Choice, Purpose/Will, Action

At the heart of Rita's story is her choice to accept and teach all students. She strongly feels that there is a lack of understanding and acceptance of students of color. The identifiable purpose is to reach the "disadvantaged" students in her classrooms, as she responds with pride at the data that indicates that both the "disadvantaged" and "advantaged students had similar scores. Her actions, as an "all-in-one" teacher, define one of the challenging roles she has assumed in her students' life.

Chinere's Story: Making a Difference

Chinere is a vibrant, effervescent fourth grade, teacher in her early 20's. She is youngest and the only African American participant in this study. She is a second year teacher of language arts in CyFair ISD since she graduated from teacher training college. Her answers reflect the enthusiasm, energy and commitment that she brings to the classroom. Chinere's story began with a list of teachers in her family.

(Thoughtful) I know I wanted to teach every since I was in fourth grade, and – how it all started? My mother is a teacher. Her sisters are teachers. So kind of like - it's a family trend. So every summer, starting in 4th grade, I'd ask my teachers for all their left over papers, and so I would go home with tons of it. My parents were not very pleased, but it kept me entertained. So what I would do is

like gathered my neighborhood friends and things, and I would teach them. And so my parents bought me like one of those stand-up chalkboards, and we would teach in my backyard. I think that my mother inspired me to become a teacher. I always knew that I wanted to make a difference in children's life – make a difference. So that's it – pretty much it!

High Expectations

In response to a question regarding the results of the standardized TAKS tests for her students, Chinere reacted:

So some of the lowest of the lowest passed. I was crying all – when they first gave us the results – I was so impressed. I believe in them, even when they don't believe in themselves. And I try to encourage them to believe and just motivate them, you know. Because that means a lot too! (excited) When you get them to believe in themselves – it pays off. And it really does!

The following are excerpts from the additional conversations which showcased Chinere's high expectations of her students:

Q. What has it been like for you teaching students of color?

A. It has not been difficult. I think that the thing that has been difficult is that some of them are a little lower. But I am not going to say that they can't do it - I have already proved that they can do it...So I don't care what it takes – recess, something special, – whatever - I am going make sure that they do what they have to do to understand so that they could be successful in life... But what really impacts me about teaching children of color is that - I am just letting them know - You don't have to be low. Like if your parents did not graduate, if they did not go to college, it does not mean that you have to do that – you can be and you can do whatever you want to do.

Q. Is there anything that you would like to tell me about your teaching - your experiences that I did not ask?

A. Like I said - my aim is to get them all. I don't teach failures, and I let them that.

Q. Oh! You don't teach failures - that's a deep statement?

A. That's right. I don't teach failures.

Q. You mean that all the kids that you teach - what? They will succeed - they will!

A. That's not an option! They will!

Q. You also talked about your grandmother telling you stories about picking cotton, working for slave owners and not getting everything that they worked for. What comments might you have about when someone gets an education? Compare it to what your grandmother was trying to teach you about working and not getting compensated for all her efforts.

A. Sure - I always relate to my kids. First of all I tell them - when you get an education. I never say "if" - I just assume that they all are going to get an education. I mean I don't care if they - I care if they do or not, but if that's their choice and they don't want one, then that's their business, but when they are in my presence - I always tell them - when you receive an education, that is something that no one can take away.

Q. What are some of the things for which you don't have support that you have had to move on without the support? {pause} What kind of support are you thinking of?

A. Right now because I am in a Title I school, like I said, I teach very low students - not that they are not able, because I have already proved that they are able. But - basically, parental support. I try to always call home with something positive, you know even it is negative, I try to find something positive out of the negative, so they can help me with the negative. But that's the thing I never get a phone call that help me deal with the situation or something, so I have to go to plan B - and that's praying that's praying (chuckle). That's works all the time - perhaps which should be plan one next year. But no seriously just - parental support- that's one thing that I really struggle with that I wish I had more of, but since I don't I still don't let it hinder me.

Q. What values would you not compromise as an educator?

- A. Some of the values I wouldn't want to give up – my expectations... I never, never want to give up my expectations. I never want to give up the value of - that having my kids – let them slack. I push them so hard, Ms. Henry. They are probably still going to benefit from it, you know. So don't want to give them that expectation that they are going to become slackers – never want to give them that (expectation). They say that I am pretty strict – but I never want to give that up –never want to give that up, because it helps me and I know that it helped them because it paid off.

Chinere helps her students to believe in themselves and provides additional help for her students. She does not consider the educational level of parents as a benchmark for the students' academic success. Another position which Chinere took was that there was not going to be any direct relationship between the involvement of parents and the effort that she was going to contribute to students' success. During her interaction with students, her message is that “failure is not an option.”

Multi-role Teacher

Chinere described her role as a teacher of children color in this way:

It would be probably would be a lot easier, if I had – I wouldn't even say all, because it's not all of them, but the majority of them – they don't have that parental help at home, so it's like, the whole load is on me. It's all in my hands.

But, I don't, I could just give up like – oh - you know. But I am not here for that!

- Q. How has teaching children of color impacted your life?
- A. So I say it has impacted me because I get to make a difference in their lives, when they don't really have parents or some role model there – like I am their role model. I get so many notes daily - you know - thank you, and that touched me.
- Q. Why are your students successful, and how do you connect that with the process you have gone through?
- A. Oh – definitely, I do. I kind of treat my students like they are my kids - kind of

how my mom, you know, raised us. I kind of do the same - I am old school, I am old school. They have to try, they have to try and that's how my parents were. They did not let us, you know not try – not try it out first before we said, well we couldn't do it, you know. So I kind of, I see myself more like a teacher. Yea – I do see myself like a mother figure to my students.

The impact of Chinere's parents – not allowing her to give up – is transferred to how she relates to her students as a teacher and also a mother figure.

Meeting the Needs of Students

It was during our discussion about memorable experiences teaching students of color that Chinere demonstrated how she met the individual needs of students.

OK – let see. I can say a few months ago or so, I taught this writing lesson, and it was about adding details to the writing, and while I was doing some of my writing, some of my kids were like - “You know, I am stuck, I am stuck. I've never gone on vacation. I have never done this. How can I write about it, if I have never done this?” I took little scenarios – just little things about school – about park, and just turn it into a whole story. And they were like in awe, like we really can do this. We don't have to actually go somewhere, or you know cruises or whatever. We don't have to do that. We have stories inside of us right now; we just have to put them on paper. So I guess my most memorable moment in teaching them would be that. To show them - hey did a good job with it. They did a good job with taking what they had and making stories out of it. Like I told them – be your own author. Everyone has a story to tell – just tell it, you know. So I think for them seeing that they did not have to go to Disney World, you don't have to do this – you can tell a story, you know. Some of my White kids –

you know they are more fortunate or whatever and they have stories like that to tell, but children of color – theirs are just as good.

Q. How do you keep them (students of color) motivated?

A. Oh boy – you are talking about some strategies I have had to just come up with things – but it works. For one thing, I never take anything the same. I change every six weeks, and this is from the arrangements of my room to the different awards – awards that I give to them. And then I always set a goal, and I make them work towards it to reach it. Short term goals, you know, you have to turn in six weeks of work, and at the end of this, and you get this or something like that. Yes, I always try to keep my awards system different, ‘cause if I keep the awards system the same – they will get bored with it. They pretty much stop – they stop trying. I am very creative, so I am always coming up with something silly. This past year – the thing was – how I motivated my Black kids is that if they come in and they get right to work, they like to come in and see me do something silly. So I maybe do a flip or something (smiling). You know something silly – act like I am passed out - ‘cause I am in shock because - but they work for it. Why not do it? It’s not costing me anything, so keep it - switch it up all the time.

The experiences of the students in Chinere’s classes are integrated in their assignments. For example she demonstrated that they should use their trips to local parks or playgrounds as the nucleus of their narrative writing. Her instructional strategies and reward system are innovative and varied.

Respect and Acceptance

Q. Why are your students successful, and how do you connect that with the culturalization process that you have gone through in your life?

A. I let them know – I don’t care what color you are. I am going to be fair, and I treat everyone the same. And they know that I love them and that makes a difference too.

Q. Another question which evolved while I was listening to your first interview was about classroom management. You said that you wish you could ask your students why you were more successful with them than other teachers - especially Anglo teachers.

A. I don’t know what it is, and I don’t know why. But I did, I asked a couple of my

kids – why, and they told me that when they look at me, they see their mother. Or they see, you know, so I guess is like the thing I realize is the care or the love. I don't say the other teachers do not see the care of the love. I mean, I work really hard with them Ms. Henry, and I don't settle for less.

There is an observable difference between the conduct of the students of color when they are in Chinere's classroom and other teacher's classes. The difference in behavior seemed to be linked to the acceptance and respect that Chinere has for the students and the acceptance and role of their mothers.

Chinere's Analysis

When I paired the elements of Burke's Pentadic analysis, the "purpose" had the most influence on the other terms in Chinere's story because a recurring examples of why she became a teacher of students of color.

- 1.Purpose-Act: Why Chinere chose to be teacher ?
- 2.Purpose-Agent: Why Chinere feels she has high expectations of students of color?
- 3.Purpose-Agency: Why Chinere makes a difference in the student's academic success?
- 4.Purpose-Scene: Why Chinere's classroom validates her students' culture?

Purpose-Act: Why Chinere Chose to Teach?

Chinere's comment at the beginning of her story, "I always knew that I wanted to make a difference in children's life," captures the impact her choice to become a teacher has had on the students color in her classroom.

Purpose-Agent: Why Chinere Feels She Has High Expectations of Students of Color?

When Chinere reflects on her educational process as a person of color, she includes her personal experiences and how these have helped her to be confident that her students will be a success:

I guess they see me as one of them, you know. And I tell them that it was kind of

hard for me coming up – you know, just anything to reach them, but I am not lying to them. I like to share a lot of personable, you know, moments with them to let them know. Hey, I am human too. I once, you know, was in the 4th grade just as you and look where I am now. That helps!”

Chinere demonstrated high teacher efficacy when she commented that she is trying to encourage her students to surpass the educational level of their parents.

“*The students* (italics added) could be whatever they wanted to be, and that’s why I am here to help you to become whatever you want to be.”

Purpose-Agency – Why Chinere Makes a Difference in Students’ Academic Success?

Chinere does not hesitate to “bring current events right back into the class room.” and turn the role around.” As a teacher of color, Chinere took risks to heighten the awareness of her students about the importance of education.

Every time you turn on the television and stuff, you see a lot a minority people of color doing negative things and things like that...That’s going back to the education. If you have an education, you don’t have to go out robbing banks and things like that. You could have your own.

She also explained that she works extra hard because when she looks at the data, students of color are the lowest so she tries her best to boost them up. As Chinere teaches the students she includes analogies in order to help them to understand that education is a life-long process and a good attitude is required to be successful:

In life, you know, you have to have a good attitude, because it’s like a flat tire. If you have a flat tire, then you are not going to go anywhere. So I kind of relate

that, and I put it to their level so that they can understand it – the things that I am teaching them is not just fluff.

Purpose-Scene – Why Chinere’s Classroom Validates Her Students’ Culture?

She incorporates strategies in her classroom in order to make students feel that what they bring to the classroom is valid. Chinere used a “back pack” activity to find out the background of her students and all the things that are representative of them. She stated that this was an eye opening experience for her and the students. She asked each student to open their individual back packs and share information about the contents with the students. It was important that she became familiar the background of each student.

During her instructional activities, Chinere was able to integrate the information that she had acquired from getting to know the students. Students in her class were asked to write an essay about a memorable moment. She made sure that her students, who have never taken a vacation outside of the state, were encouraged to connect their memorable experiences to trips that they had made to local parks, community play grounds or visiting friends.

Freedom or Choice, Purpose/Will, Action

Chinere chose to be a teacher and her purpose was to make a difference in students’ lives. She has supported this decision by her actions 1) of not defining the students’ success by the educational level of their parents or, 2) of not limiting the effort she put into instruction based on the parental involvement.

Craig's Story: Broadening Horizons

Craig is a 30 year-old fourth grade teacher. She is Caucasian and during her first teaching year, she was a computer instructor. Afterwards she taught for 3 years in the state of Utah followed by 3 years in CyFair ISD, during which time she has been engaging fourth grade students in language arts/social studies. Craig was a very calm and focused participant. Her answers revealed a depth in her thought processes. She weighed each question carefully, and her answers capture her dedication to her teaching craft. She often closed her eyes and folded her arms during periods of reflection as if she was trying to recall and visualize the details of that would frame her response. There were times during the interview, however, that she used her hands to vigorously demonstrate the points she wished to share.

Her early recollection of how she became a teacher follows:

Well ever since elementary school (smiling), I have always wanted to become a teacher. My fourth grade teacher was also very influential, and I would always play, when I was little, “teacher” with all my friends in my basement in my house. It’s always been innate in me. My dad is a teacher, so just from him and just – it has just been a part of me. I always wanted to do it. Actually when I started going to college, I was majoring in math. I wanted to be a high school math teacher, but as I started my studies in college, I realized that it was the little ones that I wanted to work with because they are more moldable. I can’t - when they are older, it seems that more of them are more set in their ways, but when they are young, I can mould and change their views on life and try to make them

see different perspectives and head on a better road (animated). So I switched my major to elementary education, and I have loved it ever since.

Craig had several teachers in her family so the seed to become a teacher was planted in her from an early age. Her desire to be instrumental in changing students hinged on the high expectations that she has for the students.

High Expectations

Q. The question is when have you taken the opportunity to incorporate the strengths of student into the learning opportunity?

A. I was saying that I had a student that really, really excelled and caught on to the concept of writing step by step – capturing every motion, every reflection, dialogue – capturing everything. So I put him in charge of peer revising and editing, or even small group of kids that struggled. He was the “go-to” man, and that made him feel really proud that he caught on to this concept, and he just beamed - everything. He’d be, “Oh, I’ll help this person, I’ll help this person.” He just – so that’s actually – that was really what switched his mind to liking writing – realizing, you know, I can do this, and I can even help other people do this.

Q. How did you recognize that as a strength?

A. I was quick to see that he was the one that caught on to the body movements step-by-step...I would congratulate him, and then I just said, “Would you mind helping this one student? I see that you have captured what I have taught.” But I find that a lot of children, the more responsibility I give them in class, the more ownership they feel and the more proud they feel, therefore the more confident they feel, so they try even harder.

Q. When I asked you the question about how you captured the strengths of the students, you said that you were thinking of several or may be two examples, you shared only one?

A. Okay! It’s basically the same story, but not with writing. Again, it’s just I really try to find some thing that different in students. Obviously they have different strengths and weaknesses, but with every student, I try to find something that they are successful at, and then let them help others. Then they grow themselves.

Multi-role Teacher

Craig's involvement with her students extended beyond the walls of the classroom. Her comments below demonstrate how preoccupied she is with her students.

- Q. I am trying to find out how that has affected you personally - your experiences working with children of color.
- A. How has working with students of color – how has that affected me? As a person? Gosh, I almost feel that I have to hear what somebody else said because again I don't, I don't – I mean, I do go home, and I carry baggage that I am constantly thinking about certain students that struggle. I am constantly thinking, and I pray for them all the time. They are constantly on my mind, so as far as how does that affect me as a person. I mean, I sometimes feel that I can't get free because they are always on my mind. How can I help them? How can I help them feel valued? How can I help them be better? It's not an 8:00 – 3:00 thing. It's always on my mind. I sometimes dream about it. So how has it affected me as a person – gee I can't relax! (chuckle). I am constantly thinking about it.

Craig's students are always with her. She thinks about them, prays for them and her thoughts are so absorbed with them that she does not relax when she should. These actions suggest that Craig is always pondering about different ways to help her students beyond the academic subjects that she teaches.

Meeting the Needs of Students

As we discussed what it was like for Craig – teaching students of color, she mentioned that all kids needed the same thing. On further probing, I asked Craig what were her thoughts about the different needs of all children.

Right, right! Well me, personally, in my own classroom what I do with those different needs is I group them by need, and I meet them and group them in guided reading – small groups – every day, every day. I see my kids based on

what their needs are. And then, I meet with kids one and one - everyday. Do I meet with every one of my kids one-on-one every day? No. I get the ones that need that one-on-one. So I am constantly grouping kids by their needs and working with them that way.

Craig believes in dealing with controversial topics immediately. During a discussion on the Civil War and segregation, she encouraged students to assume roles as supporters of the Union and Confederacy. She questioned their choices and encouraged a forum that challenged the students' position on slavery. She was very aware of the Black students in her class and made a choice not "to ignore it (*slavery*) because if you ignore it then, they are going to talk about it at recess."

Hispanic students represent the majority of students in one of Craig's classes. During a discussion about a book whose story line centered on a family from Mexico, there was a "huge" discussion. "Once again, just helping the kids – I mean putting yourself in their situation – helping them see why they are feeling the way they are feeling and not...ignoring it."

As a teacher, Craig puts a lot of effort in interacting with the students in close proximity. She demonstrates such determination in setting the stage to meet with students in small groups and one-on-one, getting to know her students and giving them feedback in a timely manner. She is also sensitive to the needs of the students of color and encourages other students to think about their choices on controversial topics.

Respect and Acceptance

When Craig reflected on the role that teachers had in her life, she shared that there were at least two teachers who helped her before or after school when she struggled with content area subjects. This is how she remembers her teachers:

Q. How have your teachers impacted your teaching style?

A. So it's – to me what's impacted me the most is taking the time to help kids understand. If it takes a little time after school – or little moments here and there – one-on-one, I am going to make that effort because I know that I felt valued – my teacher cared for me because they took the time out to help me individually (deliberate and with emphasis on ME), and so I, in turn, want my kids to feel – I can go *to the teacher* (italics added) if I have a question, I can go up to her, I know that she will help me - She will take the time to help me. So that is probably the number one lesson I learned from my own teachers that I had - is to really show you care.

Q. So what has it been like for you, you know when you teach students of color. What has it been like for you?

A. Just the same – gosh - just the same. I don't, I don't teach any differently than I would anybody (emotional chuckle). I don't – they are kids - everyone is the same. They all need the same thing. They all need love. They all need to learn. They all need to feel valued. They all need social skills. They all - it doesn't matter. They all - I mean – they all need the same thing... When they come into my classroom, they know it's all about respect. They know if they want to get something from me they will have to ask politely, and they know that I am always going to treat them with respect. Always positive!

Q. When have you an opportunity to support children who did not feel that their culture was valued?

A. Again, it's just showing them that each one – doesn't matter who they are – they are valued – they have a purpose, they have a reason. And how I help them feel valued is when they raise their hand, I listen, and I listen to them. Like I said when they come in the room, I hug them. They feel like they are part of this community classroom, and when they speak and they have something to say – we foster respect (slower, deliberate expression) from kid to kid, from teacher to kid and from kid to teacher. Like – this is a classroom of respect. You are not going to disrespect anybody – their ideas, their culture – where they come from – that's not going to take place in this room

Q. What is your definition of an effective teacher of students of color?

A. One – caring, two – it’s always working with them one-on-one. Or, greeting them when they come in. Giving them positive praise - noticing very quickly the things they are doing right. Really positive reinforcement and that is with any child (with emphasis)!

Craig’s Analysis

The “purpose” seemed to provide significant insights into the power of Craig’s life story.

Application of Ratios in the Pentadic Analysis

1. Purpose-Act: Why Craig chose to teacher?
2. Purpose-Agent: Why Craig feels she has high expectations of students of color?
3. Purpose-Agency: Why Craig makes a difference in the students’ academic success?
4. Purpose-Scene: Why Craig’s classroom validates her students’ culture?

Purpose-Act: Why Craig Chose to Teach?

Craig expressed a desire to, “change *the students’* (italics added) views on life and try to make them see different perspectives and head on a better road.” Changing the views in life can have an impact all students in classrooms. Since Craig taught a diverse student population, any change would impact both students of color and other students.

Purpose-Agent – Why Craig Feels She Has High Expectations of Students of Color?

I found examples which clearly supported why Craig feels excited about and consumed with teaching her students. When she exclaims, “It’s always on my mind. I sometimes dream about it.” She felt confident that she could help her students because she had examples in her life of teachers helping her even when she was a “slow reader.” She stated that, “If it takes a little time after school, or little moments here and there –

one on one, I am going to make that effort because I know that I felt valued ...because *the teachers* (italics added) took the time out to help me individually....” Craig describes her greatest accomplishment as when she saw kids, who have struggled with a topic, get it.

Purpose-Agency: Why Craig Makes a Difference in Students’ Academic Success?

As a student teacher Craig shared that she learned a powerful lesson from her assisting teacher. It was that students need to know that you care before they will learn from you. Craig has made a difference in her students’ lives because she cares for them. She strongly expressed that her students need love. “It does not really matter who they are – they are valued – they have a purpose, and they have a reason.”

Purpose-Scene: Why Craig’s Classroom Validates the Students’ Culture?

Craig explained that the students are expected to treat each other with respect. She created a classroom in which she modeled how to be responsive to her students’ culture. She teaches objectively about the Civil War, and helps the students to understand the pros and cons of the event, and to understand controversy. She also includes books about Hispanics and does so to help the students understand that it is advantageous to express their feelings and not to ignore them.

Freedom or Choice, Purpose/Will, Action

Craig’s initial goal was to become a high school teacher, but she later decided to teach elementary school children. Her purpose was to concentrate on younger students in order to “mold” and broaden their horizons. Her actions were embedded in the

recognition that students needed love and care and she willingly provided that kind of learning environment.

Diane's Story: Respecting Everyone

Diane is White and in her fourteenth year of teaching. She is the most experienced teacher of all the informants. She is an outstanding, passionate educator in her late 30's. During our interview she was in her 9th year of teaching in CyFair ISD. She also taught 5 years in another district in the Houston area. She articulated her responses with clarity and sometimes tremendous deliberation. She was steadfast in her attention during the interviews.

Her emotions surfaced several times, but particularly as she reflected on her experiences with her grandmothers who often reminded Diane that everyone needed to be treated with respect. She was particularly close to one of her grandmothers who was very proud of Diane's accomplishments in school. With great emotion, Diane shared that her grandmother was "everything to me." Diane began her story with an account of her childhood memories of "playing school."

I remember when I was a little, bitty kid that I would sit with my dolls lined up. Sitting in my room, and I would give them each a piece of paper and pencil, and then I would have a chalkboard. My mom got me a chalkboard for Christmas, and I would do little things on the chalkboard like write their ABC's, write their numbers and do different things like that. So I can remember from being little practicing and doing little things like that. I would read my books to them. And then my aunt was a teacher and my uncle was a teacher....I kind of knew right

away that I wanted to be a teacher – elementary always. I never wanted anything else.

High Expectations

When we talked about values, the following exchange about high expectations evolved:

Q. What values would you not want to compromise as an educator?

A. Well – definitely, I will never, never compromise the hard work. I believe that you have to work hard at this job, because if you don't, then it shows with the kids. You have to love it, and you have to work hard for it...With the kids, I expect hard work also. You don't come into my class and not do your work. And if there is not hard work going on, well then there will be some consequences for it – especially in 5th grade, they have the consequence of not going to junior high –you know not staying with their friends. But probably putting in as much effort as you can – giving 100% to whatever that you do.

Multi-role Teacher

Diane shared the role she assumes in her students' lives. In response to a question about her view of the role of education in a person's life, She responded.

And so education is not only teachers, but it's parents and family members, you know, teaching those kids. And I feel that when I am here in the school, I am these kids everything. I am their "everything" (expressing great emotions)! You know, I am their moms, their grandmas, their teacher, their leader, their nurse. I mean – I am their "everything!" And so my job as an educator is to make sure that they move on with the skills that they need to move on.

This was Diane's reaction when she was called on to assist a female student with a very personal matter:

I mean, this is something completely new. In 15 years of teaching that I have

never had to do. It's amazing to me that a child doesn't have a parent who would teach them that – just talk to them and tell them that this is what you do. And so, over the years I mean, oh my goodness!

The commitment and passion about her role in the students' lives are captured in Diane's words above. As I listened to her repetition of the sentences, "I am their everything," I was convinced of her resolve to do whatever it took to contribute to the education of the students who enter her classroom.

Meeting the Needs of Students

Formal assessments are only one of the tools by which the academic achievement of students may be determined. Diane shared her methods of determining how students' needs are met in her classrooms.

Q. What do you use to guide your assessments?

A. Now that's more difficult because I use all different kind of things. It depends on what it is that I am teaching. For example, we are doing a novel right now. We are doing "Bridge to Taribithia," and the assessment that I have is a writing assignment because I did not want it to be a comprehension kind of thing, because there is so much more to a book like that than just comprehension questions. So in that case, I use internal questions, "How did the book make you feel? Why do you think the author did this? I ask more holistic questions. But there are other times when I feel I have to do comprehension questions – lots of rubrics - so I make my own usually.

Q. Tell me about the strategies you have developed to teach children of color?

A: Well we do different type of activities. We range from getting up and doing presentations. We do group a lot. We do stations. We do - I don't do a lot of independent activity, because I find that children learn a lot better from each other than they do absolutely could by themselves – even with me. But they do a lot of talking and discussing - my room is usually always full of activity and a little noisy because they talk a lot - And you got to see a little bit of that!

Diane frames her classroom activities around the strengths of her students of color. She recognizes the importance of “student-to-student’ interactions in group work, which promotes communication and sharing of ideas and values. She also encourages her students to include their feelings in their responses. This is an acknowledgement and acceptance of the emotional aspect that underlies students’ lived experiences.

Respect and Acceptance

When Diane visited her grandparents’ home, she soon internalized that when she was in their house, “...we treated them with nothing but respect. But the one thing they made sure that I was aware of was that you treat everyone like you want to be treated.” That lesson from her grandparents in addition to her own experiences in school paved the way for Diane’s respect and acceptance of children of color.

The only horrible memory I have of one of my teachers is doing division problems on the board because I was horrible in Math – horrible! It’s my worst subject. I remember standing up in the front of the room trying to do a division problem, and not being able to, and just feeling all these eyes staring at me. And I was mortified at it, and so I never do that with kids now a days, because I know how it feels (laughter) I never put kids on the spot because I just know how horrible it is.

After experiencing such humiliation, Diane recognized that students will enter her classroom with different tools, and that it was her responsibility as an educator to respect and accept them, not contribute to their feelings of inadequacy.

Diane elaborated on the most important lesson that she had to learn for herself as a teacher of children of color. The following words capture how she demonstrates respect and acceptance of her students.

I had to learn, and I am still learning that all children are not made the same. All children are not raised like me, or raised like my own personal children were raised. And when kids tell me their parents passed away, and they are ten, or they tell me - like I got told yesterday that their dad was pulled over and got put in jail for warrants, you know. And the most important thing is to see what these kids come in with and help them the best that I can - the eight hours I have them in here with me. And love them, and cherish them, and teach them what they need to be taught - show them respect. Then, that's the most important thing - I think.

Diane's Analysis

The “agency” was the driving force behind five components in the dramatism of Diane's life story as the motive to be an effective teacher of students of color evolved.

1. Agency-Act: How Diane chose to be a teacher?
2. Agency-Agent: How Diane manifests her feelings about her educational expectation of students of color?
3. Agency-Purpose: How Diane makes a difference in the student's academic success?
4. Agency-Scene: How Diane's classroom validates her students' culture?

Agency-Act: How Diane Chose to Become a Teacher?

Diane never wanted to do anything else but to teacher. She made a decision to teach English as Second Language (ESL) students. During a reflective section of the interview, she explained that she belonged to a White middle class family, but “going

into education, you had to learn to be more diverse and see that people are just people and they all want to do is to learn.”

Agency-Agent - How Diane Feels About Her Expectations of Students of Color?

She is confident that she can make a difference. She describes herself as a hard worker who also expects her students to work hard. She refers to her first teaching experiences in areas where the students were from low socio-economic background. After she was invited to one of her former students' graduation, she said, “It's a moment when you look in those faces, and you think – wow, I had something to do with this! You know it's a pride thing.”

Agency-Purpose - How Diane Makes a Difference in Student's Academic Success?

Diane prepares students for “life.” She includes discussion about the students' plans for the future in her classrooms.

I know the types of things that I need to teach these kids. I know what my job is and I know what I need to do. And, when I first started I was very shy. I guess, you know and inhibited, and now no – not so much. If I need something I am going to speak up and get what I need. If I want something or want something changed, I am going to change it. I mean, my job is to teach these kids – to teach them not only the TEKS – like we are supposed to (chuckle), but to get them ready for life...especially in 5th grade, you do a lot of teaching about socializing and you know, what you do you want to be when you get older. What do you want people to remember you for or as? And that is what I am most proud of

– just having more confidence and know what I have to teach these kids because I have raised two kids.

Diane has also drawn from her own experiences of being embarrassed by one of her own teachers to drive her decision about creating a learning environment in which students are not ill at ease.

I try a lot of strategies. I don't just focus on one, and every year I do something completely different based on the kids that I have. I may never have taught something before previously, but then I see there is a need for it. So it depends on the children and their needs.

In Diane's classroom, she assumes many roles and describes herself as the "students' everything."

Agency-Scene - - How Diane's Classroom Validates the Students' Culture?

Her instructional decisions include minimizing independent activities and maximizing student-to-student interaction. The latter encourages the sharing of ideas and promotes the exposure to the values and feelings of all students. She explains, "I find that children learn a lot better from each other than they do absolutely could by themselves - even with me." Diane's instructional strategies demonstrate care and respect for the variation in cultural differences of the diverse students who are in her classrooms. The learning process in her class is clearly defined by respecting everyone's opinions.

Freedom or Choice, Purpose/Will, Action

Diane chose the teaching profession knowing that she will have to work hard to teach English as Second Language students. The decisions she has made regarding classroom instruction include (a) identifying the needs of her students and finding activities that meet their needs, and (b) including holistic questions, instead of lower level questions, that capture the feelings of students and give students more opportunities to add depth to their answers. The underlying purpose in teaching is to prepare students for “life.”

Rachel’s Story: Protecting Students

Rachel is a White third grade ESL teacher in her 40’s. She has taught a total of seven years in CyFair ISD. Rachel is a sensitive educator whose story is replete with examples of the high expectations that she has for all of her students. This is Rachel’s recollection of her earliest memories of how she became a teacher:

As a child, I hated school actually, and I did not like teachers - I thought they were mean and cruel because I had one. But what I remember the most is that I couldn’t read the way they thought I should read. So I got smacked - back then they could smack you - so I got smacked on the head. I had to sit on a stool in the corner and stuff because I couldn’t read the appropriate way. I would read sometimes from right to left. Sometimes I totally just would skip words or phrases as I was reading. Now if they asked me about it I could tell them, but that did not matter because I did not read it orally the way they thought I should. So I remember – this is horrible – I would never want to do that with people.

As Rachel articulated her negative experiences in school, there was visible pain on her facial expressions. This was one of the emotional sections of our interview. She was eager to share, and my curiosity was peaked to find out how those negative experiences impacted her decision to become a teacher.

High Expectations

During Rachel's discussion of the role of education, she mentioned that "all students are the same." I probed for further clarification:

- Q. So when you say – all students are the same – how are they the same?
- A. The inside - the part that counts, and their brains and their hearts. There is no difference. They are all capable of learning. They are all capable of love and being loved, and they have to know that they are loved, and once you get them safe, and like they feel that you believe in them, they will do anything for you and they will learn any and everything, and they will push themselves. So it does not matter if my student is Asian, it doesn't matter if my student is Hispanic. It doesn't matter if my student is Black. I own you sort of because you are my child. While you are here, you will do what I say and learn what I tell you. And they do. They amaze me every year. They blow my socks off.

Rachel's answer suggests that she is hesitant to use race as a criterion to determine the needs of the students who she teaches. This is problematic because to ignore her students' racial differences may also suggest that she is devaluing the importance of diversity. Her comment, however, is inconsistent with her statement that she is aware that the African American boys who come into her class are very sensitive if they are not given the respect that they think they deserve.

Another example of Rachel's high expectation of her students was given when she passionately explained that children need someone that truly believe that they can accomplish things. "You will do this. I don't want to hear no.

They are not allowed to say the word “can’t” in my classroom. You are not allowed (chuckle). She continued:

And at first in the beginning of the year – they look at me and they laugh. But by about two months in, I am starting to see a lot more consideration. They are kinder to each other. They are trying harder. They work harder at stuff.

An example of the dialogue that you will hear between Rachel and her students as she reacted to work that was turned in would begin:

Do you feel that’s the very best thing you can give me? And nine times out of ten, they turn back, and they redo it. Because they know themselves – and that’s what you have to teach them too - they have to learn what’s good enough and what’s not. In that way they are setting their own goals. And as they attain them, they understand the importance of the education. And that’s their whole life – set a goal, attain it, and make sure it’s your best efforts. So education is good, but it’s also life.

One of Rachel’s accomplishments of which she is most proud of is when her students succeed. She described a student who was retained and should have been in Junior High, but was in fact in 5th grade. Although he struggled and could barely read anything, Rachel discovered a series of books that he liked, introduced him to these books and continued to “push him and keep after him.” He finally began to enjoy reading and eventually was admitted to advanced classes.

Rachel clearly expects her students to succeed in school, and she believes that she is very instrumental in their success. There appears to be no other options in her

classroom arena. She sees the “inside” of her students. It is the only part that matters.

Multi-role Teacher

Rachel spoke at length about the degree of involvement that she has had with all her students. The following excerpts demonstrate examples of her involvement:

I like keeping track of them – trying to make sure, and if they are not doing right I go to their ball games too. This is not a life that I imagined that I would have had – to be honest. I figured that I would be stuck in a hole.

In reference to a conversation that Rachel had with a single parent who was concerned about whether or not she should have her “shy” child tested for special services. Rachel said:

At the beginning of the year he would mouth, and you would have to almost read his lips. Now he is at the point when he will talk to me. Now, he won't get up and talk in front of the class...He will talk to me. And I talk to mom. She is a single parent – has a job. She said everybody thought that I should get him tested because he is not doing as well as he should. I said, “How is he not?” She said because he won't talk. I said, “But he does talk, not as loud as they would like, not the way that they want, but he does talk, as he gets more confident, he will talk - louder.” It comes from that. He does fine for me. He made “commended” for me. And he works hard for me, but I don't embarrass him by making him go up. I mean I will pull his “teeth” – I pull – get that little bit out of him. He now talks in my literacy group – the group can hear him – which he did not do in the beginning of the year.

One of the values that Rachel embraces is that of protecting the children who she teaches. Her words best describe how she protects these students.

From other students, you know I make them feel like they are protected – like they are safe. If someone is picking on them, I intervene. And usually will explain to this particular student, you can't pick on this particular student because they are in my class, and I don't allow that to happen to them. So I think it is important that they know that the teacher is there for them and has their safety – physically, mentally, whatever. You know if someone is calling them names, or whatever, I'll step in. Usually it's on the playground that's where you run into it. Or walking by the hallway – “I know that dumb old kid!” Or they will holler something or make faces. And I always stop, and I make a point – you may not do that to my student, and they just – Oh! The look on their faces (laughter)! But they start learning that if they are in my classes, most of the kids don't bother them, because I will come find them, and tell them, and ask them, “Why did you do *that* (italics added)? Or tell them you may not pick on them, you may not do that to them.” I don't know, but they are mine.

Rachel's actions demonstrate that she is the caretaker of her students inside and outside of the classroom. She touches the affective as well as the cognitive dimensions of her students. Since Rachel is involved with the whole child, she is an effective advocate for decisions about services that should or should not be recommended for students.

Meeting the Needs of Students

As Rachel discussed how she knew that the needs of her students were being met, the topic of assessment emerged.

- Q. How about assessment? What information do you use to guide the assessments?
- A. Then their reading - their interpretation - their comprehension is based on how they interpret the words - what word meaning they give it. A lot of that is based on their background knowledge and experience. So when I assess - I have to look at that too. Is there more than one meaning, or a different or alternative meaning to words? We go through that too - try and expose them, so they look at their clues. I don't give them real bad grades as long as they are making an effort to learn (laughter). I tell them, "A grade in progress" (laughter).
- Q. Tell me about the strategies you have developed to teach students of color?
- A. That's when we use group work a lot of time. You put those that have - are strong leaders - you put them to be in charge of the group because they are organized. They get everyone to do their part. Yes, sometimes projects - instead of doing paper/book, we will do a project on it. And we will - so we assign roles, and you can get the ones who are kind of very quiet, but they are very good at art, very good at writing, they just don't like to get up and talk. So they become the reporter or the illustrator, or something like that, and that way they are still 100% involved in the group and participating, and doing all of the work. They are learning all parts, but they are doing the part that they are comfortable with. I hope that helps.
- Q. What would be the reason or rationale for you to do that?
- A. They have to become comfortable, and it comes down to "no fear." They shouldn't be afraid to show what they are good at. Now sometimes, they have to be pushed and nudged to do something that they are not comfortable at. That's part of life too. So I do that occasionally - throw that in there. You know what - you were reporter last time, and I know that you are an awesome writer, and I know that you love to write and tell what happened. I would like you to be the one in charge. I would like you to be the one to decide who would be good at something (using an encouraging voice). And they need to do that - to feel it out - to see if they get some confidence and can do it, because it is in a safe environment then. Because they have had the experience in the group, they have seen the role played. They know what should be done. So hopefully, it helps.

Rachel identifies herself as a teacher who creates a low-anxiety environment for her students. She actively observes the strengths of her students, and then they are guided to initially learn within their comfort zone, and then to assume roles that have been demonstrated by other students.

Respect and Acceptance

Rachel's story also captures her perception of an effective teacher of students of color.

You have to treat - let them know that you respect them. They want that respect. A lot of the African American boys that I have had, they are very strong on that. They want respect, and if they feel like you don't - like don't "dis" me. Like well - "I'll try not, but if I do it, I don't intend to - you are going to have to tell me." Yea! I think the fact that you are open to them and you listen to their ideas, and you show them that you value it. And ultimately, they learn - they know, if you are just "pulling the wool over their eyes" -if you are actually listening (laughter).

- Q. What values would you not want to compromise as an individual and also as an educator?
- A. The respect they had for their parents and their own families and their family values. I don't want to change any of that. Because if they come in very negative. Ok - I do want them exposed to see that part, but there are others - there are a lot of them - like one girl said, "Can I go home with you?" I told her no. She asked why. I said because it would change you. I said, "I like you just the way you are. For you to come home with me then you might be different. You might be not as nice." So I said, "Where you are at is perfect!" They need to know that where they are coming from makes them an important person.

Rachel supports the respect that her students show to their families, and she is

also cognizant that there is resentment if there is the appearance of lack of respect to African American boys. It is evident that her acceptance of students is not contingent on them changing as demonstrated by her refusal accommodate one of her student's request to live with Rachel at her home.

Rachel's Analysis

The agency, in Rachel's story, is the focus of discussion in this pentadic analysis.

1. Agency-Act: How Rachel chose to be a teacher?
2. Agency-Agent: How Rachel manifests her feelings about her educational expectation of students of color?
3. Agency-Purpose: How Rachel makes a difference in the student's academic success?
4. Agency-Scene: How Rachel's classroom validates her students' culture?

Agency-Act: How Rachel Chose To Become a Teacher?

Rachel's evolution to being a third grade ESL teacher began when she was asked to tutor the neighborhood students in her neighborhood. She was very surprised at her success because she had struggled as reader in school. Both her neighbors and her husband were very instrumental in convincing her to begin teacher training while she was in her 30's.

Agency-Agent: How Rachel Feels about Her Expectations of Students of Color?

She suggests that students will do anything once someone believes in them. She has observed her students pushing themselves and "blowing her socks off" every year when the standardized tests results are received. Because her expectations are so high for her students, she does not permit her students to say "can't" in her classrooms.

Agency-Purpose: How Rachel Makes a Difference in Students' Academic Success?

It is not unusual to see Rachel attending the extracurricular sporting activities of

her students. Although there has been an increase of special education referrals for students of color, Rachel shared an example where she did not support, even the parent's request, to have her student tested. The end result was that this student made enough progress that he was no longer considered for special education services.

Agency-Scene : How Rachel's Classroom Validates the Students' Culture?

Students in Rachel's classroom are encouraged to be proud of who they are and the culture of their families. During instruction and assessment, the background of the students and their experiences are considered especially in the use of vocabulary. Rachel accepts the different meanings that are attached to words and validates the students' experiences. Rachel continuously models respect to all her students.

Freedom or Choice, Purpose/Will, Action

Although Rachel's experiences were negative at school, and she thought that teachers were "mean", her effectiveness with neighborhood children and the encouragement of her husband was so overwhelming that she chose to pursue a career in education when she experienced success with tutoring her neighbors' children. Her actions that contribute to the educational success of students include, (a) protecting her students, (b) pushing them to do their best, and (c) supporting them in non-school events.

Linde's Creation of Coherence

The analysis of the participants' narratives was also be done through Linde's(1993) creation of coherence by identifying continuity, order, and the causality of the life stories. The three major themes that emerged as I focused on the cultural socialization process were: (1) valuing the culture of others, (2) living in countries

outside of the United States or speaking languages other than English, and (3) belonging to a family compromising of people of color.

According to Linde (1993, p. 100), the characteristics of self are "...maintained and exchanged through language" are (1) the continuity of self through time, (2) the relationships of self to others, and (3) the reflexivity of self. During this analysis, the continuity of self may explain how the participants' past is not only relevant to but is also related to the present. The emergence of a "self" that is unique but simultaneously related to others may give some insight into, a) the space which teachers claim for their separate "selves," and also b) the interaction that the teachers have with their students. The third characteristic of self which occurs during the process of narrating may identify the emergence of a functioning social self that "can be reflected on or related to as an other" (Linde, 1993, p. 105). The audience helps to determine whether or not the narrative is about the self as it relates to the 'self' or 'other' (Linde, 1993).

The focus of this section of my analysis is to look at how these three characteristics of self impact the narrators' awareness of the relationship between their experiences and the cultural radar guiding instructional decisions. In determining the process for analyzing the life stories of the participants, I identified the construction of coherence that was connected to the participants' cultural socialization process. Cultural socialization is being used in this study to frame the personal and professional experiences that influence the cultural values, beliefs, and traditions that are evident in educators' instructional decisions and interactions with students of color. This process

may contribute to the connections that both the interviewee and the participants make between the construction of the participants' cultural socialization and their life stories.

Jane's Cultural Socialization

Jane is a Caucasian teacher who is in her late 30's who teaches fourth grade students. As Jane reflected on her childhood, her perception that she lived in a bad part of town seemed to be influenced by her parents' view about people who were different.

Continuity of Self Through Time

She began her story:

My parents lived in - they lived in a bad part of town, and my parents were prejudiced, which I never liked, and the bad part of town, you know had African Americans. Typically, it was mostly either White or African American...And it was segregated back then. But there were bad parts of town, and that is where my parents grew up and they did not want to be there.

My dad's side of the family - everyone was on welfare- and so my parents were like you know, we are not going to be that way. We were poor, not poor, you know by today's standard, but we did not have much money. So, I know that my mom's side of the family was very discriminatory towards my dad's side because they were welfare, and they -she looked down on them. And so you know (emotional) you don't ever really think about, but that is, you know, that was, I was hearing messages of you know, and they definitely were racists.

Jane's reaction to her parents' racism during her childhood was the beginning of her journey towards an inclusive perspective.

I think I had a very strong sense of protecting myself and so I think part of my defense mechanism when I was being abused- whether it was physically or verbally was really bad was like - they might say, "You are no good." Just very hateful and I would, in my head, I would tell myself well "you are ignorant, you are stupid, you are not educated," and that was how I kind of taught myself I guess a protective mechanism(elevated, animated voice), so I wouldn't believe what they were telling me.

In sixth grade Jane began to realize that she was different from her parents. She

explained that she started to find her identity. She rebelled against disrespecting people on welfare and looking down on people of color. Jane did not share my definition of “people of color” as inclusive of both Blacks and Hispanics. Jane acknowledges that her husband was different and expected her parents to be “horrified” when she married a Hispanic. This is how she describes her decision to marry a person of color:

I definitely never believed my parents as far as their racists’ beliefs. I just always rebelled against them. I am sure they were horrified. My husband was a person of color in their eyes. He, to me he wasn’t. He is Hispanic. You know, he was born in this country. He is an American who happens to speak Spanish, and his parents are from South America. But I never took well to being told what to do. I am definitely an independent thinker.

Jane also shared her journey to embracing the outward show of emotions to which was introduced when she married her Hispanic husband. She was unhappy as a child, but while she dated and met her future husband’s family, she became enamored with the openness of the Hispanic culture. “I was always drawn to that – always, always, always, you know, greet each other with a hug and a kiss.” That kind of interaction was so different from the home environment in which she grew up. Her family members did not even touch each other.

In her role as a teacher of students of color, Jane continues to demonstrate the characteristics of the “self” that values people of color. When asked, for example, how she validated the cultural experiences of students of color. She answered:

I think just – I just take people as people. You know – they are nice to you. That’s how I have kind of always been as was a kid – not judging someone by race. But, they are a nice person – so in my mind I was thinking – where I was always hearing negative, hateful messages from my parents – thinking - how could you say that? That person is nice. Just because you know, or you have met one angry, horrible example of a person, and they happen to be of that race, that does not mean that they are – that the whole race is lost (elevated voice) you

know, you just can't do that! I just always had an understanding from a young age that that was just not fair. It was not valid to conduct your life and treat people *like that* {italics added}. I just carried that over into the classroom.

In addition to her decision not to be racist, she does not want to be known as the teacher who teaches to the test. She emphatically declares that history is skewed if teachers gloss over the surface of topics such as the Civil Rights, the Holocaust, Native Americans and the Japanese interment camps - "There is one sentence in the book - sorry, I am not going to teach that way!"

The Relationship of Self to Others

Jane created a self that separated her both from her parents' and some of her professional colleagues' beliefs and practices. Jane gave an example of what transpired while planning a social studies lesson on the Holocaust with other teachers. She remembered that one of her colleagues commented that there was only one question on the district benchmark on the topic, and strongly criticized Jane for spending so much time planning for one question.

When Jane was asked to comment on her definition of an effective teacher of students of color she said:

I think you need to be aware of their cultures and the differences - and be sensitive to that, and I think you need to address issues, if they come up. You know if there is conflict. I think you need to be sensitive and understand the kids and where they are coming from, because if you don't, you know, you are going to have a wall where you can't reach them.

In presenting information so that she would help to build "well-rounded" students, she also established another self with her students - one that fostered a positive interaction between teacher and students. "I come in to do my job, but I personally

consider my job the whole student, not just academics.” Another component of Jane’s job as a teacher is the relationship that she establishes with the parents. She explains what she has done to be able to interact successfully with the caregivers of her students.

I took Spanish all four years, and my parents wanted me to take German, and all my sisters took German, and I refused. I said that it was a language that I would never use. I insisted on Spanish. They let me do it. I always joke like – who was smarter there (laughter)? Obviously, I made the right choice.

Jane is fluent in Spanish and believes that her knowledge of the language has helped her to set up a good environment in the classroom and a positive relationship between the students’ parents and herself.

The Reflexivity of Self

As we approached the end of our second interview, Jane also talked about her perception between the connection of her students’ success and her own cultural socialization. She recalls that she had to challenge the messages that her parents tried to give her and in turn Jane challenges the students to evaluate the messages that they are getting, because sometimes “adults make mistakes.” She was very determined not to be like her parents. She believes that she is a better person overall who is very aware that student are “Not all the same. They are not cookie-cutter kids. So I don’t think you can teach that way. I don’t test that way.”

As she continued to reflect, I asked her what her feelings were about the interview and all that we had covered.

I think it’s been great (laughter) because I have realized things that I hadn’t connected – you know. I know my background (elevated voice). I am very aware of how it affects me as a person. You know, not just as a teacher, but I was able to - I don’t know - kind of figure things out a little bit better.

Jane's marriage to a person of color, her passion about valuing individuals based on their character rather than race, and her determination to teach, in depth, topics that might be considered controversial are evidence of her refusal to support racism that her parents promoted during Jane's childhood. Consequently, this life-long opposition to racial prejudice is ingrained in the instructional decisions that she makes while teaching. Her reflection highlights her awareness of the impact of the epiphany that has shaped her cultural socialization.

Rita's Cultural Socialization

Continuity of Self Through Time

Rita's compares the school she attended as a child, in another country, to a boot camp that was un motivating for students. She is in her mid 30's and was born in one of the Asian countries. Her experiences as a volunteer in her son's classroom in the United and States in addition to the encouragements of parents and teachers motivated her to become an educator who would be approachable, fun to work with and could make a difference in students' lives.

Although her parents could afford to buy her the resources for school, it was the motivational part of education that was lacking for Rita.

It's just the classroom itself. When I think back, I am going – oh, my God (laughter). How did I sit through that day? Sixty kids sitting all day long? Here they have so much flexibility, so much freedom.

Rita's remembers memorizing whatever her teacher instructed her to commit to memory without questioning her teacher. Rita compares the personal interaction with

her own teachers to the interaction that she has with her students during instruction.

Even to this day, sometimes as I am teaching a class, I wonder why I never asked questions to my teacher. I have to go back and research and investigate and find out myself before I teach it to the kids because these kids will ask why. They want to know why, and as teachers here we are expected to go in depth and tell them the reason behind and all that. And we as kids back then, we just took it for granted – the teacher is telling me to do it, I'll just do it. No questions *were* {italics added} asked, we just did it.

As we talked about Rita's experience in the high school, she recalls being bored to tears, and she would just doodle all day long. She admits that she was smart enough to survive, but as a teacher she tries her best to be the opposite of what she experienced.

Maybe that's where I get this motivation to be a creative teacher here because I want to give these kids the opposite of what I experienced. Now you see why my background is affecting what I am here.”

The Relationship of Self to Others

Rita defines herself as an ESL student. English is her second language because she speaks two other languages from her birth country. As a child she had to come up with some tricks, by herself, to remember what she was taught. She shares these self taught, creative tricks using hand actions, lots of pictures and charts in her classroom. “Pictures do explain things better, and they get it (animated)! Like I said, I was into art and I like to draw...It all ties in - my personality with what I am doing in the classroom.”

She was very thoughtful in describing her perceived connection between the

cultural socialization process she went through and the success of her students of color.

And sometimes I may say things different. I may pronounce things different, and I say, “Hey, that’s Rita’s way of saying it – because I am different, right? I speak a different language a home, and if I have an accent, it’s okay. You can understand what I am saying.” And so – just laugh at myself. Because there are some kids who kind of feel conscious about speaking because they may speak different or they may have an accent, or they have a hard time speaking, but if they see the teacher laughing at herself and her own mistakes, then they learn to accept themselves too.

After going through her personal experiences as an ESL student, Rita understood the challenges that her students face. She not only includes the survival tricks that she used in her personal struggles during classroom instruction , but also openly establishes a connection with her students because like many of her students of color, English is not her first language.

The Reflexivity of Self

Rita’s comment regarding the interview process was powerful evidence that she did self checking and correcting from the time we first met until our second interview. Rita had prepared several pages of notes for follow-up during our second interview which indicated that she was reflecting even when we were not face-to-face. Her first thoughts about the interview was that although she realizes that she reflects daily on what she does in the classroom, she was able to go in depth into her past.

And kind of realizing – oh I do this because of this past experience I have had! So reflections of those kinds have really opened my eyes and opened my heart, and I have enjoyed this experience. And I think that we all need to take the time to think about our past – really, you know. Childhood and schooling, and all that, really go back, because it really affects us - a lot more than we think. Who we are as educators and the values that we come with, the philosophies that we have, really are affected by what we have had in the distant past. Not all of us take the time to think about it (chuckle). Not that we have the time to think about it. But you made sure that I thought about it, and I think that you have opened my eyes in many ways.

The continuity in Rita's story is centered around her experiences as a student in an unstimulating educational environment. Her instructional strategies, including those that expose her private challenges as an ESL student and an adult, are shared with her students as she interacts with them. Rita's reflexive self helps her to realize the connection between why she creates a stimulating learning environment and the boring classroom experiences she had early in her life.

Chinere's Cultural Socialization

The Continuity of Self Through Time

Twenty- two year-old Chinere is the only African American participant, and she knew that she wanted to be a teacher every since she was in the fourth grade. She always knew that she wanted to make a difference in children's lives. She lived in a neighborhood that had predominantly Black and Hispanic families.

So every summer, starting in fourth grade, I'd ask my teachers for all their left-over papers, and so I would go home with tons of it. My parents were not pleased, but it kept me entertained. So what I would do is gathered my neighborhoods friends and things, and I would teach them.

She credits her maternal grandmother and parents for inspiring her to always go to school and do not give up. During that same time, she also made a difference in the lives of her grandmother's friends who were in their 60's and 70's. Her contributions included: running errands, helping them clean, and washing their hair. Chinere started young because, "I was one of the ones who were just willing to know what's going on – wanted to be involved."

When we talked about how taking care of others transfer into teaching, she responded:

I think it transfers because, first of all - now I try to tell my kids, you know what - don't complain – it important - an education – the same way I was taught, but in different ways. Like – it's like a light go off on me when I see they are getting something that I knew they were struggling with, and I have been struggling to teach them. I think that - like everything in my past that I have learned it helps here in the classroom, in a sense.

As a child of color, Chinere planted the seed of going the extra mile for others, not only to help the predominantly Hispanic and Black peers during the summer, but also to assist the elderly with their household chores.

Since Chinere grew up in a two-parent home, she wants to be considered part of

the “village” that helps to raise children - especially those who are being parented by one person. Now as a teacher she works extra hard because students of color have the lowest scores on the standardized tests. She also adds, “So I don’t care what it takes – recess - something special – whatever. I am going to make sure that they do what they have to do to understand so that they could be successful in life – so they could grow.”

Relationship of Self to Others

Chinere used the expression of “being entertained” when she taught her siblings and peers while in the fourth grade. She expanded more on the meaning of entertainment and how it transferred from ‘personal’ entertainment to “student” entertainment that was organized around the interaction with her students. She is no longer the recipient of entertainment. She provides entertainment.

So yes, I say it’s entertaining because not only, back when I was a little kid, it was a little joke then, we just did it - you know. It’s a game. But now this is serious. To entertain my students and things like that - I try not to keep it dull. I try to keep it exciting in different ways so that they are entertained as well. Not only entertained, but that they can take something with them as well when they move on. So yes, I really think it is entertainment.

The Reflexivity of Self

As Chinere reflected on the self that has emerged, she comments, “I think it is wonderful because it helped me realize – I do things for my students daily...and this has helped me to reflect back on the past, and even things that I want to do better myself in the future.” With a great deal of enthusiasm and hope, she shares that this interview

process has been a catalyst for new ideas and a reminder of the great things that she can do to help others.

Chinere's story is a powerful example of how the drive she had to make a difference in the community as a fourth grade student spiraled into her teaching career. The continuity in doing whatever it takes to help others from childhood to adulthood is evident. She enjoyed being entertained by her siblings and neighborhood friends in her world when she pretended to be their teacher. Now she makes sure that her students are entertained by challenging and differentiated instruction. As she reflects on what she has already done, her drive continues, but without limits on what she may do to continue to make a difference.

Craig's Cultural Socialization

The Continuity of Self Through Time

Her dad is a teacher, and education was always valued in Craig's house. Craig, who is in her early 30's, is the youngest of the four White teachers who participated in this research. She spent a lot of time in the basement of her house playing "teacher" with all her friends. As she pursued her teaching career, she was drawn to work with elementary-aged students who would be more "moldable" than high school students. Her goal was to change students' views on life "and try to make them see different perspectives and head on a better road."

When we began the first interview, I soon realize that Craig had a strong religious background. She recollects that the cultural value that was passed down to her from her parents was religion. "Growing up – it was all Caucasian, pretty much. It was

very – not a huge minority...I wasn't exposed to – in fact, I can't even recollect in elementary school different ethnic groups.” When asked Craig to share what prepared her to teach students of color, she hesitated and then it was as if a light bulb went on. She described her experiences in a study abroad program where she lived in Costa Rica for one month.

That's probably my big first experience with meeting different cultures and seeing diverse people. I had such a wonderful experience there! We lived in a home of someone who was Costa Rican, and every morning they had breakfast on the table for us and when we came home - great conversations!

When Craig was in high school, she was employed in a McDonald's in Louisiana and Florida for two summers. She was one of three Caucasians working in this restaurant. She worked with inmates of different cultures from a correctional facility.

And just daily working with them and becoming their friend and just seeing - everyone is a person – it doesn't matter (emotional). I mean- but that was when I would say is – just the daily interactions and becoming great friends with my co-workers.

Craig also went on a religious mission to Chile for one year and one-half. She recalls that she had never seen so much love and affection from the people whom she met. Even though the Chileans did not have a lot of money, big houses, or heating for the cold months, they shared everything that they had. “They would give their last morsel of bread to me and my companion. So nothing but love, I have, and my respect (emotional).”

In her classroom, there are at times that controversial topics emerge during instruction. One centered on the Civil War and slavery. Craig encourages students to assume the roles of supporters for the Confederacy or the Union. She challenges them to think about the issues and their positions. In recognizing the African American students in her class, she does not believe that this topic should be ignored. “Because if you, *the teacher* (italics added) ignore it then, they are going to talk about it at recess. So I deal with it right then and there and put them in the shoes. Then that helps.”

Hispanics represent the majority of students in one of Craig’s classes. She also includes literature that features the history of Mexican-Americans and their struggles. Again she encourages students to wear the “hats” of another culture, “helping them see...why they are feeling the way they are feeling and talking about it – not ignoring it.”

Although Craig’s goal to “mold students and broaden their views” began as an idea growing up in a totally Caucasian community, she equipped herself to help her students broaden their “view of the world” after her personal experiences in other countries. As a teacher, her instructional strategies clearly promote the examination of events from different perspectives. Through her instructional strategies, she continues to perpetuate the “self” that had a vision of expanding the perspectives of others. childhood .

Relationship of Self to Others

There is a clear picture of Craig’s perception of her relationship with her students of color.

I just feel that it’s not seeing people of color. It’s not seeing White, Black,

Brown – it is seeing a person for who they are in the inside. And how that impacts me in my teaching? Every child has a need, it doesn't matter their background. Every child has a need, and I am here to help with that need. It doesn't matter – Black, White, Yellow, and Brown. Like I said my associations from working and my family is – I don't see color. It's their heart. It's their inside (very deliberate and emotional in this response).

This is consistent with a response she gave to the question about her experiences and feelings when she taught students of color.

They all need the same thing. They all need love. They all need to learn. They all need to feel valued. They all need social skills. They all - it doesn't matter. They all - I mean – they all need the same thing...When they come into my classroom, they know it's all about respect. They know if they want to get something from me they will have to ask politely, and they know that I am always going to treat them with respect. Always positive!

Craig sees herself as a teacher who is focused on the “inside” of her students. Her experiences with people of color have contributed to her resolve not to define students by the color of their skin. However, her claim of being color blind suggests that she may not be at stage in her own cultural development that allows her to acknowledge the importance of diversity. Two of the problems of assuming a color blind position are 1) to make an assumption that the students of color want to be considered “raceless,” and 2) to promote a separation of students of color from the cultural values that they bring with them from their homes.

The Reflexivity of Self

Self-reflection was a positive experience for Craig. She now has information to help her to decide what direction she should go in terms of her instruction and relationship with her students. She indicated that her plan is to tweak different areas of instruction, her personal teacher bubble and the interaction that she has with students.

Diane's Cultural Socialization

The Continuity of Self Through Time

Diane is a White, fifth grade teacher who is from a family of teachers. She recalls lining up her dolls in her home, having her friends over, and teaching them from a chalkboard that was a gift from her mother. She always knew that she would be an elementary teacher. Her favorite teacher, even now, is an African American teacher. Diane's comments explaining why she pursued her childhood dreams to be a teacher follows:

I think that it's kind of a selfish thing. I guess I liked knowing that I helped people. That I make a difference - I guess I don't know if you consider that selfish, but it's kind of one of those things that I just think I am a good, decent person because I am doing something that is making a difference in somebody else's life.

Throughout her narrative, Diane shared the how she continued to make a difference not only in the life of her own children but also with her students.

One action that supports Diane desire to help others was when she got married before graduating as a teacher and assumed the role of step mother to two

children. Diane said that raising her step children was her greatest accomplishment because it would have been hard to raise her own children and step children are doubly hard. Diane has continued to raise “other people’s children” in her classrooms. She comments:

And I feel that when I am here in the school, I am these kids everything. You know I am their moms, their grandmas, their teacher, their leader, their nurse. I mean I am their “everything.” And so it’s my job as an educator to make sure that they move on with the skill that they need to move on.

When Diane attended the high school graduation of one of her former first grade students who used to live in a very low socioeconomic area, she states that, “It’s a moment when you just look at those faces and you think – wow! I had something to do with this! You know it’s a pride kind of a thing, you know.”

Relationship of Self to Others

Diane works hard so that she can be prepared to teach her students culturally and academically. She has extensively studied the cultural behaviors and norms of many of her parents and students. Diane expresses the importance of figuring out nuances of behavior and the socially acceptable kinds of things that she had to learn as a teacher of students of color. For example, when she has conferences with Hispanic families, it is expected that she should address the male member of the family, not the female. One of her students always wears a special covering for her face while she eats in the cafeteria. The student has explained to Diane that it is a family tradition to cover her face when she partakes of meals. After the meal, the student removes the special cloth used to

cover her face. That is another example of Diane's support of the cultural practices of her students.

Diane describes the lack of exposure to students of color while growing up in a White middle class family:

But going in education, you just have to figure out what is socially and culturally acceptable in each of those cultures and you have to learn it. Going in to education, you had to learn how to become more diverse and see that people are people and they all want to learn.

Academically, Diane attends staff development and brings back effective strategies and ideas to her classroom instruction.

"If I find something that I might be useful to my kids, I bring it back and try it in some way, shape or form. I see what my kids have deficits in, and I teach to those also...I try to teach them in whatever they need help in."

She is always prepared for her students. She knows what she is going to teach them she and she emotionally told me that no matter how tired or old she gets, she will continue to work hard for her students, and her expectation is that they will work hard also.

The Reflexivity of Self

Diane's passage of reflection helped her to realize that there are things about which she thinks, but have not verbalized until during the telling of her life story. She also was able to affirm that through her dedication and hard work, she is impacting the lives of her students.

Rachel's Cultural Socialization

The Continuity of Self Through Time

Rachel is a White, third grade teacher in her 40's who was born and lived in a religious community until she was married. She attended public schools and experienced ridicule and taunting whenever she ventured outside of the confines of her community. She was protected by her parents and family but, "People would throw eggs, or they would throw food. They would try to run you off the road – things like that – just because we were different."

She also had negative experiences in school.

As a child I hated school actually, and I did not like teachers. I thought they were mean and cruel because I had one. But what I remember the most is that I couldn't read the way they thought I should read. So I got smacked – back then they could smack you – so I got smacked on the head. When I think about when I first started, it was – I just remembered being scared. Everybody had gone to kindergarten. So I walked in, and I just remember going there and thinking there is so much more in there. I didn't know anything. They all had their alphabet. They all had their numbers. I did not have those.

Those are Rachel's recollection of her childhood experiences as a student. She had no desire to ever become a teacher. After her marriage, she traveled around the world visiting many places and meeting different people. Her experiences traveling to countries outside of the United States, however, broadened her perspective when she met and mingled with people from diverse cultures.

When she volunteered in her children's school, she observed how engaged the students were when she read to them. Eventually all the neighborhood kids were coming to her house to listen to Rachel read them stories. Even though she was encouraged to be a teacher, her response was, "But teachers are mean!" However, she discovered that not all teachers were mean after interacting with some her children's own teachers. After much persuasion from her husband, she went to college to pursue her teaching degree.

One of her roles as a teacher was to protect her students.

It makes me very protective of the students that are in my class. I don't want anybody to mess with them. No other student and I don't like any other teachers – if my students are doing something wrong, I will correct them in my own way! Which is - we sit and we talk. And why do you think so and so got upset with you? I just feel they are mine! I do. I feel very protective with them, and I try to teach part of my values which is to have respect everybody in the classroom.

Rachel's dislike for teachers has been channeled into the type of protection with which she engulfs her students.

Relationship of Self to Others

Rachel establishes a learning environment that is contrary to that of the "mean" teachers she encountered. She does not support ridicule of anyone that may look different. Her experiences in school are similar to those which her ESL students encounter. She spoke Dutch as a child and recognizes that the "accent" that many of her students have makes them a target for ridicule. A situation with which she had some

familiarity as a student.

You don't laugh at them - *students* {italics added}. You don't make fun of them.

You encourage them. Because if you laugh and make fun, they are never willing to take risks, or to try anything, even if they are really very good at it. So I try and make sure it's safe out there.

Her favorite teacher in junior high school recognized that Rachel had an extraordinary number of words in her vocabulary. Not only was Rachel's vocabulary enormous, she knew how to figure out the meaning of challenging words – much to the surprise of her junior teacher. Rachel's reaction to her teacher was:

And I liked her because she did not belittle me, or tell me, "Well you are wrong, that's not right, you know, you can't just – there has to be something else." And she never did that, but she just kept giving me more to read, more to read, and kept pushing the limits of what I was able to read.

Now in her role as a teacher, Rachel recognizes the strengths of her students. She demonstrates her belief in their achievement and continues to challenge them to raise the bar for their goals, "Good, you got it! That's wonderful! Here you go – thought you were finished? You are not done yet – nope – keep on going?" This year I have got a lot that are successful.

The Reflexivity of Self

Rachel acknowledges that she started in a small setting, but was able to get out and find something that made her happy. Her success story is a stimulating discussion piece for her students. "I don't care what your background is – how small your world is.

Once you find what makes you happy, you are successful.” Rachel also added that sometimes she is not sure how she does “stuff.” Whatever she had done, however, seems to be working.

Her interview ended with one wondering – she said that she always thought that all schools were the same and then explained that she also assumed that the expectations was the same across the board, but “They are not. No, no!” That comment demonstrated how Rachel was mutually informed herself and about others through a reflexive process.

Participant Observation

I also gathered field notes as a passive participant (see Appendix D). It was neither desirable nor feasible to be an active participant because there were limited opportunities while I was observing features of the classroom and behaviors of the actors (Powell, 2006). I am also informed of the practice of gathering data as a participant who does not interact with those being observed to any great extent by Spradley (1980). While visiting the classrooms, I borrowed from the analogy of being on a “grand tour” of someone’s home as I observed the participants (Spradley, (1980). The experience included being introduced to the family members, or the students, as well as looking at the home and its contents, the classroom.

The features that I chose to observe were 1) the actors and the place, 2) the activities and instructional strategies, 3) the teacher-student interaction, and 4) the feelings of the actors. Observing the teacher and the classroom provided first hand information that contributed to answer the research questions, 1) How do teachers account for their effectiveness with students of color, and 2) How is a culturally

responsive environment demonstrated in the student/teacher interactions? I relied on my 15 years of experience teaching students of color and my knowledge of the curriculum in CFISD to evaluate whether or not the activities and instructional strategies were consistent with the features of culturally responsive teaching. I visited each participant's classrooms between the first and second interview so that, during the second interview, I could incorporate comments and questions about what was observed. Each visit lasted between forty-five minutes to one hour and one-half.

I have also included the information that the principals shared in the "Descriptive Survey" of the Culturally Responsive Classroom of each participants. I will differentiate between what I observed and the principals' contributions in this analysis.

Jane's Classroom

Actors and Place

I visited Jane's fifth grade classroom during a language arts lesson that focused on poetry. The thirteen students in the class represented Hispanics, Blacks, Whites and Asians. Jane's classroom displayed authentic student's work and several graphic organizers which served as anchor charts to which the students could refer in order to remember what was previously taught.

Activities and Instructional Strategies

Jane modeled to her students how to create a diamante poem. She chose a familiar topic for her poem and was able to make personal connections during this direct instruction. One of the strategies that she used was the incorporation of photographs and hand gestures to bring her presentation to life. She included several critical components

in an effective teaching cycle: 1) explaining the long term goal of the project, 2) providing sample poems from diverse writers, and 3) checking repeatedly for understanding.

Jane then challenged the students to create their own personal poems. She encouraged them to pull from background knowledge of previous years. Specifically, she suggested that they think of parents, relatives, television shows on which students could anchor their personal poems. Jane gave the students choices for the presentation of their poems and their writing implements, but her expectations were specific in terms of how the students should be using pencils, markers, chalk or pens. Students stayed on task and were not hesitant in their responses to questions. They asked for Jane's assistance so that they could make personal connections with their poem. The students appeared to be familiar with the routines as they responded quickly to directions and redirections.

Teacher Student Interaction

The interaction between the students and teacher reflected an environment of low anxiety. She was actively monitoring the students by moving around the room and conferencing with each student on a one-on-one basis. Her voice was calm and clear. She also demonstrated an awareness of her students' needs by placing one student closer to the instructional tool from which she taught.

There were also occasions when she moved closer to students when they appeared to be off task. Jane had established boundaries in her classroom. She reminded her students that, "This was not the time to share." When it was time for dismissal, Jane

reminded the students what tables should look like and how the chairs and materials should be put away. Students were complimented when they made the correct choices.

Feelings Demonstrated by Actors

There was a high level of interest demonstrated by the students and teacher. Some of the expressions she used as she monitored the students' work were: "Looks good, I am waiting on you, and you have not yet started!" Jane appeared happy and showed her approval of the efforts by nodding her head, smiling or encouraging the students to keep trying. There was a high level of curiosity on the part of the students as they continued to solicit Jane's help for possible topics. She was quite animated and responsive to the students' questions, yet soft spoken with her replies to her students. On one occasion, she told a student, "I am glad you put that *information* [italics added] in your poem."

Principal's Observation

Her principal confirmed that she sometimes observed displays of multicultural books in Jane's classroom and also the integration of multicultural resources during instruction. Jane also presents information to her students by encouraging their skills, talents and cultural heritage. One of the ways that Jane validates her students' cultural heritage is by frequently linking ideas in the content to students' experiences ideas. Jane celebrates and acknowledges the celebrations of the ethnic groups in her classroom. She has also established a relationship between the curriculum and the community cultures by engaging the students in projects that require a partnership between the home and the school.

Summary

Jane's instructional strategy encouraged the students to use their prior knowledge to complete the assignment. She valued what her students brought into the classroom. Her use of poetry books by authors from a variety of ethnic groups is consistent with her goal to always teach outside of the box in order to expose students to information not prescribed in the curriculum. During the time that I visited her classroom, there was evidence of reciprocal respect from both the teacher and the students.

Rita's Classroom

Actors and Place

I observed Rita's ESL students during their science content area block. This was class with 17 students representing Hispanic and Asian groups. I visited Rita's classroom during the final two weeks of school, and she told me that most of her visuals were already stored away. However, she shared that the activities that are usually available for students include hands-on games, which are designed for reteaching, and activities that require students to move around the rooms and incorporate their total physical response. Rita also assured me that activities are usually done in such a way that there is differentiated instruction for her students.

Activities and Instructional Strategies

The students were involved in a review lesson on a topic that was recently taught. Initially, they were asked to complete a review sheets before participating in a game. The name of the game is "Around the World" and students took turns advancing from one part of the "world" to another when questions were answered correctly. This activity

was competitive and students were anxious to be in the “hot seat” so that they could be declared the winners. Rita posed the review questions, but there was no peer assistance permitted in this game. She encouraged students to, “Let the student think – don’t tell him the answer.” When one student was unable to provide the correct answers, she solicited the answers from other students.

Teacher Student Interaction

Rita monitored the students while they reviewed the worksheet before the game. She helped students individually to complete the assignment. It became evident that Rita’s expectations included students a) staying on tasks, and b) giving maximum effort while doing assigned work. I observed a classroom in which there was quite a bit of structure and control. Rita was very vigilant and students were immediately redirected for distracting behavior. Students were immediately reminded of the consequences of the failure to follow classroom rules.

Feelings Demonstrated by Actors

Rita was quite controlled as she moderated the game. There were occasions when she smiled in order to temper a student’s disappointment because the incorrect answer was given. The students were excited to participate, but appeared to look at their teacher for permission to display their emotions. When she celebrated with them when the correct answers were given, they demonstrated their feelings more enthusiastically.

Principal’s Observation

In addition to a display of multicultural books, there are personal artifacts from the teacher’s as well as the students’ homes in Rita’s classroom. There are personal

conversations as well as class discussion about family traditions. The connection between home and school experiences are evidenced in the journal writings, parent conferences and class discussion. Rita sometimes engages in activities that comparing and contrasting the instructional content with the social and cultural experiences of her students.

Summary

There is no doubt that Rita was in charge of her class. She did not hesitate to remind her students of that verbally and from her body language. Drawing from her experience as person from another country, she understood that validating her students' culture should be an integral part of successfully interacting with them. Rita's expected all her students were high as she celebrated when they successfully answered questions.

Chinere's Classroom

Actors and Place

Chinere taught eighteen White, Black and Hispanic fourth graders. Her review lesson was on story structure. She began with direct instruction to all students, and then proceeded to teach a shared activity. Chinere's classroom was print rich with an abundance of meaningful visuals. Her displays included classroom rules, homework poster, reading strategies, power point with components of the reading skills that were currently taught. There was also a chart with a list of "Chinere's Stars."

Activities and Instructional Strategies

Chinere modeled the story structure and then organized the students in small groups in order to encourage peer tutoring. She included higher order thinking questions

in order to encourage students to evaluate their answers and come up with actions to solve problems. At the end of the lesson cycle, Chinere facilitated a “presentation” phase so that everyone may benefit from a) experiences of being an audience, and b) a variety of responses generated during the assignment.

Teacher-Student Interaction

Although Chinere’s presence was energizing, it was not intrusive. She allowed her students space to work on the assignment. However, she was so tuned in to her students’ needs that any time a student looked uncertain, she was there to assist and encourage. She kept track of all the students who did not have a turn to participate in the classroom activity and reminded them that they could, whenever they wanted. She did not fail to praise them individually and collectively. Her students fed off Rita’s energy.

Chinere’s students knew the class routine. They came immediately to the carpet when she asked them to do so and raised their hands to get permission to respond to questions and share ideas. There were smooth transitions when the students moved from working as a whole group to small groups and then to individual assignments .

Feelings Demonstrated by Actors

This was a fast paced classroom. The students were anxious to answer. They eagerly volunteered to take leadership roles, and when the students spoke, their voices boomed with confidence. Rita is an energetic teacher who at one point commented, “Wow, yea – I am excited!”

Principal’s Observation

Chinere displays a poster that includes an interest list of her students. She knows

what they do outside of the school environment through communicating and following up with parents. Chinere has spent considerable time becoming familiar with the personal lives of her children. It is not unusual to see Chinere involved in one-on-one instruction with students as they sit on the carpet. There seems to be no power struggles between Chinere and her students and she has had no classroom management referrals.

Summary

The buzz of student involvement in Chinere's classroom reflected teacher preparation that was directly related to the needs and, subsequently, the high interest level of the students. Chinere is able to zero into the needs of her students by asking them about their interests. During my visit, Chinere's care for her student was very evident. She obviously invested considerable time in class procedures and expectations. The results were maximization of instructional time and positive teacher-student interaction because there is not a lot of time spent on disciplinary challenges.

Craig's Classroom

Actors and Place

I visited Craig's fourth grade class and observed a writing lesson. Students were asked to choose one of their favorite stories from which to create a picture book.

There were several teacher made posters around the classroom. The captions included: "Good Readers," "Questioning Strategies," "Recommended Books." The list of books and book covers of the "Recommended Books" reflected a variety of genre, multicultural authors and topics of high interest to fourth grade students. In addition to instructional aids, there were several copies of the students' work posted as well as the

guided reading groups.

Activities and Instructional Strategies

The students were very engaged in their assignment. This was an independent activity, and there was little interaction between students. Craig was constantly on her feet conferencing with students, or kneeling next to their working areas, asking questions, and providing opportunities for students to problem solve. I overheard Craig ask her students, after listening to them and offering possible solutions, “Will this work?”

Teacher-Student Interaction

There was a special bond between Craig and her students. They were accustomed to her attention and it appeared that her students felt so special when she interacted with them. Craig redirected students’ behavior by referring to the positive responses and conduct of other students. One of the phrases she used was that she liked how other students were “working and not talking,” or that one student was, “very dedicated in getting his book done.” She did introduce an element of competition in her classroom management by displaying, on the chalkboard, the number of students who completed their work. This public display might have encouraged others to keep on task.

Feelings Demonstrated by Actors

Craig displayed a calm disposition during my visit. She is a very confident teacher whose knowledge of the writing process was evident. The one-on-one attention that she provided to each student was extraordinary. Craig responded to each student’s

needs and was tireless in her effort. This is one indication that she cared about every student's success on the assigned project.

Principal's Observation

The visual evidence of multicultural integration was the books that Craig displayed in her classroom. During her writing instruction, Craig encouraged the student to unveil their own experiences rather than working within a prescribed guideline. Students in Craig's classes were offered tutoring or extra help during recess or her own planning period.

Summary

The choice of books that was displayed in Craig's room was evidence that she exposed her students to authors and topics that promoted discussion beyond that which might be prescribed by the curriculum. The confidence that she exuded may be linked to the time that she has invested in identifying the needs of her students and preparing to meet those needs. Craig's students seem to expect the attention that she provided and she created opportunity to spend with them outside the regular class times.

Diane's Classroom

Actors and Place

Diane's fifth grade ESL students were seated on the floor in preparation for her lesson. The classroom environment was one that fostered the success of Diane's students. The bulletin boards and walls supported the academic needs of students and included: word study lists, a vocabulary wall, content area objectives, and directions that reminded students of the classroom expectations. There were also items that addressed

the affective domain of students and their teacher, such as, photographs of students, and notes from students to Diane.

Activities and Instructional Strategies

The students were engaged in a grammar lesson focusing on the use of colons and commas. The teacher explained the function of these punctuation marks using materials placed on an overhead projector. As Diane read to her student from the piece to be punctuated, she modeled how she incorporated a “think-aloud” strategy to decide when the use of a colon or commas should be used. Diane encouraged the students to respond chorally to the questions during the direct instructional segment of the lesson. This instructional strategy supports students who might not have the confidence to respond individually. In addition struggling students may be exposed to how more proficient students were responding to the assigned task.

The students were then directed to incorporate the guidelines for using colons and commas in their individual projects. Students worked in guided reading groups, independently, in cooperative groups, or “buddy reading” in groups of two’s. The guided reading group was facilitated by the teacher, and each person in the group had immediate feedback from her. During this time the students’ specific needs were addressed. Diane expectations were that everyone would successfully transfer the guidelines for using commas and colons in their independent assignments.

Teacher-Student Interaction

Diane walked around and monitored the students’ work. Students were reminded to review their work before turning in the completed assignment. Both students and

teacher spoke in low voices. She planned her instruction so that there was time for a closure to the lesson and followed up by sharing with the students the focus of the upcoming lesson. There was an established signal used to get everyone's attention. Diane gave specific reminders to students about what the class should look like when instruction was finished.

Feelings Demonstrated by Actors

There was laughter both by teachers and students. These students were happy as they interacted with fellow students. It was evident that the students were accustomed to working with each other. Diane's class was having fun identifying how to use commas and colon in their assigned work.

Principal's Observation

She displays a poster in her room which serves as a reminder that both the students and teachers should be respected at all times. Diane encourages her students to bring in materials from home that reflect their culture. She discusses the issues involved in immigration and connects this with the students' heritage. Diane has been instrumental in clarifying misunderstanding when parents need explanation about how the school system works. When students arrive from other countries, Diane's has played a supportive role in helping them through a difficult transition to the United States.

Summary

Diane has used her 14 year of experience to connect with her students in both the cognitive and affective domains. Her low voice demands the attention of her students, and her high expectation of her students is reflected in the efforts of her

students.

Rachel's Classroom

Actors and Place

I observed Rachel's ESL third language arts classroom in which there were twenty-two students. One-third of her students were Black, one-third White and one-third Hispanic. The instructions for the assignment were posted on the chalkboard. I visited the classroom during the last two weeks of the school year and Rachel commented that the majority of her classroom aids and bulletin boards were already in storage. The current language arts objectives were posted, but little evidence of any other motivational or educational bulletin boards.

Activities and Instructional Strategies

Rachel directed the students in a variety of activities. Some students were involved in reviewing homophones using a worksheet, while others were writing in their journals. In order to begin to make connections with the next school year, students were asked to make journal entries regarding their expectations for fourth grade. They could speculate on their friends, teachers and academic goals. I noticed that one student went closer to the chalkboard, without permission, to record information. Rachel did not react to the student's decision. This suggests that there were routines that had already been place and Rachel supported the individual need of students.

Teacher-Student Interaction

Rachel was an active teacher, she was observed watching over the shoulder of students, patting students on their shoulders, moving closer to students and kneeling next

to the students so that she could confer with them. Her voice tone was low and she asked questions such as, “What are you doing? Did you read the instructions?” On one occasion, when Rachel walked by a student, who had been waiting for her assistance, a student touched Rachel’s arm to get her attention. Other students raised their hands, or left their seats to solicit the teachers help. Rachel responded positively to all attempts for her help. The students were well versed in the procedures that were acceptable in Rachel’s class - especially in the area of collecting and putting away material.

Feelings

There was a relaxed atmosphere in Rachel’s classroom. The low anxiety that filled the room was a reflection of Rachel’s calm and friendly disposition. The students did not express any apprehension in approaching their teacher. All of the students smiled or laughed at some time during my observation. They smiled with each other and with Rachel.

Principal’s Observation

Rachel is very involved with the students’ parents. She has an understanding of the students’ background, and always look for ways to meet the needs of her students.. She is always looking for ways to meet the needs of her students and provides them with books that reflect their diverse cultures.

Summary

Rachel’s classroom is a student-centered one. She flows with the needs of her students. Her role is to help the students to enjoy the learning process. The continuous interaction with her students helps them to realize that they are all special to her.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

When I began this study, my goal was to conduct a qualitative life history research that would unearth some pivotal events in teachers' lives. These moments, I believed, might capture the socialization process of teachers and the connection with their effectiveness with African Americans and Hispanic students in an elementary school district. As I journeyed with the participants through the interview process, and eventually tried to make sense of the substantive material that I collected, there were many moments when I was just caught up with all the shared experiences. I spent many hours reminding myself that I had to refocus in order to reconnect with purpose of my research.

Cole and Knolwes (2001) described the conceptualization of my research project as the vehicle by which I carried my own life history. During this process I constructed my own personal and professional development. I also assumed an interpretive, naturalistic approach during the analysis and attempted to "make sense and interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning that the individuals bring to these events" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 p. 3).

As I interviewed the participants, I embraced 1) relationality - the relationship between the participants and the researcher, 2) empathy, care, and reflexivity and, 3) mutuality, "the co-creation of a conversational space where issues of researching can be openly and thoughtfully considered as they occur in the natural rhythm of the

researching process” (Cole and Knowles, 2001, p. 29). By adhering to these principles, I was able to establish mutually satisfactory relationships with the participants so that I could encourage their authentic responses.

The interviews with six participants over a four month period were face-to-face and were framed by semi-structured questions. I observed each teacher during an instructional period and collected data that described the classroom environment of each teacher from their respective principal.

Summary

The results of the study are presented in response to the questions that guided my project.

1. How do teachers account for their effectiveness with students of color?
2. How is a culturally responsive learning environment demonstrated in the teacher-student interactions?
3. How do teachers perceive their cultural socialization process as a factor in successfully teaching students of color?

The four themes that evolved from the life history of the six informants: 1) having high expectations of students of color, 2) assuming multi-roles in their students’ lives, 3) meeting the needs of the students, and 4) respecting and accepting the diverse cultures in their class rooms answered my first research question. Taylor et al. 2000, Towns, et al. 2001, and Love, 2003, in their discussion of the “extra mile” that effective teacher walk, support the above themes as qualities of effective teachers of children of color. Burke’s Pentadic Analysis provided a more in-depth look at the motives that underlie the themes

identified. The “purpose” (why) was most influential in explaining the motives of Jane, Chinere, and Craig, while in Rita’s, Diane’s and Rachel’s stories, the “agency” (how) dominated their motives for effectively teaching students of color.

Teacher Effectiveness

Jane’s high expectation was based on her refusal to embrace the racial attitudes of her parents. She believed that every student in her class would be successful. In Chinere’s story her high expectation hinged on a vision with an action plan that would encourage her students to surpass the educational levels of their parent. Her students could become whatever they wanted. Craig had high expectations because her own teachers had left her a legacy which gave her confidence that she could be instrumental in helping students to be successful. Diane also believed that she could have an impact in making a difference in her students’ lives. Rachel’s high expectation was strongly connected to her protecting her students from any kind of negative interaction with other teachers or students. She made it very clear that the students belonged to her and they would perform for her because she expected them to do so.

Rita identified the strengths in students and implemented strategies that guaranteed her students’ success. She also believed that she could teach all students. Rachel demonstrated an extraordinary confidence in her students. She believed that all students needed “in order to accomplish things” was the knowledge that she had high expectation for them. In her classroom, no student was allowed to say “can’t.”

Culturally Responsive Environment

The second research question was, “How is a culturally responsive learning

environment demonstrated in the teacher-student interactions?”

A culturally responsive learning environment was demonstrated when teachers 1) assumed multiple roles in their classrooms, and 2) accepted and respected the cultural differences of their students. In addition to the examples, from their narratives, of why and how the participants validated their students' culture, there was also evidence of culturally responsive classrooms during the Participant Observation visits, and in the data collected from building principals. These contributed to answers for the second question that guided my research project.

Multiple Roles

All the participants assumed multiple roles in meeting the needs of their students. Jane felt driven to use the experiences she acquired in her prison ministry to guide her students from going on paths that may lead to incarceration. At one point in her teaching career, she was also prepared to provide a home for a run-a-way student. Although Chinere would welcome more parental involvement, she recognized that the “whole load” was on her, but she had no plans to give up. Instead, she decided to treat her students as if they were her children.

Craig was constantly thinking of her students and searching for solutions to help them feel valued. She was so committed to helping them that she dreamt about them and did not allow herself to relax. Diane felt that she was “everything” to her students. This included being their mother, grandmother, teacher, leader and their nurse.

Rita described her role as an “all-in-one,” teacher, mentor, confidant and parent. She accepted her role with its many responsibilities in a school where students needed

more than academic support. Rachel kept track of her students by extending her vigilance to activities in which students were involved outside of school. She was also an advocate for parents who were not familiar with the educational jargon so often used in schools.

Accepting and Respecting Cultural Differences

Jane demonstrated the value that she placed on her students' background knowledge when she encouraged them to use their experiences in their assignments. There were multicultural books used and displayed in her classroom, and Jane's instructional practices included culturally relevant topics that were not included in the prescribed curriculum. The building principal cited examples of Jane's partnership with her students' homes.

All of Chinere's students were exposed to the different cultural experiences that were brought to the classrooms. The students' presentations were received with respect and those presenting did not show any anxiety while interacting with their classmates. The interests of the students were included in the topics from which Chinere taught. She was also very involved in the activities in the communities.

Craig established a classroom environment in which all students were expected to respect each other. She modeled respect and her students were respectful in return. She was committed to expand the curriculum to include sensitive topics, and supported a low-anxiety environment in which comments and questions were encouraged and valued. Students were encouraged to unveil their own experiences when they wrote. Her classroom displayed books with multicultural themes and books written by diverse

authors.

Diane's recognized that when she decided to go into education, she had to learn to be more diverse and "see that people are just people and they all wanted to learn." Diane's instructional decisions promoted student-to-student interaction in order to maximize the sharing of different ideas and values. She connected the students' heritage with immigration topics and encouraged them to bring materials from their homes that reflect their cultures.

Rachel encouraged her students to be proud of their culture of their families. She was particularly sensitive to the vocabulary usage and accepted the meanings that validated the experiences of the students. She has an understanding of her students' background and provides them with books that reflect their diverse cultures.

Rita thought that students had more control over their learning when they were allowed to share authentic experiences. Her room displayed artifacts from her country as well as those that represented the countries of her students. This was consistent with her feelings that all students should be accepted with the culture that they bring to the classroom.

Cultural Socialization Process

The third question addressed how teachers perceive their cultural socialization process as a factor in successfully teaching students of color. I analyzed the cultural socialization process of the participants using Linde's (1993) Creation of Coherence. As I unpacked the continuity, order, and the causality of their life stories, three major themes emerged: 1) valuing the culture of others, 2) living in countries outside of the

United States or speaking languages other than English, and 3) belonging to families compromising of people of color. These themes framed the personal and professional decisions that reflected the cultural socialization process of the participants.

Jane's recollection of her past depicted a home in which her parents were prejudiced against people of color. Her position was to prepare herself to be unlike her parents, and she therefore created a self that separated her both from her parents and from some of her colleagues' beliefs and practices. She married someone from the Hispanic culture and consistently expanded her coverage of the topics that were recommended in the district's curriculum. As she reflected on the evolution of her self, she made a connection to the experiences with her parents and the impact this has had on the high expectation she subsequently had for her students of color.

When Chinere was in the fourth grade, she began a journey of going the extra mile when she "taught" her siblings as well as her Hispanic and Black peers during the summers in her neighborhood. She wanted to be part of the "village" that raised the children who did not have two parents at home in her community. She has continued to respond to the students who historically have the lowest grades on standardized tests by giving them extra support outside of the instructional time during the day. Her awareness of the needs of students of color has been the catalyst that has helped her to do extra for the students in her classes.

Craig's exposure to cultures that were different from her White middle class community began when she lived in Costa Rica on a foreign exchange program while she was in college. Her eighteen month stay in Chile during a religious mission along

with her interaction with diverse groups of inmates at a McDonald franchises during two summers helped to frame her social culturalization. As one of three Caucasians working among Hispanics and Blacks, she had first hand knowledge of being in a non-majority role. Those experiences helped her to emphasize “role play” during the instruction of controversial topics in order to broaden her students’ view of the world. Her experiences have helped to focus on the needs of her students, not on their skin color. During her reflection, her plans included making changes in her self as well as in the interaction that she has with her students to improve her instruction.

A confident African American female was Diane’s favorite teacher in elementary school. She was very influential in Diane’s life, and Diane recognized from that time that education can empower people of color. Diane’s successful journey with her own step-children also convinced her that she could effectively teacher other people’s children. In her effort to understand the students that she teaches, Diane has studied the respective cultural behaviors and responds appropriately to their manner of dressing and the role of males and females in families. Diane shared that during the interview process, she had verbalized events that she previously did not think about. Her period of reflection was an encouraging passage as she expressed the realization that she was positively impacting the lives of her students.

Rachel lived in a protective environment during her elementary and high school years, but experienced ridicule when she ventured outside that safety net. She belonged to a religious group that was often the target of insults from those who did not understand the people who lived in her community. In school, she struggled to learn

how to read and that contributed to her negative memories while attending school. Her plans did not include becoming a teacher. She traveled extensively overseas to countries such as Belgium, Holland and Austria before beginning her teacher career. Now, she protects her students not only from other teachers, but also from other students. The learning environment that she supports is unlike the “mean” elementary classrooms of which she was a part. She spoke Dutch as a girl and connects her language struggles with many of her ESL students. Her reflective journey was a reminder that her success story has served as a motivation tool for her students. Rachel recognized that the high expectation that she has for her students are not necessarily repeated in other classrooms.

Rita grew up in India where she was unmotivated to learn from teachers who tried to deposit information in the students’ brain without encouraging any input from them. Unlike the teachers in her native country, she became aware that elementary educators in the United States had the opportunity to create stimulating environments for students. She decided to be a teacher who was approachable and whose classroom would be one in which students could ask questions. Rita speaks two languages other than English, and describes herself an ESL student. She made connection with the struggles that her students have in learning English, and openly shared the experiences of “sounding different” when she talks to her students. Rita spoke at length about the how beneficial it was to go in depth into her past as she became more aware of the stimulus behind the values that she brings to her classroom.

Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that the cultural socialization of each participant was instrumental in helping them to become effective teachers of students of color. The events that define their cultural socialization process were moments that helped me to reconstruct their past and facilitate the process of helping the participants to make sense of their interaction with students. The high teacher expectation, the affirmation of the students' culture, and the effort to meet the needs of their students emerged with consistency during the analyses of data using Linde's Creation of Coherence, Burke's Pentadic Analysis, the Participant Observation and the principals' description of their learning environment. A connecting thread of high teacher efficacy was also woven in all their narratives. The participants did not believe that situational factors in the life of their students should determine their success. These teachers created learning communities in which failure was not an option. Hilliard (1991a;1991b) argues that the educational goals we set for our children should be restructured and the curriculum must be pluralized in order that our children achieve educational excellence.

The success of students of color who have been in classrooms of teachers with high expectation is well documented in research (Lumsden, 1997, Hulsebosch & Koener, 2000 and Parsley & Corcoran, 2003). During the course of their lives, the experiences and challenges of the six participants were at times similar, but also varied. Their early experiences ranged from growing up in a household that supported racial prejudice, hating teachers, living in a White middle class family, living other countries to being surrounded by successful African American family. The participants in my

research did not doubt their students could be successful because they actively pursued avenues to help students achieve high academic standards.

Each participant claimed a culturalization process that was unique but their acceptance and validation of the cultural differences of their students had positive effects on their students. After the face-to-face interviews were completely, I listened to their taped voices repeatedly and relived their expressions and emotions. Their lived experiences supported the argument that successful students do not have to be taught by teachers who share the same ethnic background, since four of my participants are White and one Black and the other from Asian heritage (Nieto, 2002, Honaker, 2003 and Nieto, Chamberlain, 2005).

For me this was no ordinary journey, it was a period of reflection as I recognized the similarities that I share with these six participants in my own quest to be an effective educator of students of color.

Implications for Practice

The six teachers who participated in my research project represent the demographics of the teachers who would be found in the classrooms of the Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District. They are teachers who have been successful in teaching students of color in a district whose student demographics have changed dramatically over the past 10 years. The recommendations are based on the findings of this research study and contributes to the body of research that support the high teacher expectation, teacher efficacy, and the creation of culturally responsive classrooms as key components in effective classrooms for Hispanic and Black students.

- *District administrators should reflect on the guidelines that are used to hire teachers who are most likely to teach students of color in CFISD.* Interviews should include questions that expose the cultural socialization process of potential teachers. All interviews for teaching positions should contain questions that invite aspiring teachers to reflect on the events that frame their cultural socialization process. In addition, portfolios that contain descriptions of multicultural activities and projects in which interviewees were involved in their teacher training experiences should also be a part of the interview process. The participants all had positive statements regarding the impact of the opportunity to reflect on their past and its influence on their teaching practices in the diverse classroom settings. The responses of potential teachers will provide a window through which district personnel and principals could look for clues that might identify effective teachers of students of color.
- *Staff Development for experienced teachers.* Teachers should be required to participate in on going staff development that allows them to be reflective about the kind of instructional decisions they make and the motives behind these decisions. The mismatch of cultures between students and teachers has caused many teachers to be frustrated and ineffective in classrooms with students of color. There is much effort being put into introducing new strategies and curriculum initiatives. Based on the findings of this research,

if the teachers do not believe that the students can succeed, the introduction of new and improved curricula will not impact students' success.

- *Teachers should build relationships with students.* Students tend to respond more favorably to teachers who are familiar with their cultural history and who affirm and encourage students to integrate their background experiences in assignments. One way of acquiring culturally relevant information is to engage in personal or district mandated professional development that includes information about the positive contributions of people of color. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know, and those who take part in these staff development will expand their narrow historical views of the contributions of people of color.
- *Educators must be able to recognize the strengths that students take with them to the classrooms.* Although generalizations about cultural differences of students cannot be supported under all conditions, the learning styles of students of color are complemented by the cultural experiences of the society, home, and schools. Since there is a mismatch between the cultural experiences of the teachers and the students, it imperative that teachers do not marginalize the learning styles of students of color, whose strengths fall within the domain of field sensitivity rather field independence (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).
- *Classroom literature should have greater cultural diversity.* Coordinators of the curriculum must include the use of literature with greater cultural

diversity as the primary pieces that drive lesson units in reading. There is sometimes a reference to the use of “multicultural” books as extended or enrichment activities, and since there is seldom enough time to teach even the core curriculum subjects, the primary selection should also include books in which people of color are portrayed in a positive light. The impact of using books that represent diverse cultures will be that all students will be exposed to a balanced curriculum, and those teachers who are not driven to go beyond the curriculum will be required to use the resources provided. Ultimately the inclusion of a variety of literature will empower both the teachers and all students to look at issues with multiple perspectives and to develop a greater understanding of each other.

- *Effective teachers of students of color should be recognized as model teachers.* Since there are teachers who are effective in teaching students of color, these teachers should be recognized and their classrooms should be a showcase for instructors who struggle to teach this population. The potential of these participants who serve our students of color should not go unnoticed. During the visits by other teachers, these model teachers will be able to demonstrate how they successfully create culturally responsive classrooms and the multiple roles that are a part of their success. These model classrooms should also be used as teaching laboratories for experienced teachers who struggle to meet the needs of students of color. The teachers in these model classrooms should consider themselves agents of change as this life history

research provided them with a channel through which their voices may be heard. Potential teachers should also be required to spend extended time periods in these class rooms in order to reduce the cultural shock which so many first year teachers experience in schools that represent the changing “face” of CFISD.

- *District administrators must reflect on the changing demographics of CFISD and how to meet the needs of all their students.* Although the focal point of this research was about effectively teaching students of color, all students will benefit from being in a culturally responsive classroom. There are still schools in CFISD whose student demographics is predominantly White middle class. These schools continue to perform well on the standardized tests. There are also schools that have of students of color who have also been successful on the state mandated tests. It should be recognized that state mandated tests are very basic and students who perform well still need to be challenged to go beyond TAKS. CFISD must examine the dynamics between teachers and students that are in place in the latter schools and make the required changes to successfully impact all students of color. Since the demographics of CFISD mirrors the trend of a majority of students of color in most of its schools within the next 25 years (D. Anthony, 2005), both the students of color and the students who represent the White, Asian and Native American population will benefit from teachers who are better prepared to effectively teach all the students.

Implications for Theory

- *The nature of personal experiences, exposure to languages and engagement with other cultures must be considered as part of the process that contributes to culturally responsive teaching.* Three of the participants lived in countries outside of the United States; four of them spoke languages other than English; and four of the informants belonged to families of different races. These experiences are part of the self development of the participants that resulted in acquiring the knowledge from which they built cultural bridges.
- *Effective teachers of students of color have a socialization process that influences their teaching outside of the curriculum.* They demonstrate a mindset that engages students in activities that go beyond the boundaries set by state mandated instruction.
- *Effective teachers of students of color know how to identify the strengths of students and how to choose high interest activities.* All of the participants did not engage and incorporate a deficit model in teaching students of color. The high expectation of the teachers and meaningful activities contributed to the high interest that the students demonstrated in the instructional activities chosen by their teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this life history research:

1. There were no male teachers represented in this study. It would be interesting to

replicate this study and include male teachers to see what, if any impact, they would have on Hispanic and Black boys, who continue to be described as student populations in crisis.

2. Further research that includes interviews with student of color would capture their voices and provide insight into the students' perception of who were their effective teachers, and why these teachers were considered effective. A comparison could be made between the themes that emerged in the teachers' interviews and the themes of the students.
3. A longitudinal study should be considered to evaluate the effect of the reflective process of the participants involved in this study. This information would provide further insight into the changes that participants have made as a result of the connections they made between their cultural socialization and how they teach students of color.

The value that these six participants place on their craft was determined by the practitioners themselves. Their stories and contributions – personal and professional - to the educational success of students of color should be catalysts for discussion between educators concerned with the issues of educational equity.

Personal Epilogue

In this section, I will reflect on the path that I traveled during this one year of interviewing the six participants and analyzing their data. I recognized from the early stages of the conceptualization of the topic that negative and positive experiences with my own teachers were the driving forces behind my interest in the cultural socialization

process of effective teachers of students of color. My life story became increasingly entwined with those of the participants as I listened to the pivotal events that influenced 1) Jane's rejection of the racially prejudice practices of her parents, 2) Rita's resolve to create a nurturing environment for her students, 3) Craig's goal to broaden her students' horizon, 4) Chinere's effort to make a difference in her students' life, 5) Diane's decision to respect everyone, and 6) Rachel's mantle of protection for her students.

Through this research process, I have gained insights into a broader picture of the impact of teacher student relationships. Not unlike the participants in my study, who lived within a social and cultural context that defined who they are, this project has contributed to the sense that I have made of my educational experiences both as a teacher and a student. My recollection of the experiences with my teachers and the stories of the six participants intersect and provide the tools to illuminate a path that effective educators need to take to impact the academic achievement of all students of color.

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APPENDIX A

LIFE HISTORY TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT

LIFE HISTORY CONSENT FORM

The Socialization Process of Effective Educators of Students of Color in a
Elementary School

Investigator: Patricia M. Henry	Advisor: Dr. Norvella P. Carter
Home: (281) 894-8487	(281) 213-3188
Work: (282) 856-1152	(979) 862-3802

You have been asked to participate in a research study of effective teachers of students of color. A total of 6 people have been asked to participate in this study. You were selected to be a possible participant because many of the students who you teach have been successful on the State mandated standardized (TAKS) reading tests. **Your building principal has also completed a survey about your classroom environment and based on the results of this survey, your classroom has been described as culturally responsive.** The purpose of this study is to examine the connection between the cultural socialization of educators and the academic achievement of their students.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to record your responses on audio tape, and you will be observed during instructional times in your classroom.

The audio taped and written information obtained during this project will be used to write a life history which will be read by the respondents. Your consent to be audio taped is a requirement for participating in this study. There will be a minimum of two interviews and one observation session in the classrooms. The study will take place over a 90-day period.

The risks associated with this study are minimal. The benefits are, 1) to share information regarding the construction of successful learning environments for students of color, 2) to contribute to the research that describe the advantages of empowered students of color, and 3) to provide a better understanding of the impact of teacher preparation programs that address the needs of diverse student populations.

You will not receive any payment or reimbursement for participating in this study.

The life history will not be shared with others without the written permission of the participants. This study will be confidential, and the information shared will not be disseminated to others without the written permission of the participants involved. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research will be stored securely in a locked cabinet, and only Patricia Henry will have access to the records.

Audio tapes will be made, and these will be stored in a locked file cabinet by Patricia Henry. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Texas A&M University. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make you uncomfortable. You can withdraw at any time without your relations with the University, job, benefits, etc., being affected. You can contact Patricia Henry and my advisor, Dr. Norvella P. Carter with any questions about this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia M. Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the vice President for Research at (979)458-4067, araines@vprmail.tamu.edu.

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the information sheet for your records.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B
ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT FORM

Subject: Qualitative Life History Research

I am conducting a qualitative research study of effective teachers of students of color (Hispanic and African American) in the Cypress-Fairbanks School District. The purpose of this study is to examine the connection between the cultural socialization of educators and the academic achievement of their students.

I plan to interview a maximum of 6 teachers from the district. The Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports will be used to identify schools in which students of color have been successful on the TAKS tests.

The life history will not be shared with others without the written permission of the participants. This study will be confidential, and the information shared will not be disseminated to others without the written permission of the participants involved.

If you agree to permit me to interview _____, who has been identified as an effective educator of students of color on your campus, please answer the questions on the attached Principal Survey. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included for the return of this survey.

Please contact me, if there are questions.

Yours truly,

Patricia M. Henry, Investigator

Home: (281)894-8487

Work: (281)345-3239

Dr. Norvella P. Carter, Advisor

Home: (281)213-3188

Work: 979-862-3802

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY

PRINCIPAL SURVEY
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

Please check the choice that best reflects the learning environment of

_____.

1. Is there visual evidence that multicultural information, resources, and material are incorporated in classroom instruction?

<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom Observed
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Never Observed

2. Does the teacher encourage students to praise their own and each other's? cultural heritage?

<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom Observed
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Never Observed

4. Are a variety of instructional strategies connected to the different learning styles of the students?

<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom Observed
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Never Observed

5. Is there evidence that the teacher encourages the students to build bridges between their home and school experiences?

<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom Observed
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Never Observed

6. Does the instruction facilitate meaningful connection between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities?

<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom Observed
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Never Observed

Signature of Principal: _____ Date: _____

Name of School _____

SOURCE: Gay, Geneva (2000). Culturally Responsive Teaching – Theory, Research, & Practice. New York, NY: Teacher College Press

**DESCRIPTIVE PRINCIPAL SURVEY
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM**

School:

Teacher:

Please provide detailed description of the following for
_____ who has consented to participate in a life history research
on Effective Teachers of Students of Color in your school.

1. Visual Evidence of multicultural integration/resources
2. Affirmation of Cultural Heritage among students
3. Differentiated Instruction
4. Connection between home and school experiences
5. Connection between content and cultural realities - instructional content and the social and cultural (experiences) of students

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION FEATURES

Name/School_____ Time_____

Subject_____

of students_____

1. Place
2. Actors/what do actors look like?
3. How were actors involved in the activity?
4. Feelings demonstrated by actors.
5. Teacher/Student Interaction
6. Classroom Management
7. Instructional Strategies

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Cultural Socialization of Effective Educators of Children of Color in an Elementary School District

Initial Interview

Some of the questions that were included in the interview:

Personal Information

1. The purpose of this interview is to find out how you became and teacher. This is the first of two interviews. The second interview will focus on the teaching methods that you use in your classrooms.
2. How many years have you been employed as a teacher?
3. How many years have you been employed as a teacher in CyFair ISD district?

Background and Careers

3. What was growing up in your house or neighborhood like?
4. What cultural values were passed on to you? By whom?
5. Could you tell me any family stories told about you as a young child/adolescent?
6. What characteristics do you remember most about your grandparents/ parents?
7. What is your first memory of attending school?
8. I'd like you to tell me the story about how you became a teacher. Please start with your recollection of your childhood.
(Where would you like to begin your story about how you became a teacher?)
9. What do you remember most about elementary school?
 - i. Did you have a favorite teacher in elementary school? In junior high? In high school?*
10. What are your best memories of school – memorable experiences?
 - i. What are your worst memories of school?*
 - ii. What accomplishments in school are you most proud of?*
11. How did you decide to become a teacher?

12. What is your view of the role of education in a person's life?
13. Describe some of the events in your life that prepared you to teach students of color.
14. What has that been like for you – teaching students of color?
15. What impact has this experience had in your life?
16. As an educator, can you tell me about experiences in your position that have affected you personally?
17. Probe!
18. Tell me about a time when you have had opportunities to support children who did not feel that their culture was validated.
19. Probe
20. Tell me about a memorable experience that you have had as a teacher of students of color.
21. *Have you had contact with past students?*
22. How have you evolved as a teacher?

Second Interview

Teaching Strategies

1. What do you remember the most about your teacher training experiences?
2. What was the most important course you took in college?
3. What is your definition of an effective teacher of students of color?
 - What information do you use to guide instruction/assessment?
 - Tell me about the strategies you have developed to teach students of color?
 - Tell me about the time when you took the opportunity to allow students to incorporate their learning strengths in order to complete the assignments.
4. What values would you not want to compromise?
 - As an educator*
 - In your personal life*
 - How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
5. What is the most important lesson that you have had to learn for yourself as a teacher of students of color?
6. What is your perception of the connection between students' success and your cultural socialization?

Closure Questions

1. Is there anything that you feel we have left out of your life story?
2. What are your feelings of this interview and all that we have covered?

VITA

Patricia May Henry

EDUCATION

			Year
Ph.D.	Curriculum and Instruction	Texas A&M University College Station, Texas	2008
M.Ed.	Elementary Education	Sam Houston State University Huntsville, Texas	1992
B.A.	Sociology	Concordia University Montreal, Canada	1980
B.Ed.	Physical Education	McGill University Montreal, Canada	1976

ADDRESS

6100 Queenston
Houston, Texas 77084

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	
Elementary Education Instructional Specialist	Cypress Fairbanks I.S.D Houston, Texas	2005-present
Elementary Education Bilingual/ESL Specialist	CyFair Independent School District Houston, Texas	2004-2005
Teacher: Bilingual	CyFair Independent School District	2003-2004
Teacher: ESL	CyFair Independent School District	1989-1999
Teacher: Physical Education	Klein Independent School District	1987-1989

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

National Association of Multicultural Education
Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education
The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi