



2019

DISRUPTING THE PRISON-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: DOING RESTORATIVE IDENTITY WORK WITH OFFENDER-LABELED YOUTH

Jahmon Londre Gibbs
University of the Pacific, J_gibbs4@u.pacific.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/uop_etds



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gibbs, Jahmon Londre. (2019). *DISRUPTING THE PRISON-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: DOING RESTORATIVE IDENTITY WORK WITH OFFENDER-LABELED YOUTH*. University of the Pacific, Dissertation.
https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/uop_etds/3655

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of the Pacific Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

DISRUPTING THE PRISON-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: DOING RESTORATIVE IDENTITY
WORK WITH OFFENDER-LABELED YOUTH

By

Jahmon L. Gibbs

A Dissertation Submitted to the

Graduate School

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Benerd School of Education
Educational Administration and Leadership

University of the Pacific
Stockton, CA

2019

DISRUPTING THE PRISON-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: DOING RESTORATIVE IDENTITY
WORK WITH OFFENDER-LABELED YOUTH

By

Jahmon L. Gibbs

APPROVED BY:

Dissertation Chair: Ronald Hallett, Ph.D.

Dissertation Co-chair: Rod Githens, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Linda Skrla, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Erin L. Castro, Ph.D.

Senior Associate Dean: Linda Webster, Ph.D.

DISRUPTING THE PRISON-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: DOING RESTORATIVE IDENTITY
WORK WITH OFFENDER-LABELED YOUTH

Copyright 2019

By

Jahmon L. Gibbs

DEDICATION

This thesis is in dedication to Granny Rosa Lee Gibbs who was born August 11, 1925 and called home by her Heavenly Father on August 17, 2019 at the age of ninety-four to join my Grandfather Lonnie Gibbs who unexpectedly passed away in 1973 the same year that I was born. I never met my Grandfather, but since my Grandmother never remarried, I view her faithfulness as a testimony of her love for my grandfather and their seven children.

At her funeral, I learned that my grandmother received her high school diploma from Compton Adult School in 1974 at the age of 49, which exemplifies her spirit and personal desire to obtain an education. Granny Rosa was a beautiful, intelligent woman, who without a doubt loved her family unconditionally. As her grandson, I am proud to be just a mere fraction of the Gibbs legacy. I understand it is only because of the sacrifices of my ancestors that I can proudly dedicate this dissertation on Restorative Identity Work in loving memory of the most honorable Granny Rosa Lee Gibbs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I have to give honor to God for working through me and continuously surrounding me with people who were extremely supportive and shared in my vision to create something extraordinary for marginalized populations. Secondly, without a doubt I must thank my beautiful and loving wife Racquel Miranda Gibbs for holding my hand throughout this journey, while simultaneously raising our three amazing children Jayla Red, JaRoc Blu, and Jahmon Legacy Gibbs who unquestionably are the “*why*” for everything that I do.

In addition, I would like give acknowledgement to those individuals who have made me feel celebrated and not tolerated. So thank you to my mother who blessed me with an unlimited amount of calls to talk through my ideas and thank you to the faculty at the University of the Pacific. If I had a thousand tongues, I could not thank enough Professor Ronn Hallett who has always encouraged me to keep my voice, my cohort (particularly Beth Jara & Jennifer Claire) for encouraging me to be fearless, and my coworkers who helped me manage my workload and carried me when I was exhausted. Lastly, a special shout out to Anna Conrad who God used to push me through the door in relationship to pursuing my doctorate degree and for having “Crazy Faith” in her personal pursuit to keep her family intact.

DISRUPTING THE PRISON-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: DOING RESTORATIVE IDENTITY WORK WITH OFFENDER-LABELED YOUTH

Abstract

By Jahmon L. Gibbs

University of the Pacific
2019

The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic study was to address how the existence of counterspaces influences the psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society. A counterspace has been defined as a social setting where two or more individuals come together to challenge deficit notions. No longer is recidivism solely being placed on offender-labeled youth that reside within juvenile correctional facilities, therefore the need for innovative programs that help develop resistance narratives and promote reengagement with the educational system are needed. In this 12-week qualitative ethnographic study the two concepts of restorative practices and narrative identity work are blended together and reconceptualized to create something new Restorative Identity Work. From an ontological perspective, the educational experiences within the counterspace (Room 21) was shared utilizing a musical playlist. The playlist is used to provide a thick description of the 12-session leadership group that was designed to be a resource for offender-labeled youth to become eligible for the high school Student Council within the correctional facility. Through the use of journals, theme songs, restorative practices, and narrative identity work, offender-labeled youth gradually gained a deeper understanding of their role in social narratives. The leadership group resulted in six out of nine offender-labeled youth becoming members of the Student Council and fostered the development of resistance narratives for all nine students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	9
List of Figures	10
Chapter 1: Introduction	11
Juvenile Offenders From Boys to Men	11
Statement of the Problem	13
Purpose Statement	14
Research Question	14
Overview of Study	14
Significance of Study	15
Conceptual Framework	17
Summary	19
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	21
Track #1/Just the Two of Us: Youth and Community Engagement	21
Track #2/Everything is Everything: Restorative Justice to Practice	25
Track #3/Am I Wrong: Self-Identification and Self-Efficacy	32
Track #4/Lovely Day: The Power of Identity Work in Counterspaces	37
Chapter 3: Methodology	43
Track #5/Don't Believe the Hype	43
Track #6/Research Design: Paid in Full	46
The Role of the Researcher	54
Summary	57
Chapter 4: Results	58

The Counterspace: Room 21.....	58
Chapter 5: Discussion	129
Track #7/Stereo Hearts	129
Track #8/Rollercoaster of Love: Restorative Practices	131
Track #9/Talk: Narrative Identity Work.....	135
Track #10/"The Street Sweeper" by Dr. Martin Luther King.....	142
Track #11/Locked Up: Recommendations for Research	146
Track #12/Vapors: Restorative Identity Work Conclusion	149
References.....	152
Appendices	
A. Weekly Lesson Plans	161

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Session One Journal Entries.....	71
2. Session Three Journal Entries.....	80
3. Session Four Journal Entries.....	85

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. The Counter Narrative Mural.....	61
2. The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) Mural.....	62
3. The Counterspace Floor Plan.....	63
4. Leadership Group Attendance	147

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Juvenile Offenders From Boys to Men

During my freshman year in high school New Edition had just released their Heart Break Album (1988) and I remember listening to their music religiously. New Edition could capture how I was feeling as an adolescent before I could even put it into words, possibly because they were teenagers themselves. Almost magically their lyrics seemed to transform into a reimagined narrative that helped me gain perspective as a teenager transitioning into adulthood. One song in particular by New Edition became my teenage anthem in response to when I was told that I was either too young or too old to do certain things. Ironically, as a University of Pacific graduate student with an interest in the self-identity of adolescents, I decided to replay my teenage anthem as an adult. As I listened to the song play through my speakers, I quickly became nostalgic as the music permeated through my body and touched my soul. Song lyrics always have had the tendency to create pictures in my mind, and in turn, those pictures allowed me to internalize and visualize the songs message. This one particular song by New Edition titled "Boys to Men" was about transition and how circumstances can force teenagers to grow up faster than intended. Intentionally I found myself revisiting my teenage playlists, but unexpectedly I discovered the relevancy of my teenage anthem in relationship to the plight of offender-labeled struggling to make the transition from boys to men. Erik Erikson (1968) describes adolescence as the stage in which adolescents are obsessed with achieving independence and finding their identities. The transition from boys to men centers around conformity and social identity, but an abrupt life interruption with the criminal juvenile system can be stigmatizing and result in long-term consequences.

Since the first juvenile court case in Cook County, Illinois, there has been significant changes within the juvenile justice system; however, the belief that most offender-labeled youth are developmentally different than adults and more receptive to change has remained the same (Jennings, Gibson, & Lanza-Kaduce, 2009). Historically the State has taken on the role of the parent for offender-labeled youth by acting in the “best interests” of the child, which stems from the doctrine of *parens patriae* (the State as the Parent) where the juvenile justice system handles offender-labeled youth with kid gloves or in a manner different than seen in adult criminal courts (Bilchick, 1999). Over time, three divergent rationales have emerged in relationship to intervening with the misbehavior of juveniles: 1) treatment, 2) deterrence, and 3) normalization (Jennings et al., 2009). Unfortunately, regardless of the chosen intervention, blacks and Latinos account for over 60 percent of America’s 2.3 million prisoners (Smith, 2009). Statistics indicate that over the last 30 years the United States penal system has increased suddenly from 300,000 to 2 million with the majority of the penal population stemming from drug convictions (Alexander, 2010; Mauer, 2006).

Statistically the mass incarceration of minorities is disheartening, especially from the standpoint of an African American school psychologist working within a correctional facility. On a daily basis for over 19 years, I have consistently witnessed these disparaging statistics, but I also have been privy to the stories behind these statistics. Each story told by offender-labeled youth gradually evoking some type of underlying emotion (hurt, anger, depression, trauma) as the storyteller draws closer to their truth. Throughout the years, the more I listened to these individual stories the more they began to sound like various genres of music, but all with the same tragic ending (incarceration). However, despite the genre, I was often left with feelings of responsibility to introduce a new beginning or some sense of hope. Therefore, as a graduate

student I felt compelled to write my dissertation from an ontological perspective with subheadings reflecting a musical playlist that was symbolic of a new beginning because almost identical to how Oliver and Gershman (1989) describe ontological knowing as “organic life and transcendent dance” (p.3), music has always helped me to visualize content and context intrinsically.

Ontological knowing requires metaphors of “organic life and transcendent dance” (p.3), so that we can come to know with our whole bodies as we move from imagination and intention to critical self-definition, to satisfaction, and finally to perishing a new being (Slattery, 2013, p.32).

Consequently, throughout this book I utilized musical tracks as subheadings indicative of my epistemology fusing together with the literature that I reviewed on offender-labeled youth transitioning from boys to men. In this chapter, I will introduce the reconceptualization of two concepts, the concept of restorative practices with juvenile offenders and the concept of narrative identity work within counterspaces, which when blended together will create something new that I will term *Restorative Identity Work*.

Statement of the Problem

In the United States 1.5 million juveniles are arrested each year (Puzzanchera, 2009; Snyder & Mulako-Wangota, 2011) and more than 110,000 are placed within juvenile correctional facilities (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Sadly, the majority of those juveniles are repeat offenders (Barrett, Katsiyannis, & Zhang 2010). According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the average recidivism rate for offender-labeled youth is 55% after 12 months from their release, which means more than half of incarcerated youth are returning to prison within a year (Mathur & Clark, 2014; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). In the spirit of the doctrine *parens patriae* (the State as the parent) the State is failing as parents statistically, if only half of offender-labeled youth can make it on their own after residing in a

state correctional facility (Snyder et. al, 2006). No longer is the blame for recidivism placed solely on offender-labeled youth the fault has shifted to the juvenile justice system itself, indicating the need for innovative programs that understand that real community engagement will only occur when stakeholders have common goals, resources, and supports to help youth reintegrate into the community (Mathur et. al, 2014). Thus, more research is needed on how state correctional facilities can support offender-labeled youth prior to reintegrating into the community.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of how the existence of counterspaces influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society.

Research Question

Since counterspaces are defined as a social setting where two or more individuals come together to challenge deficit notions (Case & Hunter, 2014), intentionally Room 21 was designed to be the counterspace for offender-label youth within this qualitative ethnographic case study and the research question was *“How does the existence of counterspaces influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society?”*

Overview of Study

On a weekly basis, in this qualitative ethnographic case study I met with nine offender-labeled youth for 12-weeks to investigate how the existence of a counterspace influences the psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth. In a small focus group, I became an active participant that explored *restorative practices* and *narrative identity work* with offender-labeled

youth were incarcerated (18 years or older). Through the use of a restorative justice circle, I was able to combine restorative practices with narrative identity work to create restorative identity work within a counterspace.

Since a case study is an in-depth analysis of a bounded system (Tisdale & Merriam, (2016), Room 21 became the space that bound this case and since ethnography is considered the study of a culture, this consequently became a qualitative ethnographic case study. The case was bound in a counterspace (Room 21) within a juvenile correctional facility, but only adult offender-labeled youth who were enrolled in high school were allowed to be studied within the counterspace. Through a voluntary leadership group, an emphasis was placed on providing an opportunity for offender-labeled youth to enhance their psychological well-being through restorative practices and narrative identity work, which ultimately required civic engagement and reengagement with the school community through restorative identity work.

Significance of Study

The high recidivism rate of 55% for offender-labeled youth within 12 months is disheartening (Mathur & Clark 2014; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). The recidivism rate reflects the need for a state of consonance between the prosocial behaviors exhibited by an offender-labeled youth *before* and *after* their release into the community. If the existence of cognitive dissonance between what incarcerated youth *do* prior to transitioning into the community and their *future* goals can be reduced by the reconceptualization of restorative practices and narrative identity work within a counterspace then the significance of studying the existence of counterspaces may be able to expand beyond restorative justice and into something new termed restorative identity work. According to Festinger (1957), “The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and

achieve consonance” (p. 3).” Therefore, hypothetically if an offender-labeled youth wants to become extraordinary at something then the juvenile should experience discomfort with mediocrity, in turn creating an opportunity for growth. Practitioners and educators are in a position to help offender-labeled youth in real time with their self-identification by utilizing restorative practices where they work *with* offender-labeled youth through their discomfort and provide the needed resources for juveniles to succeed when their behaviors are incongruent with their goals.

As a school psychologist working with offender-labeled youth, I want my graduate studies to be able to shape the *practices* between state personnel and community agencies and draw attention to what is being lost in transition: the self-identification and mattering of offender-labeled youth. Judicially, when the State takes on the role of the parent (*parens patriae*) (Bilchick, 1999) then the State becomes responsible for the psychological well-being of the offender-labeled youth. According to Rosenberg and McCullough (1981), *interpersonal mattering* for adolescents can be described as “others depend on us, are interested in us, and are concerned with our fate,” which consequently affects their psychological well-being.

I hope to breathe into existence *restorative identity work*, as a practice that extends beyond restorative justice and focuses on the psychological well-being of the offender in hopes that offender-labeled youths will feel as if they matter. Research indicates that when a person feels like they matter or others care about their well-being, then they are less likely to exhibit behaviors that would disappoint those who are invested in them (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). Likewise, when children feel as if their actions reflect their parents, then they feel like they matter to their parents (Jung, 2014; Rosenberg et. al, 1981). Homologous with when the State takes on the responsibility of the parent (*parens patriae*) (Bilchick, 1999), the State is in the

position to help reduce recidivism through restorative practices by working *with* offender-labeled youth despite their transgressions.

Conceptual Framework

Restorative justice allows the offender who caused harm to come together with the victim or victims of an offense, in hopes that through communication healing can occur and relationships can be restored through reparations to the victim (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015).

Restorative justice has emerged as an alternative to court-based criminal justice, but the downfall to restorative justice is that no matter what nature of the offense, victims are considered deprived of something that is due to them (their life, property, respect, etc.) therefore the idea of restorative justice becomes subjective (Wenzel et al., 2008). Relevant research suggests that there is only one notion of justice restoration: retributive justice where an offender who violated a rule or law deserves to be punished in order for justice to be reestablished and the offender has to be punished to the severity of the wrongdoing (Wenzel et al., 2008). Consequently, the sentence given to the offender-labeled youth convicted of a crime serves as their deserved punishment in this qualitative study, which allows for the primary emphasis to be placed on making amends and the healing process. Therefore, throughout this book the reconceptualization of restorative justice to restorative practices will be blended with narrative identity work to create something new termed restorative identity work which places an emphasis on civic engagement and the self-identity of offender-labeled youth through lived and vicarious experiences.

Restorative practices are inclusionary practices that work *with* students as opposed to zero-tolerance policies that do things *to* students without consideration of the circumstances or the potential opportunity for a student to learn about their behavior (Gonzalez, 2012; Wilson, 2013). Restorative practices allow school leadership to transform a rule violation into an

opportunity for a teaching moment by emphasizing understanding and accountability for behaviors, which is significantly meaningful for students with disabilities, who may require a deeper understanding of how their behavior impacts others (Wilson, 2013).

Restorative practice can easily sound exactly like restorative justice; therefore, the inclusion of narrative identity work with an emphasis on amends to compensate for transgressions needs to be included to make *restorative identity work* more distinct. In regards to my reconceptualization of restorative justice, imagine a DJ (disc jockey) mixing music from at least two sources simultaneously. I plan to mix restorative practices with narrative identity work and create a new sound that promotes positive change. Narrative identity work gives meaning to individuals and groups through narratives, which are designed for healing and restoration of marginalized individuals by opposing the disapproving societal representation relative to the individuals and their reference groups (Fine et al., 2000; Opal 2011; Rapport 2000; Rossing & Glowacki-Dudka, 2000) and restorative practices are inclusionary, therefore when amalgamated together they will expectantly ignite the transformation of offender-labeled youth.

Historically, researchers have had the ability to mix concepts like DJ's mix music. For example, Williams and Teasdale (2007) mixed cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and meditation resulting in a deliberate remix for secular practice called Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) for treatment of clinical depression. The reconceptualization of the two concepts was considered a match made in heaven because the subjects of MBCT demonstrated a reduction in the likelihood to relapsing by 50% in individuals who experienced recurrent episodes of depression (William & Teasdale, 2007).

The reconceptualization of two concepts is not new, however the significance of the reconceptualization is primarily based on participant outcomes. No matter how well two

concepts are mixed together by researchers, the participants are as pertinent as an MC (master of ceremony) on a hip track because participant outcomes make the reconceptualization relevant. Therefore, as a graduate student, I know the reconceptualization of restorative practices and narrative identity work to enhance the psychological well-being of juvenile offenders through counterspaces will only become relevant when offender-labeled youth are handed the microphone and given a voice. If the voice and behavior of offender-labeled youth can become harmonious through the reconceptualization of restorative justice and narrative identity work within a counterspace; consequently, the attention that offender-labeled youth receive from state personnel and community agencies will matter in regards to helping the offender-labeled youth reintegrate into society. According to Rosenberg and McCullough (1981, p. 164) “attention is the most elementary form of mattering.” The conceptual and theoretical framework of restorative practices and narrative identity work in relationship to the juvenile justice system will be described in more detail in Chapter 2 in order to gain a deeper understanding of existing *practices* that enhance the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth *prior* to transitioning back into the community.

Summary

Metaphorically, I will be the disc jockey (researcher) in this qualitative study spinning two records simultaneously. One record on the turntable will be titled “Restorative Practices” and in my other hand there will be a record titled “Narrative Identity Work.” As I mixed the concepts of restorative practices with narrative identity work, something new will play, which will be termed *restorative identity work*. Restorative practices work *with* the MC (master of ceremony) and ignite transformation beyond restorative justice, but ultimately the MC (juvenile) determines whether the reconceptualization of restorative practices and narrative identity work is a hit. The

literature review in Chapter 2 has been intentionally setup like a playlist because music has always helped me gain a deeper understanding of the content and context of literature that I read, therefore unapologetically I utilized music tracks as subheadings to discuss restorative justice, restorative practices, and narrative identity work, which have a history of being utilized within programs for offender-labeled youth making the transition from boys to men.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Track #1/Just the Two of Us: Youth and Community Engagement

Offender-labeled youth are an exceptional group with specific needs that need to be addressed while they are incarcerated and after they are released from correctional facilities (Tarolla, Wagner, Rabinowitz, & Tubman, 2002). Research strongly suggests that youth involved with the juvenile justice system increase their likelihood to gain employment and reengage in the community, if they are able to learn interpersonal skills while incarcerated and if they receive support as they reintegrate back into society from a correctional setting (Chung, Little, & Steinberg, 2005). Therefore, a restorative philosophy that stresses the importance of relationships and making the shift from a punitive to supportive approach (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015) is emerging, and the ideals of immersing school communities in a pedagogy that places an emphasis on relationships and a curriculum that values social and emotional learning is being recognized as a restorative practice that can be proactive in relationship to school justice and discipline (Morrison et al., 2005). The spirit of restorative practices is distinctly captured by Wachtel (2013) who wrote:

Human beings are happier, more cooperative, and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in position of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them (Wachtel, 2013, p.8).

Youth engagement is associated with positive outcomes and perceived as a strong sign that formerly incarcerated youth are making strides toward a successful transition back into society (Mathur et al., 2014). Bullis, Yavanoff, and Havel (2004) posit that youth engagement is when youth are “employed, or enrolled in a school program, or working and going to school, and not arrested or placed back into the youth or adult criminal justice systems” (2002, p. 70). However, Zaff, Kawashima, Boyd and Kakli (2014) argue *productive engagement* is a global

construct that relates to one's motivation to engage in a variety of prosocial experiences, which centers around academic and civic engagement and one's behavioral expression of their motivation. Interestingly, Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) perceive *interpersonal mattering* as "a motive" (p. 165) that influences a person's behavior and affects their psychological well-being. Therefore, even though employment and education are beneficial in increasing post incarceration engagement, re-entry services must be tailored to the youth and not solely based on the educational and employment opportunities available at the time (Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009).

Attention is considered "the most elementary form of mattering" (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981, p. 164), therefore the understanding that disengagement or engagement of youth is a relational issue between an individual and the context for him/her is essential to the developmental trajectory for reengaging youth (Zaff et al., 2014). Over the last two decades, there has been increased recognition that placing an emphasis on punitive interventions with disengaged youth does not help youth develop a more positive trajectory (Lerner, 2004). In fact, when programs align with the strengths of disengaged youth the probability of the youth progressing toward a path more academically, socially, and civically increases (Cohen, 2010; Hahn, Leavitt, Horvatt, & Davis, 2004).

For too long, an emphasis has been placed solely on whether youth are engaged in academics, employment, and court ordered services without an enough emphasis being placed on whether the community is engaged with the youth (Mathur & Clark, 2014). Community engagement is a planned process with a specific purpose that includes the collaboration of various identified groups to address an issue in their community (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).

The Juvenile Justice System consistently collaborates with a multitude of agencies, such as foster care, mental health, vocational rehabilitation, and child welfare (Leon & Weinberg, 2010). A growing amount of research indicates the majority of incarcerated youth are *dually involved*, meaning youth are involved with the child welfare system or homeless, which classifies them as *crossover youth* due to an existing overlap of services (Osgood, Foster, Flanagan, & Ruth, 2005). Crossover youth have a history of maltreatment, which is recognized and accepted as a characteristic that increases the propensity of delinquent behaviors, but yet little research is available addressing the specific needs of this population or known about how different treatment modalities related to improving outcomes may impact these youth (Siegel & Loyd, 2004). From an ecological perspective crossover youth and community agencies face the challenge of adequately addressing the physical and socio-psychological needs of this population (Herz, Ryan, & Bilchik, 2010). Mahoney and Stattin (2000) explain:

“the issue is not whether an individual is engaged in an activity—the issue appears to be what the individual is engaged in, and with whom. In terms of antisocial behavior, it may be better to be uninvolved than to participate in an unstructured activity, particularly if it features a high number of deviant youth.” (p. 123)

The high recidivism rates and poor outcomes for incarcerated youth have caused some scholars to scrutinize intensive rehabilitation programs without sufficient transition and reentry services (Abrams, 2006; Steinberg et al. 2004). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports the average recidivism rate for juvenile offenders is close to 55% after 12 months of being released from a correctional facility (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). According to Bullis and colleagues (2002), the recidivism rate for special education youth is even faster, since youth with disabilities are 2.8 times more likely to return to the Juvenile Justice System after 6 months in comparison to their non-disabled peers. Traditionally post incarceration outcomes are measured by recidivism rates and juvenile arrests, however successful outcomes also depend

heavily on community partners and stakeholders who receive these youth as they reintegrate back into the community (Mathur et al., 2014).

Research strongly suggests that shared responsibility between various community and child care agencies can enhance educational success and youth engagement (Gonsoulin & Read, 2011). Community ideology is built around the value of relationships (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). According to Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne (2005), “strong institutions that develop genuine positive relationships within the nexus that sustains individual and collective life seem essential to our capacity to build a civil society” (p. 336). Congruent with the work of Rosenberg (1985) that portrays *societal mattering* as “the feeling of making a difference in the broader scheme of sociopolitical events—of feeling that one’s thoughts and actions have an impact, create ripples, and are felt” (p. 215). According to Wachtel (1997), the philosophy behind restorative justice is deeply rooted in creating a sense of community:

Community is not a place. Rather it is a feeling, a perception. When people see themselves as belonging to a community, they feel connected. They have a sense of ownership and responsibility. They feel they have a say in how things are run and a stake in the outcome. (Wachtel, 1997, p.193)

Similar to the song “Just the Two of Us” by Bill Withers that proclaims that people can make it if they try, the idea of “community” can be romanticized and research literature approaches the idea with a certain naivety assuming that the community wants to have a relationship with the offender (Verity & King, 2008). Regardless of romanticism, the ideology and interventions of restorative justice rejuvenates the notion that there is a genuine interest from members of the community to reconcile with an offender and practice the common alternative of bringing people together to repair fractured relationships, which has allowed restorative practices to expand beyond criminal justice institutions and be utilized in social agencies (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015).

Track #2/Everything is Everything: Restorative Justice to Practice

The basic concept behind restorative justice is to allow the offender who has caused harm to encounter the victim or victims of an offense, which in turn draws the offender closer to the community and making reparation to the victim (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). According to Ryan and Ruddy (2015), restorative justice can happen almost instinctively, for example one of the researchers shared a story about how if his child broke their neighbors' window, then he would take the child over to the neighbors' house, have the child confess their wrongdoing, and then figure out some type of way for the child to replace the window. Through this restorative process, the father may become more vigilant or possibly hesitant to trust his child again, but the effort put forth by the child to make amends would be considered an initial step to regaining trust within his family and community (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). The process is simple yet profound because healing and closure occurs after genuine communication of all parties involved (Hopkins 2015), which demonstrates a shift in mind-set *from a punitive* approach that typically has the deep seeded need to punish the wrongdoing of the offender *to a restorative* approach that places an emphasis on mending the fractured relationships between the victim and offender (Roberts, Hough, 2002).

The victim-offender reconciliation work that came out of New Zealand inspired the implementation of a modified Maori circle within the juvenile court system shortly after the Children, Young Persons, and their Family Act was passed in 1989, which led to the development of a formal concept of restorative justice (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). In Australia, restorative conferences were inspired from the family group conferences (FGC) of the Maori people in New Zealand, however the conferences in Australia were distinct because facilitators/mediators worked from a script in an effort to formalize the restorative justice process

(Moore & O'Connell, 1994). In 1991, the FGC program went to Australia via New Zealand and was developed in the city of Wagga Wagga. By 1994, restorative justice (RJ) conferences were being held and the expansion of restorative practices began to move beyond correctional institutions into other sectors of society, such as education (Lockhart & Zammit, 2005).

Restorative justice conferences and programs make practical use of a theoretical perspective known as reintegrative shaming, which rely heavily on emotions like shame and guilt in the restorative process (Kim & Gerber, 2012). Braithwaite's reintegrative shaming theory (1989) was one of the most influential criminology theories because by encouraging offenders to feel ashamed there was a reduction in recidivism. According to Braithwaite (1989),

Shaming is rough-and-ready justice, which runs great risk for wronging the innocent, and that the most important safeguard is for shaming to be reintegrative so that communication channels remain open to learning of injustice, and social bonds remain intact to facilitate apology and recompense. Reintegrative shaming is not only more effective than stigmatization; it is also more just. (pp. 159-161)

Supportive research related to Restorative Justice Programs have a tendency to focus on the satisfaction of the victims and the recidivism rates of the offenders (Ahmed, Braithwaite, 2004; Harris, 2006; Hosser et al., 2008; Sherman et al., 2000). Rarely is the exploration of the offenders' perception of the process examined despite the notion that restorative justice should repair the damages of all parties involved, which includes offenders, victims, and the community (Kim & Gerber 2012). Furthermore, research indicates that the restorative justice process relies heavily on interpersonal communication skills, which is problematic when considering that 50-60% of juvenile offenders have clinically significant levels of language impairment (Snow, 2013).

Over the past 20 years, the reconceptualization of restorative justice has been occurring through hermeneutic discussions about what is and what is not restorative, and the limitations

and versatility related to restorative justice (Hopkins, 2014). Zehr (1995) illustrates through a comparison chart titled “Understandings of Crime” how crime can be viewed through either a retributive or restorative lens. A retribution model forces distance between the offender and the victim in comparison to a restorative model that forces all parties to come together to decrease the distance created during an incident, which allows for healing to begin (Zehr, 1995). Over time restorative justice has emerged as an alternative to court-based criminal justice, but the downfall to restorative justice is no matter the nature of the offense the victims are considered deprived of something that is due to them such as their life, property, or respect (Wenzel et al., 2008).

The reconceptualization of restorative justice by Wachtel and McCold (2001) pushed for expanding restorative justice to restorative practices through the utilization of a Social Discipline Window. The four approaches to relationships were categorized as punitive, neglectful, permissive, and restorative, which could be applied in various settings (Hopkins, 2015). In an educational setting, the idea of authority figures participating in activities with students was considered a *restorative practice* and the ideal method because it was considered both high in support and high in control when dealing with student with behavioral problems in comparison to *punitive practices* that tend to do things *to* students, such as punishment (O’Connell, Wachtel & Wachtel, 1999). Despite research demonstrating that punishment is high in control and low in support, it is still the most prevalent method used in our schools today (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015).

The long-term consequences of exclusionary practices reveal that 69 percent of incarcerated adults are dropouts, 75 percent of youth in adult prison fail to complete tenth grade, and 33 percent of all incarcerated youth cannot even read at a fourth-grade level. After punitive acts, such as being suspended or expelled, minority students are far more likely to be

incarcerated and consequently African American and Latinos account for over sixty percent of America's 2.3 million prisoners (Smith, 2009). The number of students suspended from school in 1974 was 1.7 million, doubled to 3.1 million by 2000, and in 2006 research indicated that 1 out of every 14 students was suspended during the school year (Gonzalez, 2012). Qualitative research indicates the consequences of these exclusionary practices, which remove or "push-out" students from the school community and academic instruction contribute to delinquency, dropout rates, and ultimately what researchers refer to as the school-to-prison pipeline (Fowler 2011, Gonzalez 2012).

Dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline will require a paradigm shift where school leadership focuses on student inclusion into the school community rather than exclusion. Schools and school leadership will have to reexamine responses to issues related to school performance, dropout rates, and the school-to-prison pipeline without a disproportionate reliance on suspensions and expulsion (Gonzalez, 2012). Therefore, teachers, school administrators, and other school-based personnel who play a vital role in shaping the school culture will require effective professional development to enhance their capacity to create schools and more effective learning communities (Gonsulin et al., 2012, Coggshall et al., 2013).

Creating a restorative culture has driven the research of Hopkins (2015) over the last 15 years and led to the reconceptualization of the restorative justice process to restorative practices that expand beyond the criminal justice system, and ultimately creates a restorative culture. Hopkins' (2015) approach to restorative practices was to emphasize five core beliefs related to the mindset of the restorative process, five areas of language, and five stages in the restorative process, which she has termed the 5:5:5 model, which can be universally used in various settings. The 5 Core Beliefs help demonstrate how a Restorative Culture can be established and what the

framework for a restorative environment or culture would look like, sound like, and feel like within an organization that was based on restorative principles. The five core beliefs are as follows:

- 1) Everyone has a unique perspective on a situation or event and needs an opportunity to express this in order to feel respected, valued and listened to.
- 2) What people think at any given moment influences how they feel at that moment, and these feelings inform how they behave.
- 3) Empathy and consideration for others is crucial to the health and wellbeing of us all. Everything we do is likely to have an impact on those around us.
- 4) Our unmet needs drive our behavior. If our physical and emotional needs are met we are able to function at our best– and if they are not we are under resourced and less able to cope – especially in challenging situations.
- 5) The opportunity to engage in empathic collaborative problem-solving affirms and empowers people. (Hopkins, 2015)

According to Hopkins these 5 Core Beliefs can be changed into restorative interventions which can be utilized across various setting. In a school setting for a restorative culture or any change to occur, research suggests that unless the head teacher is “on board” the initiative will fail because a restorative approach differs from the traditional approach to discipline (Kane et al., 2007). Recently, trainings throughout the United Kingdom in restorative approaches have expanded beyond correctional facilities and into the public sector where professionals ranging from social workers, truancy officers, educational psychologists, school administrators, and foster care agencies are beginning to deconstruct the original notion of the victim-offender encounter rooted in reintegrative shaming theory to the values, principles and core beliefs of an organization desiring to create a restorative culture that shapes the environment or workplace (Hopkins, 2015).

“Restorative justice is not a map, but the principles of restorative justice can be seen as a compass pointing a direction. We believe at minimum restorative justice is an invitation for dialogue and exploration” (Zehr, 2002, p. 10). However, despite the belief that restorative approaches may result in better outcomes than adversarial approaches, practitioners must consider (no matter whether in an educational setting or correctional setting) the nature of the oral language demands that will be placed on the juvenile offender and the possible high-risk implications for the victim if the offender cannot communicate effectively (Snow, 2013). Furthermore, since restorative justice utilizes shame and guilt to breakdown a juvenile offender to the point that they feel ashamed and want to recompense for their wrongdoing (Braithwaite, 1989), then what is in place to *distance* the juvenile offenders from the shame and guilt associated with restorative justice?

One way individuals (juvenile offenders) can *distance* themselves is by problematizing the views others hold of them through narrative identity work, which is considered *distancing* (Snow & Anderson, 1987). *Distancing* from an ontological perspective plays like a counter narrative reminiscent of the song “Everything is Everything” by hip-hop artists Lauryn Hill which is undoubtedly dedicated to struggling youth who refuse to accept deception as a replacement for the truth, which profoundly reflects the work of Snow and Anderson (1987) where through distancing, marginalized persons assert how they are “different” from the ascription society makes about them.

In contrast to distancing, labeling theory argues that delinquents who are identified and sentenced may associate their “offender” stigma as a badge of honor where they embrace the label, which consequently changes their social identity and their behavior (Ascani & Braithwaite, 1989). Similar to labeling theory, within narrative identity work marginalized individuals that

embrace master narratives of self often find social value in their self-identity when the identity provides leverage, even a stigmatized identity (Case & Hunter, 2014; Leinsring, 2011).

However, the social practices of *embracing* and accepting these *labels* mirrors the description of hegemony described by Peter McLaren where he argues:

By social practices I refer to what people say or do. Social forms refer to the principles that provide and give legitimacy to specific social practices...
Hegemony is the struggle in which the powerful win the consent of those oppressed, with the oppressed unknowingly participating in their oppression (pp. 173-175).

The *oppression narrative* in identity work discusses the commonalities and shared experiences of a group, like the common thread that bonds incarcerated youth with similar stories of being pushed to the margins (Case & Hunter, 2014). Although the oppression narrative was not promoted while working with offender-labeled African American youth, Case and Hunter (2012) found it noteworthy because the narrative gave students a voice that typically would not have been heard in relationship to their experiences of marginalization within the larger society.

The transition from youth to adulthood primarily is a process based on teaching conformity and shaping social identity, but an interruption by the juvenile justice system can alter the pathway of youths to adulthood and have severe long-term implications for juvenile offenders (Myers, 2003). A pernicious consequence associated with being deemed a deviant is that youth with this marginalized identity often discover that people in positions of power, such as teachers and community leaders may become reluctant to provide life-bettering opportunities to them (Davies & Tanner, 2003). Restorative Justice Programs have a tendency to focus on victim satisfaction and the recidivism rates of the offenders (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004; Harris, 2006; Hosser et al., 2008; Sherman et. al 2000). However, less research is available in

relationship to the offender perception of the restorative process despite the notion that restorative justice should repair the damages of all parties involved, which includes offenders, victims, and the community (Kim & Gerber 2012).

Track #3/Am I Wrong: Self-Identification and Self-Efficacy

Narrative identity work gives meaning to individuals and groups through narratives that are designed for healing and restoration to marginalized individuals by opposing the disapproving societal representation relative to individuals and their reference groups (Fine et al., 2000; Opsal 2011; Rapport 2000; Rossing & Glowacki-Dudka 2000). According to Snow and Anderson (1987) *identity work* is a “range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustaining potential identities congruent and supportive of the self-concept” (p.1348).

Case and Hunter (2014) in a nine-month ethnography studied *counterspaces* and narrative identity work of offender-labeled African American youth in order to gain an understanding of how youth resist the negative societal conceptions of their identities. Through an intervention program called Peer Ambassadors (PA), which functioned as a *counterspace*, offender-labeled youth through narrative identity work created four distinct counter narratives: oppression, resistance, reimagined personal narratives, and collective narratives (Case & Hunter, 2014). Typically, offender-labeled African Americans who have encounters with the Juvenile Justice System are perceived by society as “threatening” and “defective” (Bernburg 2006; Bernberg & Krohn 2003). Narrative identity work within a counterspaces offers a social setting where two or more individuals come together to challenge deficit notions (Case & Hunter, 2014), making narrative work central to identity construction and maintenance, and preeminent in the construct of identity (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010).

The *resistance narrative* in the PA program avowed that offender-labeled youth had “uninterrupted potential” despite their involvement within corrective systems (Case & Hunter, 2014), which when placed juxtaposed to the dominant societal narrative that characterizes incarcerated youth as irredeemable and adult criminals-in-training (Bernburg, 2006; Bernburg & Krohn, 2003), the resistance narrative becomes an apparent essential counter narrative. Despite incarcerated youth having a history of problematic behaviors, they should not be considered “damaged” because they still have the capability to engage in prosocial behaviors and give back to their community (Lavie-Ayaji & Krumer-Nevo, 2013). In the Peer Ambassador program youth were allowed to work *with* adults instead of *under* them, which reinforced the proposition of the uninterrupted potential narrative and gave youth a sense of efficacy (Case & Hunter, 2014).

Psychologist Albert Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as the perceived capability to accomplish one’s goal and strive in specific circumstances that influence one’s life. According to Carroll et al. (2012), when it comes to self-efficacy delinquent adolescents set the fewest goals, have the least challenging goals, and demonstrate a lack of commitment to those goals they do set, which reflects lower levels of academic and self-regulatory efficacy when compared to at-risk and non-at-risk adolescent groups. Socially, juvenile incarceration is considered a major setback for adolescence because they frequently return to their communities inadequately prepared for young adulthood, as shown by studies which indicate that juvenile offenders often continue criminal behaviors into adulthood (McCord, 1992).

According to Bandura’s (1986, 1997) “triadic reciprocal causation” model the relationship between personal factors, behavior and the environment all impact human agency related to one’s self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and self-regulated learning. The triadic

reciprocal causation model is typically displayed in a triangle and depicts the interdependence of three determinants: personal factors (P) which include cognitive, affective, and biological events; the environment (E); and, behavior (B) (Bandura, 1986,1997; Erlich & Russ-Eft, 2011). The triadic reciprocal causation model supports the notion that ones' environment is a contributing factor in relationship to an individuals' personal-identity and behavior. Therefore, discourse related to counterspaces and the promotion of well-being through self-enhancing social processes that occur within settings and are implicated in the adapted responses of marginalized individuals (Case & Hunter, 2014) may deserve attention.

In narrative identity work, a counter narrative to the aforementioned lack of self-efficacy was found in *reimagined personal narratives* where youth were allowed to become mentors to other youth, providing the opportunity for offender-labeled youth to re-craft themselves and their personal identities into a positive light (Case & Hunter, 2014). Prior research has shown that roles as youth mentors, advocates, and youth leaders can stimulate the development of competencies and a sense of self-efficacy in marginalized individuals (Maton & Salem, 1995). Albert Bandura states "The self is socially constituted, but by exercising self-influence, individuals are partial contributors to what they become and do" (Bandura, 1997, p 6).

According to Sternberg, Chung, and Little (2004) adolescence who have their lives disrupted by the juvenile justice system are frequently robbed of opportunities to practice typical developmental skills, such as developing healthy relationships with pro-social peers, engaging in romantic relationships, and gaining a sense of personal mastery where they clarify and deepen their purpose in life (Steinberg et.al, 2004). From a developmental perspective, formerly incarcerated youth often have to compensate for their delayed psychosocial development which can make the transition back into the community a confusing and difficult time period (Abrams,

2006). Western societies expect individuals to develop the psychosocial capabilities to meet the responsibilities of young adulthood between the ages of 16 to 24 which is a challenge within itself (Steinberg, Chung, & Little, 2004), but coupled with the challenge of being a young adult that was not afforded the typical psychosocial opportunities to adequately prepare for this transition the “dual challenge” of transitioning into adulthood (Altschuler & Brash, 2004) becomes reminiscent of what sociologist W.E. Dubois called “double consciousness” where an individual is being divided into a state of “two-ness” because they are stuck between two realities (Nyawalo, 2013).

In a qualitative study by Laura Abrams (2006), the two realities for 10 incarcerated youth released from a 12-month therapeutic correctional institution in Minnesota, came from being stuck between *anticipated problems* and *actual lived experiences*. One anticipated problem and agreed upon reality amongst all 10 participants in the study was that there was a necessity to have a plan for dealing with “old friends and influences” as they were *preparing to go home*, and the second reality was all participants would need the resolve to execute their plans long enough for their new belief system to outlast their old belief system. In this particular study, 3 out of 10 of the participants were re-incarcerated within 3 months due to an inability to navigate through the *actual lived experiences and challenges on the outs* (Abrams, 2006).

Social learning theory, posits that people learn deviant behaviors in the same way they learn non-deviant behaviors, where through social cues individuals learn differential reinforcement as found in the psychological principles of operant conditioning (Brauer & Tittle, 2012). Differential reinforcement has been defined by Akers (1998) as “the balance of anticipated or actual rewards and punishments that follow or are consequences of behavior” (1998, p. 67). Therefore, social learning theory posits that learning occurs through direct and

vicarious behavior reinforcement (Brauer & Tittle, 2012). Akers (1998) suggest that the cause of some juvenile offenders being incarcerated and becoming more sophisticated criminals is due to differential reinforcement, which is more succinctly explained in the following statement:

Whether individuals will refrain from or initiate, continue committing, or desist from criminal and deviant acts depends on the relative frequency, amount, and probability of past, present, and anticipated rewards and punishments perceived to be attached to the behavior (p. 66).

Reinforcement has a major role in social learning theory, but correlations are often frequently relied upon to demonstrate support of the theory, such as correlations between peer relationships and deviant behaviors or the relationship between cognitive attitudes and participation in deviant behavior. However, some scholars posit that social learning theories should not just be measured by well-established correlations between criminal behavior and negative peer associations because it may just relate to “faulty measurement and the tendency of people to seek the company of others like themselves” (Gottfredson & Hirschi 1990, p. 156; see also Tittle et al., 1986, p. 427).

Regardless of scholarly debates, social learning theory is one of the preeminent theories of crime and deviance because it argues that people learn deviant behaviors the same way they learn non-deviant behaviors (Akers & Jensen, 2006). Therefore, for juvenile offenders who have thoughts that emulate the first few verses from the song “Am I Wrong” by Nico and Vinz ,which plays like a counter narrative consistently questioning the master narrative with undertones of encouragement to think of alternative methods possibly through the utilization of counterspaces to promote positive self-concepts among marginalized individuals through the challenging of deficit-oriented dominant cultural narratives (Case & Hunter, 2012; hooks,1990). The learning of non- deviant behavior within a counterspace is imperative because it represents a “site of radical possibility” (Akers and Jensen, 2006).

Track #4/Lovely Day: The Power of Identity Work in Counterspaces

Case and Hunter (2014) studied counterspaces and narrative identity work of offender-labeled African American youth in order to gain an understanding of how youth resist the negative societal conceptions of their identities. Identity work within counterspaces has been theorized to enhance well-being by challenging deficit-oriented social narratives concerning marginalized individuals' identities through oppression, resistance, and reimagined personal narratives within counterspaces (Case & Hunter, 2012).

An *oppression narrative* is a shared narrative which articulates the nature of an individual's lived experiences (Balcazar et al, 2011). For example, in 1868, William Edgar Burghardt (W.E.B) Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts where all people in the common wealth were born free due to the adopted Bill of Rights. Therefore, his educational experiences were vastly different from most blacks who grew up poor and enslaved during that time period (Stafford,1989). Blacks from the South, like Booker T. Washington who was born a slave in 1856, were not allowed to receive an education because it was illegal to educate a black person in the South prior to the Civil War ending in 1865 (Hoedel, 2012). Consequently, the educational and lived experiences of W.E.B Du Bois and Booker T. Washington were vastly different, but the shared oppression narrative of dealing with two realities of being black and American, which Dubois termed "double consciousness" reflects a state of two-ness (Nyawalo, 2013) similar to the "dual challenge" of being both a young adult and a formerly incarcerated young adult transitioning into adulthood (Altschuler & Brash, 2004).

According to Fine, Weiss, Weseen, and Wong (2004) *resistance narratives* are sites of critical and counter-hegemonic discourse with thoughts and dreams "that speak of a world that can be" (Case & Hunter, 2012; Fine et al., 2000 p. 140; hooks 1990). The fact that W.E.B Du

Bois was provided the same education that white students received at a time when most blacks were poor and enslaved makes his classroom a counterspace, despite the oppression narrative associated with being a black student. His environment allowed him to prove himself as a ready individual, which aligns with the work of Case and Hunter (2012) where ready individuals respond to oppression by affirming their capabilities to overcome oppression, which ultimately instills a sense of hope and optimism within them. W.E.B Du Bois through his lived experiences stated “The secret of life and loosing the color bar, then, lay in excellence, and in accomplishment” (Stafford,1989, p.24), which aligns with the resistance narrative of offender-labeled youth which avows that offender-labeled youth have “uninterrupted potential” despite their involvement within corrective systems (Case & Hunter, 2014).

Metaphorically, in this tale of African-American leaders, Booker T. Washington represents formerly incarcerated youth because as a slave, he was robbed of the counter-hegemonic educational experience that W.E.B Du Bois endured until 9 years of age (Hoedel, 2005), which is parallel to how juvenile offenders are robbed of opportunities to practice typical developmental skills, such as developing healthy relationships with pro-social peers and a sense of personal mastery due to being incarcerated (Steinberg et.al, 2004). From a developmental perspective, formerly incarcerated youth often have to compensate for their delayed psychosocial development (Abrams, 2006), comparable to how Booker T. Washington who could only envision going to school as he carried the books of his slave master’s daughter to school. He wrote “I had the feeling to get into the schoolhouse and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise” (Washington, 1907, p.7). The first reality for young incarcerated youth is that they can only *anticipate* what life will be like as a free man and they must wait to

have the lived experiences (Abram, 2006) no matter how motivated they are to desist from criminal behaviors (Panuccio et al., 2012).

According to E.A. Panuccio et al. (2012), motivation precedes change, therefore for formerly incarcerated youth to desist in criminal activities subjective motivations and social supports are needed. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) contend that motivation is created from when one has the goal of self-improvement, but with specific and realistic resources for achieving those goals. Motivation does not guarantee or ensure a person will reach their goal, however it is necessary for change to occur (Panuccio et al., 2012). Booker T. Washington (1907) with no money to pay for his tuition when he arrived at Hampton Institute took a job as a janitor and stated “I was determined from the first to make my work as janitor so valuable that my services would be indispensable” (p.59) and despite being unable to cover the cost of his tuition the school administrators let him continue his education for four years and he graduated from Hampton in 1875 (Hoedel, 2005). The resistance narrative of Booker T. Washington was harmonious with what Patricia Hill Collins (2000) posits as a “hidden space.... of consciousness” (p. 98) where marginalized individuals refuse to accept the status quo as normal and the notion that they are somehow inferior and their oppressed condition is somehow their deserved lot.

A reimagined personal narrative is an individual-level construct (Balcazar et al., 2011) which differs from an oppression and resistance narrative that derives from setting-levels that invariably influence the content of the reimagined narrative (Salem, 2011). Therefore, if education was bread then W.E.B Du Bois was born with a piece of bread and wanted a sandwich, in comparison to Booker T. Washington who was born with nothing and craved a piece of bread. The reimagined narrative stems from the counterspace where individuals draw from their

oppression and resistance narratives as well as identity-affirming experiences to set the stage to re-craft self-concepts that have been “devastated by the larger culture” (Fine et al., 2000, p. 23.)

In the North, W.E.B DuBois was the first black student to graduate from Great Barrington High School in 1884 and delivered the commencement speech at his graduation (Stafford, 1989). His life by definition reflected a resistance narrative from an early age because he was born free and educators at Barrington High School provided a counterspace for DuBois to develop a resistance narrative that embodied the individual right to dignity and respect (Case & Hunter, 2012). In comparison to Booker T. Washington who would not experience counter-hegemonic discourse until after the age of 9, therefore the dominant culture narrative became a site for fierce contestation in the service of a “self-defined standpoint” (Collins, 2000) in relationship to his reimagined personal narrative. The reimagined narrative is personally transformative and liberating because it imbues the marginalized individual with a belief that he is more than what the dominant narratives have suggested (Balcazar et al. 2011), consequently W.E.B Du Bois in 1910 cofounded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) which spearheaded the struggle for racial advancement, while Booker T. Washington became a phenomenal educator that built Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute into America’s largest and best-endowed institution.

Snow and Anderson (1987) define identity work as a “range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustaining potential identities congruent and supportive of the self-concept” (p.1348). Educational settings have been regarded as safe havens (Cherniss & Deegan, 2000), free spaces (Fine et al., 2000) and sites of resilience (Payne 2008), but what makes counterspaces distinct from these various settings is that the primary function of the

setting is to “challenge deficit notions” and facilitate self-enhancement and the adaptive responding of its members (Case & Hunter, 2012).

The prison classroom is a space of interest because both educators and students are obliged to deal with the experiences of possibilities and humanization under dire conditions (Castro & Brawn, 2017). The power of identity work in counterspaces should provide an atmosphere that plays like the song “Lovely Day” by Bill Withers and be harmonious with the work of Pitre (2014) who found that teachers with a *profound belief in students* that never question whether their students have the capability to perform tasks, rather they teach with the assumption that their students are brilliant and capable had high performing schools. Educators in high performing schools that teach with certainty of their students’ brilliance, humanity, and inherent capability, discovered their beliefs shape their instructional practices in relationship to how they teach their students (Pitre, 2014; Delpit, 2012).

Theoretical Remix

Supportive research related to Restorative Justice Programs has a tendency to focus on the satisfaction of the victims and the recidivism rates of the offenders (Ahmed, Braithwaite, 2004; Harris, 2006; Hosser et al. 2008; Sherman et al., 2000). However, if restorative justice utilizes shame and guilt to breakdown a juvenile offender to the point they feel ashamed and want to recompense for their wrongdoing (Braithwaite, 1989), then what is in place to *distance* the juvenile offenders from the shame and guilt associated with restorative justice? A possible solution is blending restorative practices that emphasize doing activities *with* students instead of *to* students with narrative identity work. Narrative identity work gives meaning to individual and groups through narratives that are designed for healing and restoration to marginalized individuals by opposing the disapproving societal representation relative to individuals and their

reference groups (Fine et al., 2000; Opal 2011; Rapport 2000; Rossing and Glowacki-Dudka 2000). Identity work within counterspaces has been theorized to enhance well-being by challenging deficit-oriented social narratives concerning marginalized individuals' identities through oppression, resistance, and reimagined personal narratives (Case & Hunter, 2012).

There is little to no research related to the reconceptualization of restorative justice with narrative identity work within counterspaces, which for the purpose of this dissertation will be termed “restorative identity work.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Track #5/Don't Believe the Hype

Restorative justice has the tendency to focus on the satisfaction of the victims and the recidivism rates of the offenders (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004; Harris, 2006; Hosser et al. 2008; Sherman et.al). Yet, rarely is the exploration of the offenders' perception of the process examined despite the perception that restorative justice is about the healing of all parties which include the victim, offender, and the community (Kim & Gerber, 2002). Traditionally, the restorative model tends to force all parties to come together to decrease the distance created during an incident, which allows for healing to begin (Zehr, 1995). However, over the last 20 years the reconceptualization of Restorative Justice has expanded with an emphasis being placed on restorative practices that examine how relationships are either punitive, neglectful, permissive, or restorative (Hopkins, 2015, Wachtel and McCloud, 2001). Research indicates that human beings are more likely to make changes in their behavior when those in position of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them (Wachtel, 2013). The goal of action research is to address a specific problem in a practice-based setting (Herr & Anderson, 2015), therefore this research will address the need for counterspaces within juvenile correctional facilities. Counterspaces offer a social setting where two or more individuals come together to challenge deficit notions (Case & Hunter, 2014), and (Room 21) is the counterspace within this qualitative ethnographic study where offender-labeled youth come together to challenge deficit notions typically associated with incarcerated youth through participation in a leadership group.

As a school psychologist for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), I have had the unique experience of implementing restorative practices by working *with* juvenile offenders who attend high school within a State correctional facility and the privilege of helping to shape the

school culture by overseeing the Student Council. Initially my interests in the student council stemmed from a graduate course that required students to conduct a program evaluation. Consequently, I selected the student council but inadvertently my program evaluation led to action research where I became a participant/observer and an agent of change. The Student Council needed to be re-established because there was only 3 members. Drawing from my epistemology as a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, I knew that the worth of an organization was often determined by the members. Therefore, once well-recognized high school student leaders were recruited and became stakeholders the student council roster quickly went from 3 to 22 students. Over the last 3 years, we have maintained about 18 to 20 students on the student roster and the student council meets weekly in the counterspace that is bound within this case study. The student council functions as a student-led organization for high school students where students continuously work *with* educational staff and security utilizing restorative practices to plan assemblies, student activities, and participate in project-based learning.

As a graduate student with an interest in expanding restorative practices to include narrative identity work, I have discovered that the accumulation of 19 years of work experience within the DJJ coupled with having direct access to the marginalized population within the DJJ has unexpectedly given me an “*insiders point of view*” where juvenile offenders can be observed and studied “naturally” in a real-world setting. Typically, offender-label youth that attend the high school within the juvenile correctional facility that I work see me talking to students, walking by their classroom windows, or they overhear me using humor with staff to change a serious situation into an opportunity for growth. Despite being a highly-visible person on campus, I inevitably maintain an *etic* perspective amongst offender-labeled youth because I am

an “outsider” that works for the correctional facility as a school psychologist and I have never been incarcerated. However, as a researcher ironically I have an emic perspective because of my 19 years of working with offender-labeled youth in an educational setting. My work experience as a school psychologist has established and given me the standpoint of an “insider” amongst offender-labeled youth because I have become a natural part of their school culture and community. Consequently, after nearly 20 years of work experience, I found myself in a position to develop a 12-week curriculum designed to help offender-labeled youth challenge deficit notions through civic engagement and vicarious experiences. As a qualitative researcher making practical and effective use of ethnographic methods, I gave comprehensive account of how the existence of counterspaces influences the self-identification and psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth who are incarcerated through student journals, field journal, and an in-depth analysis of individual theme songs selected by offender-labeled youth in the leadership group within the counterspace (Room 21).

“Qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how, they construct their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attributed to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).”

According to Subpart C (46.306) (a) (2) under permissible research for prisoners, there are four categories that determine whether a study is permissible research for prisoners. At least one of the categories must be applicable for a study to be considered ethical. Categorically under permissible research, this study aligned with two categories. The first category being that this was a study of a prison as an institutional structure (development of counterspaces) or prisoners as incarcerated individuals that presents no more than minimal risks and no more than inconvenience to the subjects (narrative identity work).

Secondly, this research was on practices (restorative practices), both innovative and accepted, which have the intent and reasonable probability of improving the health or well-being of the subject (narrative identity work). From an epistemological perspective identity work bears the resemblance of the 1988 Public Enemy single “Don’t believe the Hype,” which was a counter narrative to the negative press and social media associated with that particular hip-hop group at the time. “Don’t Believe the Hype” plays like a repeated warning to marginalized populations to not believe the master narrative that is usually written about them when a story is wrote.

Purposefully, rather than focus on recidivism rates, the percentage of incarcerated youth who are dropouts, failing academically, or reading at an elementary level, I chose to gain a deeper understanding of how the existence of a counterspace influences the self-identification and psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society. A counterspace challenges deficit notions of marginalized populations through narrative identity work. Identity work within counterspace has been theorized to enhance ones’ psychological well-being by challenging deficit-oriented social narratives concerning marginalized individuals’ identities through oppression, resistance, and reimagined personal narratives within counterspaces (Case & Hunter, 2012). Therefore, the guiding research question for this qualitative ethnographic case study is as follows:

How does the existence of a counterspace influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society?

Track #6/Research Design: Paid in Full

As I struggled to develop my research design and methodology the song lyrics first uttered by Eric B. & Rakim from the 1987 song “Paid in Full” came to mind, “I’m thinking of master plan, cuz ain’t nothing but sweat inside my hand” which inspired me to search for the

video. Ironically, the video began with a commentator announcing “This is a journey into sound, a journey which along the way will bring to you, new colors, new dimensions, and new values” and subsequently displaying the different responses that music elicits from various cultures. As a graduate student, I first envisioned Eric B. & Rakim as ethnographers giving a “thick description” about their humble beginnings as struggling artists within a hip-hop culture where artist sought to be paid in full for their talents. However pedagogically, I began to see the opportunity to use this song to teach about narrative identity work because hip-hop artist Eric B. moves quickly from an *oppressive narrative* that depicts him as a person in the struggle who is willing to commit crimes for money to a *resistance narrative* where he contemplates ways of making money legitimately to ultimately a *reimagined narrative* where he uses his mind along with a pen and some paper to get “Paid in Full.”

More importantly than simply building from the framework of Case and Hunter (2014) who conducted the nine-month ethnography where they studied counterspaces and narrative identity work of offender-labeled African American youth in order to gain an understanding of how youth resist the negative societal conceptions of their identities. I realized that the time period of the two songs “Don’t Believe the Hype” and “Paid in Full” was during my adolescence. The mere fact that I can recollect some of the lyrics from these songs 30 years later suggests that hip-hop has had an influence on my identity as a teenager. Therefore, the use of individual theme songs were incorporated within this qualitative ethnographic case study as a means of gathering data and as a tool for narrative identity work related to youth who are incarcerated. This approach expanded on the framework developed by Case and Hunter (2014) during the ethnography on the intervention program called Peer Ambassadors (PA). The PA program functioned as a *counterspace*, where offender-labeled youth through narrative identity

work created four distinct counter narratives: oppression, resistance, reimagined personal narratives, and collective narratives (Case & Hunter, 2014).

Building from the framework of Case and Hunter (2014), I created a research design for a qualitative ethnographic case study that would examine the oppression, resistance and reimagined narratives of offender-labeled youth within a leadership group that met on a weekly basis to investigate how the existence of counterspace influenced the psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth. As the facilitator of the leadership group, I was a participant/observer exploring *narrative identity work* with offender-labeled youth who were incarcerated (18 years or older) and voluntarily agreed to participate in the small focus group. A case study is an in-depth analysis of a bounded system (Tisdale & Merriam, (2016), where a single unit has boundaries placed around it such as a counterspace and an ethnography is considered the study of a culture, therefore this is a qualitative ethnographic case study. This case was bound in the counterspace (Room 21) within a juvenile correctional facility and only adult juvenile offenders enrolled in high school were allowed to be studied within the counterspace. The counterspace placed an emphasis on providing an opportunity for offender-labeled youth to enhance their psychological well-being through the reconceptualization of restorative justice and narrative identity work, which when blended created something new, which I termed restorative identity work. Restorative identity work requires civic engagement and promotes offender labeled-youth reintegrating back into their school community.

Participant selection. After the study was approved by the University of the Pacific and the Department of Juvenile Justice and permissions were granted, then participants were selected to participate in this qualitative ethnographic case study where through a small focus group, interactive journals, and field notes, data were collected. High school students who were 18

years of age and older were selected for the study and given a consent form which indicated an interests in the study and a willingness to allow this researcher to utilize their journals as data, with the understanding that at any point they could withdrawal from the study without being denied or removed from the group and their journals would be withdrawn from the study.

According to Macnaghten and Myers (2004), “focus groups work best for topics people can talk about to each other in their everyday lives, but don’t.” Therefore, participants were placed into a focus group to discuss leadership and becoming extraordinary. From a constructivist perspective, this leadership group was designed to influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society. The group met weekly for 60 minutes to discuss becoming extraordinary and data was only collected and discussed in Room 21. Each week within a twenty-four-hour period, I reflected on what happened in the leadership group. Typically, I examined pictures taken of the whiteboard which had tally marks under each participant name symbolizing how much knowledge they were able to retain from the information given during the leadership group either that day or from weeks prior. As a facilitator, my plan was to help students navigate a dialogue related to change after introducing them to new information and vocabulary terms. Through my experience as a school psychologist, I understand that most of our students struggle with cognitive dissonance, consonance, and goal-setting, so on a weekly-basis through innovative methods I attempted to engage offender-labeled youth using YouTube videos, music, and movie clips to want to become the best students that they could be.

Participants were selected through the use of student council applications. Students who signed up for the student council, but were not selected because of their history of behavioral problems (incentive level) were still allowed to attend student council meetings as “interests”

until their behavior stabilized (incentive level increases). Incentive levels are determined by a duration of time that students have been participating in prosocial and acceptable behaviors and the levels are identified as A, B, C, and D and are almost equivalent to grades because A is the highest and D is the lowest level. Initially within the student council, I made the announcement amongst student council members (A & B level) and “interests” (C & D level) that a leadership group would be hosted by the school psychologists for all students that would like to enhance their leadership skills and maximize their potential prior to transitioning back into the community. After the announcement based on the number of eligible participants (adult high school students) snowball sampling occurred from students who had requested student council applications and all 18 years and older students that were verified through the institutions database (WIN System). Students who were minors or had an extensive history of working with this School Psychologists were deemed ineligible for participation in the study. Although, it should be noted that minor students had access to the group and were given the opportunities to participate in the leadership group even if they did not participate in the study because this was a natural part of the school functioning, which would occur even without the proposal to conduct a qualitative ethnographic case study. Therefore, no student was denied access to the leadership group and multiple leadership groups were available for students who were not participating in the study. It should be noted, that similar research groups with almost identical pedagogies had been held and facilitated by this school psychologist. Since 2014/15, I have had students select theme songs and I have monitored their progress through emails with teachers related to their effort and classroom performance. No harm or concerns with the leadership group has occurred. Currently as a school psychologist, I receive continuous request for students with behavioral

concerns to be included in the leadership groups held within this counterspace (Room 21) that functions as an intricate part of the high school within the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Participation was voluntary, informed consents were obtained, and all participants were ensured that their involvement would remain anonymous. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants and to the high school.

Data collection. As a qualitative researcher utilizing ethnographic methods, I kept a fieldwork journal to document my reflections related to the group, which helped capture my thinking, decisions, or the paradigm shifts that I experienced as a participant observer. On a weekly basis attendance was taken, absences were documented, and incentive levels within the institution were monitored. I understood as the researcher I am the primary source of data collection, therefore my written personal reflections occurred immediately after the group concluded or within a twenty-four-hour period, if time constraints did not allow me to write notes immediately. Since the “ethnographic interview” from an anthropology perspective places an emphasis on culture, I had participants select a theme song that represented their identity and asked them open-ended questions in relationship to their selection to gain insight about the culture of youth who are incarcerated, such as rites, rituals, myths, hierarchies, heroes and so on (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Each participant was asked to select a song that represented their identity within the first 3 to 5 weeks and after week 6 oral presentations were given to the group related to *why* participants chose a particular song to represent them as a theme song. Each oral presentation was immediately followed by transformative interviewing where, as a researcher, I “*intentionally*” aimed to challenge and change the understanding of participants” (Roulston, 2010, p. 65 – italics in original). No songs were allowed to be changed once selected until after

the transformative interview had occurred to be fair to early presenters. However, after each transformative interview all participants were given the opportunity to change their theme song.

As the school psychologist working within the juvenile correctional facility and participant/observer who facilitated the leadership group in order to gather a different type of data where participants were able to hear the views of others. According to Hennick (2014):

Perhaps the most unique characteristic of focus group research is the interactive discussion through which data are generated, which leads to a different type of data not accessible through individual interviews. During the group discussion participants share their views, hear the views of others, and perhaps refine their views. (pp. 2-3)

The Restorative Justice circle was utilized to allow the leadership group to share information in an organized-fashion and alleviate the capability for offender-labeled youth to hide within the group. In a restorative justice circle, one person cannot dominate the group because the restorative justice circle creates a balance, therefore a person with a dominant personality could only absorb time when they contributed to the group, but nevertheless every voice was heard. The leadership group topics provided background information for journal topics and interview questions were semi-structured where initial questions were asked in an interactive journal. During the first six weeks, each participant and their journal were assigned the same numerical number and all journal entries were recorded onto one document after each session for twelve consecutive weeks. As the facilitator, I reserved the right to continuously re-examine and expand on the open-ended question to ensure responses were answering the guiding research question: How does the existence of a counterspace influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society?

Data analysis. The collection of data and analysis occurred during school hours on a weekly basis immediately after each group in this qualitative case study that utilized ethnographic methods. Data collection consisted of journal entries, theme songs, and fieldwork

journals. Each week I reviewed the purpose of my study, read and reread the data, and identify themes that could help guide the study the following week. This process was repetitious to ensure that I was drawing closer to understanding how counterspaces influence the psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth. When written data did not yield a substantial amount of data to analyze, I sought outside resources and guidance from colleagues on how to obtain larger written samples. In addition to outside resources, I began to rely more heavily on selected theme songs after the first six weeks because they tended to give me more insight on offender-labeled youth. Through the use music offender-labeled youth were able to write about a time-period in their lives that they may have not considered writing about in a journal without being given the assignment to select a theme song. As each week went by, I compared the second collection of data to the first and so on until eventually I had established tentative themes or categories related to the oppressive, resistance, and reimagined narratives of offender-labeled youth. The overarching theoretical framework was derived from narrative identity work within counterspaces that has been theorized to enhance ones' psychological well-being by challenging deficit-oriented social narratives concerning marginalized individuals' identities through oppression, resistance, and reimagined personal narratives within counterspaces (Case & Hunter, 2012).

The Role of the Researcher

As a school psychologist working within the Department of Juvenile Justice, I understood the necessity for a balance between being an insider and outsider. According to Patton (2015):

Experiencing the program as an insider accentuates the participants' part of participant observation. At the same time the inquirer remains aware of being an outsider. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so to become capable of understanding the setting as an insider while describing it to and for outsiders. (p.338)

Consequently, the role of the researcher as a participant/observer has been described as a schizophrenic activity (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016) because the researcher usually participates while simultaneously trying to stay disconnected enough to observe and analyze, all while participating (Roach, 2014).

As an ethnographic researcher, I am an "insider" because since most of the high school students are familiar with my existence in their current environment they are more likely to be their authentic selves instead of "being fake," which I have witnessed firsthand as outsiders walk onto the high school campus. Some students will have visitors questioning how they could have ever been locked up, while other students will almost re-enact a movie and try to present themselves as tougher than they really are. However, as an "insider" or from an emic perspective, I often am able to see students be their authentic selves because I have become a part of their everyday environment, which makes this qualitative ethnographic case study different from research that has been conducted from an "outsider" or from an etic perspective.

Trustworthiness. I provided sufficient detail related to the context of my fieldwork, so that readers could determine if the environment was similar to other educational settings that they were familiar with and if the study could be duplicated in various settings. Intentionally, I provided sufficient data to ensure that the thick descriptions given throughout this qualitative

ethnographic case study was trustworthy and emerged from the data collected and not my own predispositions.

As a researcher, I discussed with participants my understanding of the data collected and ask participants to correct any misinterpretation or to explain any distinct terminology that was used within the culture established within the Department of Juvenile Justice. All participants were permitted to read the completed dissertation and written materials related to their contribution. Participants reserved the right to request information be omitted or changed if data was misinterpreted prior to the completion of the dissertation.

The improvement in behavior was systematically monitored through the database, which calculates behavioral reports and in turn determines the privileges that offender-labeled youth who are incarcerated can receive. Therefore, if a student that is deemed an “interest” becomes eligible for the student council it was based on his incentive level improving not his participation in the focus group.

Positionality. I have worked within the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) for 19 years as a School Psychologist and I have a profound belief in our high school students despite their transgressions. I have developed an innovative curriculum that combines identity work, restorative practices, and project-based learning, which I call the Extraordinary B.E.A.T which is an acronym for when your beliefs, education, achievement, and time come together to make extraordinary moments. Over the past three years as a graduate student I have researched foster youth, the dropout rate, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the success rate of marginalized populations in college, which gave me the desire to conduct a qualitative ethnographic case study related to how the existence of a counterspace influences the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society.

Restorative justice is considered high in satisfaction for victims because it allows the victim to have a voice, but little is known about the impact it has on the offender-labeled youth. Through restorative justice victims and the community typically are permitted to share their stories with offenders, which many offenders have never heard. As a School Psychologist working within a juvenile correctional facility, I have borne witness to countless Victim Awareness school assemblies where brave victims courageously walk out onto a gymnasium floor within a juvenile correctional facility and share their stories that typically end in the loss of a loved one or some type of life altering trauma. Typically, during victim awareness week offender-labeled youth will listen to victims of violent crimes pour out their hearts, display pictures of innocent children that were victims of gang violence, and end their testimonies with a strong plea for the offender-labeled youth in the audience to become more productive citizen in society. As a State worker within the juvenile correctional facility, I have been a part of the audience. Consequently, I have countless memories of listening to the never ending pain that comes from a victims' voice gradually becoming distorted as it fights through tears almost as if the burden of the pain is too much for the victim to carry. During the Victims Awareness Assembly, the large gymnasium crowd often becomes extremely quiet and the false bravado of offender-labeled youth seems to shrink almost as if they are beginning to question their self-identity.

As a school psychologist, for years I left the Victim Awareness assemblies thinking that if we are going to break down offender labeled youth, then we have the responsibility to rebuild them by providing them with the opportunity to give back. In 2015, I developed a nonprofit organization called the Extraordinary Beat and collaborated with a leadership group that I conducted and the Student Council to raise over one-thousand dollars for victims. The two concepts of restorative

justice and narrative identity work blended together allowed me to create something new termed Restorative Identity work, which was needed to help offender-labeled youth restore their self-identity. Restorative identity work is important because it allows offender labeled youth despite their transgressions to understand that they can still make a difference in this world.

Summary

This research falls under the permitted prison research because it focuses on restorative practices that are both innovative and accepted with the intent and reasonable probability of improving the health or well-being of the subject through discussions related to positive change and civic engagement. Furthermore, it looks at institutions as institutional structures in relationship to the provision of *counterspaces* provided and at prisoners as incarcerated individuals or a culture with no more than minimal risks and inconvenience to the subjects because it functions as a school activity that supports high school students with their social emotional functioning related to the school culture. In previous years, I have held leadership groups that were similar to this group where as a culminating project we raised over a \$1000 for victims of violent crime, we hosted the Foster Grandparents Programs 50th anniversary celebration, and most recently we had a Welcome Back to School assembly with the Mayor of Stockton, Michael Tubbs as the guest speaker. I plan to continue to conduct this leadership group each semester, however given my emic and etic perspective as a doctoral student within a State Correctional Facility, I have been positioned and placed in the unique position to conduct a qualitative ethnographic case study that could potentially disrupt the prison-to-prison pipeline,

Therefore, I conclude Chapter 3 with the overused cliché:

“If not now, then when?”

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The Counterspace: Room 21

As I stare out of my office window in the back of Room 21, I can see in all black capital letters the message: A COUNTERSPACE CREATED TO CHALLENGE THE MASTER NARRATIVE. The message is strategically placed above the window to acknowledge the purpose of the room. Although, the sentence seems to raise more questions than answers for offender-labeled youth, it sets the stage for the dialogues within the space amongst students and educators. For example, when Alfonso an African American student of Dominican descent was invited to participate in the leadership group, we discussed how his acceptance would be contingent on his willingness to stop throwing up gang signs during a simple conversation. His tendency to throw up various hand gestures to identify either the neighborhood that he was from or his gang affiliation was a habitual behavior that would need to cease within Room 21 in order to alleviate unnecessary problems, challenge the master narrative, and reinforce that the counseling center was indeed a counterspace. His reaction to my request was “What you want me to stop gang banging?” To which I replied, “I don’t care what you do, but for the 60 minutes that you will be in this room, I need you to be the best you that you can be. I need you to help me create the environment that I want to create.” Alfonso was a wild card because his influence on the leadership group would be unpredictable and although he possessed unlimited potential, his leadership skills were uncertain. Nonetheless, he was the type of student the leadership group was designed for since he was searching for an identity similar to many adolescents in high school. As a school psychologist within the juvenile correctional facility, I have heard various descriptors of Alfonso ranging from good thru bad from educational and custody staff. On the good side, he has been described as being a good-looking kid with pretty hazel eyes or an

intelligent young man with a good personality. However, on the bad side, he was described as being an extremely disrespectful, argumentative, and a gang entrenched individual.

Consequently, when Alfonso decided to accept the invitation to participate in the 12-week leadership group, I viewed his acceptance as a challenge and an opportunity for both of us to grow.

Although every leadership group I have coordinated is different, each group makes the next one better because I gain a deeper understanding of how the existence of a counterspace influences the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society. The definition of a counterspace is when one or more people come together to challenge the master narrative associated with a particular group or marginalized population. Room 21 is the counterspace that bounds this 12-week qualitative ethnographic study. Justifiably in Session Zero, the use of thick description to describe Room 21 will be utilized to set the parameters of this study.

Every morning as I grasp my heavy set of work keys, I am subtly reminded that I work as a school psychologist within a correctional facility and not in a public school. Since every door is locked and assigned a key number, one routinely hears, “What number key opens this door?” The keys distributed to an employee methodically determine whether or not one has access to a room or building, but advertently reinforces the master narrative of safety and security within the prison system. Seemingly, each key is equivalent regardless of whether or not it opens the bathroom, a dumpster, or one’s office because each key becomes a necessity when one needs to unlock something specific.

As the key holder in this qualitative study, I know exactly which key resting permanently secured amongst several keys will allow me access into a counterspace created to help offender-

labeled youth challenge the master narrative. The key is a tarnished gold and slightly bent to the left due to the repetitive twisting needed to pull open the heavy metal door. The front door is painted light blue and is solid metal on the bottom half with five industrial thick rectangular glass windows on the top half, resembling stripes. In a row of classrooms, Room 21 is indistinguishable from the outside because each classroom has a store front windows that matches the door and is divided into three big stripes with approximately 30 rectangular glass windows, which allows the security to be vigilant and educational services to be transparent.

Once a person steps inside of room 21, in clear sight and parallel to the entrance is a wall mural that reads “the master narrative” in bold black. However, almost in an unacceptable-like fashion the word *master* has a red line drawn through it. Written above the word *master* in a red corrective-like font is the word *counter*. The wall mural is nearly 90 feet away from the front door, but unapologetically reflects an edit to the master narrative and is strategically placed where all visitors can see it. The room is a freshly painted bright white with a long stretch of white wall on the right side that displays individual portraits of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Barack Obama, and Booker T. Washington. Each portrait of the aforementioned men of color is noticeably accompanied with an inspirational quote from the individual that it portrays. The posters are lined up and equally spaced out, running down the wall in a museum-like fashion until they eventually hit a white dry erase board with the words “vision board” written above it in black adhesive letters.



Figure 1. The Counter Narrative Mural

Room 21 is like the Tale of Two Cities because it is divided into two parts. The Counseling Center from the front door appears rectangular at first, but only because inside of the room there is a walled off barbershop. Unbeknownst to visitors there is a second entrance to room 21, which is about 60 feet to the left of the Counseling Center door, but provides entry into the barbershop. The barbershop is a small square vocational shop that is an estimated 30 feet wide and 30 feet long. Similar to a duplex these two classroom doors share the same building, but they are as different as two cities because they are separate entities. The barbershop is on the left side of the room, but only takes up about 25% of the Counseling Center. Therefore, the left wall partially divides the room until the wall takes a 90 degree turn left and corners in the barbershop. The left wall that is closest to the entrance camouflages the barbershop with a complete wall mural of two subway cars draped in graffiti. The first subway car has a high school student in a cap and gown resembling the Michael Jordan Jumpman logo, except for instead of wearing a basketball uniform the Jumpman image is of a high school student wearing a cap and gown and the once held basketball has transformed into a spray can. The acronym Y.A.C which stands for the Youth Advisory Committee being spray painted in bold colors by the student logo, each bold color used to paint the acronym miraculously transitioning smoothly from top to bottom by blending a bright orange into a yellow and then into a green. On the second subway car another distinct graffiti style reads “The Extraordinary Beat” but this time the

colors utilized were red, green, white, and lime green. The Extraordinary Beat is a nonprofit organization that I created to help students see how their beliefs, education, achievements, and time can come together to make extraordinary moments, but within the juvenile correctional facility it was becoming a recognizable brand associated with the work and project-based learning that came out of Room 21.

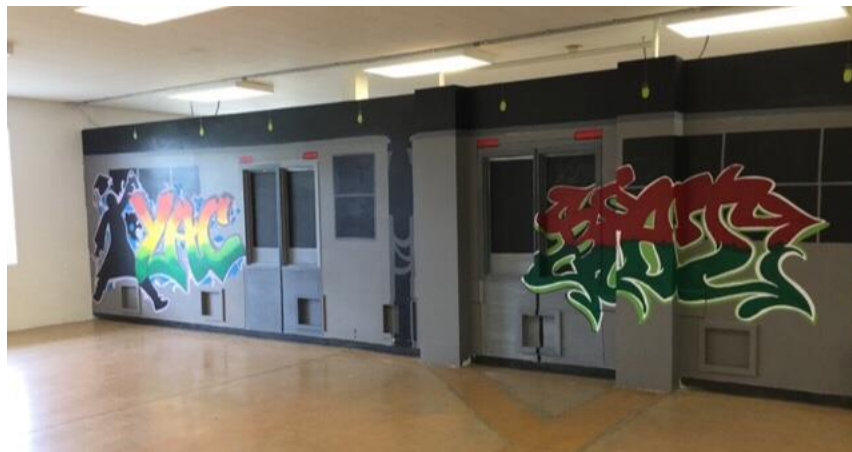


Figure 2. The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) Mural

In the heart of room 21, the diameter doubles and expands to nearly 60 feet from the right wall to left wall in comparison to the front of the room that is interrupted by the barbershop and the back of the room that is interrupted by the School Psychologist office, which sits left of the counter narrative mural. As a focal point, in the center of the room sits a pine wood conference table that is 18 feet long and seats about 18 students. The table is divided into two 9 feet sections, which when connected together creates a massive conference table for both the Student Council and the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), which are student led organizations that meet on a weekly basis during school hours. The width of the rectangular conference table faces the store front window and the conference table aligns with the rectangular shape of the right

side of the room. However, just past the two subway cars in the left of center of the room sits the mecca of this study.

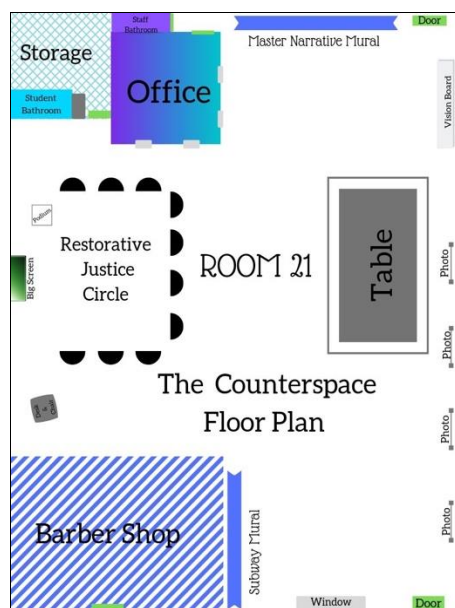


Figure 3. The Counterspace Floor Plan

In the mecca, there are 11 individual soft black lounge chairs that form a restorative justice circle. Every contemporary chair is square and helps the restorative justice circle look and feel more like a student lounge where conversations can flow easily around in a circular motion instead of a traditional classroom setting where seats are typically placed in rows. Although the restorative justice circle resembles a horse shoe, it still serves the purpose of giving each participant within the leadership group an equal voice and the opportunity to be seen and heard. Each chair positioned in an evocative manner towards the white dry erase board that closes off the horseshoe and completes the circle. The dry-erase board will be used to capture the voices of our high school students as they review vocabulary words, definitions, and share their personal experiences on a weekly basis throughout the leadership group. At the helm of the

restorative justice circle, slightly to the left of the dry-erase board sits a podium on a small square stage. Over the next 12 sessions, it will be from this small stage that I seek to gain a deeper understanding of how a counterspace influences the psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth?

Session One

In our initial session we had 8 of 9 participants show up to the leadership group. I was informed by school security that David would not be attending group because he was placed on TIP, which is a temporary intervention placement for students who are deemed to be a danger to themselves or others. David is a light skinned bi-racial student who prior to group informed me that he may be getting into trouble. In almost a premeditated manner, he stated “after my board hearing I will begin to program.” When students state they will program within this juvenile correctional facility, it means that they will begin to comply with program expectations and in turn their behavior and incentive level will improve based on their compliant behaviors.

At the beginning of the first session, one-by-one I greeted the students as they flowed into Room 21 and found seats amongst the black lounge chairs. Playing aloud was a motivational audio clip from Motiversity, which I downloaded off YouTube. Students shook hands and talked quietly with those they usually associated with and left out those they did not, while a compilation of motivational speakers that were known for captivating audiences played in the background. Once everyone was in attendance, I faded out the audio clip and seamlessly fell behind the somewhat engaged students with my own voice. I asked the 8 students, “If I were to walk into a classroom on a typical day what might I see?” The group consensus was that in some classes, but not all, there would be a lot of chit-chat, side-bar conversations, and students wandering around. However, no matter whether the classroom was loud or quiet, only about

50% of the students would be doing the work that was assigned by the teacher. Sherman, an African-American student who was built like a football player and had a big presence, felt compelled to say, “I want to make sure that it is stated that some teachers are really teaching, but then some are not.”

The purpose of the dialogue was not solely to gain a deeper understanding of what a typical high school day looked-like, but rather for the participants to identify their role in creating the school culture. Consequently, to move past the school culture and to personalize the school experience, I asked each individual, “If I were to ask your teachers about your efforts in school what would they say? Would they say that you were doing above average, average, or below average?” The uncertainty of whether I was going to check seemed to change the responses. The majority of the students stayed true to their original answers and stated they were doing above average. However, three students became concerned and with the uncertainty of what teacher would be asked, they decided to change their responses. Damien, an African American student that often appeared unkempt and resided on a Mental Health Unit due to witnessing someone getting shot in front of him and other adverse childhood experiences, was the first student to admit that his efforts were in the below average to average range depending on the class. Next, Gregory who was an outgoing, charismatic dark-skinned African American student openly admitted, “I’m not doing nothing in class but talking, telling jokes, and kicking it because I don’t really care about school like that.” Then lastly, after disrespecting all the teachers that he thought would give him a bad report, Alfonso admitted that his efforts for the most part were below average, with the possibility of being average depending on the teacher. Ironically, if David who was missing from group for fighting reported that he was doing below average than our leadership group would be a microcosm of the reported school culture because

only 55% of the students in our leadership group would be doing their work in the classroom on a daily basis or putting in above average effort.

After the leadership group described the school culture, I introduced the word of the week—complacency. I placed 11 blank lines on a white dry erase board, which unbeknownst to the participants would become a weekly routine to introduce new terminology and vocabulary words. Every week, the game would play out like Wheel of Fortune where I would become the game show host who was responsible for placing the correct letter above the appropriate blank line while putting the incorrect letters in a drawn-out box on the dry erase board, so students could use deductive reasoning to solve the puzzle. Throughout the 12-week study, vocabulary terms and group activities would be utilized to establish words of change, initiate discussions, provide opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of concepts, compete, and allow students to be active participants in their learning process. Competition will be fostered by rewarding students with points for every letter they identifying the vocabulary word of the week and additional points will be given throughout group for what students can remember from week to week. Each week the leadership group will conclude with someone being crowned the winner. All winners will receive a tangible reward the following week.

During session one, Alfonso solved the puzzle and was able to identify that the word of the week was complacency. However, he struggled with the definition of the word because it was foreign to him. Therefore, I continued to rotate clockwise around the restorative justice circle in search of a definition, which gave each and every student an opportunity to define the word complacency, but to no avail. When I found myself back at Alfonso's chair he seemed even more engaged than earlier, possibly because he was still winning. Then I announced since nobody could define the word complacency that I would give them a clue by using the root word

complacent in a story format. Following the story, I will allow everyone in the group to have a chance to define the word complacency. After all definitions were given, the School Psychologist, Mr. Singh, and the School Psychologist Intern, Mrs. Jackson, who were both in attendance would pick the best answer. If the two judges could not determine a winner, I told the group that I would break the tie by choosing the one I thought was the best out of the two participants that they selected.

Once the rules were established and the point values determined for the winner, I began to tell the story of two boxers. One boxer was considered the Champ and the other boxer the challenger. When the challenger stepped into the ring, the commentator took one look at him and described him as a mean-lean fighting machine. However, when the Champ stepped into the ring he said, "Oh my goodness! The champ looks like he may have lost a step, he's gotten a little heavier, and all we can hope is that he has not become complacent." Everyone all of a sudden seemed to have an idea of what the word meant once it was given context. The judges after hearing various definitions decided the best answer came from Manuel who was a quiet Hispanic student with long hair and a genuine smile, but who appeared to take his academics seriously. He was the first student to write down the definition of complacency in the provided journal that each participant was given without any verbal prompting. Manuel defined complacent as to be comfortable or lazy or to feel as if it would be easy to win. After Manuel was determined to be the winner by the judges, the group complained that his answer wasn't really a definition. To which I replied "if you can use it in a sentence based on what he communicated then it is a definition." I encouraged those who felt like they should have won to elaborate on their ideas, if they truly wanted to compete.

The final activity consisted of playing a short audio clip from Glen Berteau. This particular clip has been the foundation of the leadership group over the past 3 years because it promotes a reimagined narrative for anyone who wants to become extraordinary at what they do. Unapologetically, I have included the entire clip because of the profound impact it has had on my life, both personally and professionally:

You are not and I have not been called to live an average life. Average basically is just as close to the bottom as you are the top. Average is making A's and F's, average is making B's and D's, that's what average is. In the dictionary it made this statement, "His grades were nothing special, only average" was one of the definitions of average. Nothing special about your life, nothing special about what you are doing, now we are not talking about you have some prestigious job that you can brag about. It's just your life! There is just nothing that special about your life." – Glen Berteau

After the audio clip, I began to recite the speech as if it was my favorite song on the radio. I recited line after line, but sporadically paused from time to time and waited patiently for the person in the response rotation to fill in the space after given a verbal cue. For instance, I started at the beginning of the speech "You are not and I have not been called to live an (.....)" then I would intentionally pause in mid-sentence and say "the response I'm looking for has 2 words." The opportunity would move from person-to-person in a circular pattern until I heard the two words that I was looking for, which was "average life." If the student did not know the answer then I would allow the point value to go up, just to make things interesting. Although the maximum point value per question was 5 points, no matter how many wrong answers I heard. As we worked our way through the entire script members of the group began to ask "Why didn't you tell us to take notes?" to which I responded, "Why should I have to? What is your responsibility as a student and better yet how do you become above average?"

Notably, Jeff an energetic student who looked Caucasian, but who identified as a Native American understood what it took to gain an advantage over his peers and compete. Throughout

the group, he was taking notes, listening for clues, and noticing when I would slip up and almost give an answer away. Jeff similar to Alfonso was another wildcard. I was hesitant to ask him to join the group, but for different reasons. He often fought because he decided to no longer associate with a Hispanic gang that he once affiliated with. As a result, his participation in the leadership group would be contingent on his feelings of safety and required him to have the names of the other participants before he would commit to participating in the leadership group. Jeff had a history of receiving special education services, so to compensate for his deficits he had become extremely resourceful. During the leadership group, I frequently observed him reading body language and listening to the conversations amongst his peers, which is referred to as ear hustling within the juvenile correctional facility.

As we began to bring the group to a close, I asked all eight participants if they would like to remain in the leadership group. After reiterating to the group that their participation was strictly voluntary, everyone indicated that they wanted to remain in the leadership group. All the students were asked to answer the following questions in their journals:

- 1) How important is education to you and why?
- 2) Why did I play the audio clip for this group?
- 3) Why are you taking this course?

Devon, who was a well-groomed, light skinned African American student that typically wore a grey beanie on his head and spoke with a sense of confidence, stated “Me personally, I like this group because you are challenging us to think and adding to our vocabulary, which makes me want to be here.” In his journal he wrote that “I don’t want to go around the world and not know what is going on around me.” While students were writing in their journals, Devon requested

that I play the audio clip one more time and remarkably the whole class seemed to calm down and listen.

I concluded the leadership by drawing a crown over Jeff's name, which meant that he was our first winner. Jeff would receive a tangible reward at the beginning of the next group. Coming in second place was Alfonso. Watching the two students that I had deemed wildcards take 1st and 2nd was like watching an upset in sports because they out performed some of the general education students in the leadership group. Astonishingly, the last two students invited to the leadership group were the first two participants to challenge the master narrative unbeknownst to them. Jeff received special education services primarily for cognitive deficits while Alfonso received special education services due to his labile mood and behavioral issues. Nevertheless, the decision to include the so called "wildcards" paid off because both students had already challenged the master narrative of special education students by outperforming their general education peers and reinforced the importance of inclusionary practices.

Table 1
Session One Journal Entries

Journal	Names	How important is education to you and why?
1	Manuel	Education is important to me because I learn important new things every day and I will receive a diploma/GED to build up my knowledge in school
2	Sherman	Education is important because I will be the first person to get a diploma
3	Jeff	Education is the world to me because you will not get nowhere in life without it and no one can take it from you
4	Damien	Education is very important because without it you can never leave the hood.
5	Mark	Education is really important because without an education how are you going to succeed? You need to learn to read and do math at least so you can count money.
6	Gregory	Education is not really important to me because growing up all I wanted to do was graduate to make my Granny proud, but I also wanted her to be there when I graduated but she died, so now I honestly don't care about my education.
7	Alfonso	Education is very important because it opens doors to be more successful
8	Devon	Education is important because I would not want to go around the world not knowing what is going on around me.
9	David	No show/fight

Journal	Names	Why did I play the "Average Life" audio clip?
1	Manuel	For us to learn the meaning of average and what we need to do to make progress ourselves in life to become a more influential professional person in life.
2	Sherman	So we can get a better understanding of what life is about
3	Jeff	Because you want us to thrive for our education and more knowledge
4	Damien	So we can be more than just average
5	Mark	To let us know about being average
6	Gregory	So we could hear something
7	Alfonso	To have us know that being average is actually below average, always be above average.
8	Devon	Everyone thinks average is doing good, but in actuality it is not.
9	David	No show/fight

Session Two

In session two, David who had missed the first session due to getting into a fight entered the room with a smile that could easily be mistaken as a smirk. David, who was a bright young bi-racial student with prominent ears, full lips, and a big afro, often drew attention to himself by arguing with instructors in school and making people laugh. When David entered the room, he sat next to Mark who stayed under the radar during the first leadership group. However, with David in attendance, Mark suddenly became a little more animated. Mark was a slim, respectful, intelligent African American student with acne that had what was known as a “box” for a hairstyle. His hair was curly on the top, faded on the sides, with a puffy patch of hair on the nape of his neck that resembled a rabbit tail. As David supplied the jokes, Mark provided the laughter.

Immediately, I noticed the group dynamics changing with the attendance of David. The group had barely started and David had already started teasing Damien who was an African American student came to the leadership group looking like he had just woken up out of bed. David took one look at Damien and told him that he looked like a booger, which noticeably bothered Damien. His only response was to look in David’s direction and not laugh, but regardless of his unwillingness to laugh, Gregory who loved a good joke could not stop laughing. Gregory only added gasoline to the fire by repeating the joke to other students within the leadership group. Consequently, when everyone was in attendance, I felt the need to restructure the group by stating, “For the purposes of continuing to raise the bar within this leadership group, this second session will be structured differently than the first one.” This week, I will deduct one point for cursing and two points for derogatory statements. For those of you, who do not know what a derogatory statement is just think of it as anything that could be considered an

insult. The expectations that were placed on the leadership group only seemed to increase the resistance because the more I held them accountable the more they cracked jokes.

As soon as I started reviewing the material from the previous group, David exclaimed “This is not fair because I cannot win, and I don’t know the material from last week.” I then explained to David how it was fair for those who were in attendance and a natural consequence for him to feel behind since he was in a fight. I reminded the group that in the real world, “if you miss work then you make less money than those that didn’t.” Therefore, in this group just like the motivational speaker Eric Thomas states “knowledge is the new money.”

In an effort to reinforce and promote change, I announced that I talked to a few teachers just to ensure those students who proclaimed to be performing above average were indeed. Devon and Jeff both had teachers confirm that they were putting in above average effort. Jeff was grinning ear-to-ear, almost to the point I could see the tear drop that was tattooed on the left-side of his mouth, lift up just a little bit. Meanwhile, Devon who displayed a gentler smile, gave off a “that’s right vibe” as he moved his head up and down to acknowledge his agreement with the teacher report. However, the verbal praise session was cut short when David announced that, “I think my effort is above average, but my teachers just don’t like me.” I paused, looked at David and took a deep breath while a million thoughts ran through my head and simply responded by saying, “then we should work on finding a way to change that.” Sherman apparently wanting to move forward with the group asked “how long is this group?” and “are we going to get a certificate for completing this group?” He seemed slightly irritated by the amount of time that David was consuming, which left me feeling as if I had to explain to the group that the leadership group was scheduled for 12 weeks and strictly voluntary. Therefore, at any point and time, if the group no longer seemed beneficial as volunteers they could discontinue

participation in the leadership group without any penalty. The group seemed to settle down as if my body language was exuding a willingness to let any one of them go at this point.

Nonetheless, after surveying the group, all participants wanted to remain in the group so I digressed.

After a while the group regained structure and it became easier to redirect students. Ironically, during the game of Wheel of Fortune the vocabulary word of the week was cognitive dissonance and David who exhibited the most cognitive dissonance was the student that solved the puzzle. When David arrived to the leadership group he was disruptive, which left the impression that he did not want to be there. However, when David was told the leadership group was strictly voluntary, he wanted to remain in it. For the second week in a row, nobody could define the vocabulary word: cognitive dissonance. As a result, I explained how cognitive dissonance was when your behavior does not align with your goals. I discussed how if a person wants to lose weight, but eats more than he/she exercises then there is some cognitive dissonance in that diet plan. After a brief discussion about cognitive dissonance, I turned off the lights and pulled down the projection screen that was above the white dry erase board and played an Eric Thomas video. The video featured Steph Curry an NBA basketball player who remarkably made 77 three pointers in a row while practicing before an away game. As Eric Thomas narrated the story his voice had a certain edge that literally seemed to captivate the entire leadership group.

After the video, I asked them several questions about the content, but this time they were ready. Instead of continuing to reinforce the master narrative that offender-labeled youth are out-of-control and disciplinary problems like during the first 15 to 20 minutes of group, towards the latter part of the leadership group they seemed to start to want to *distance* themselves from that narrative and became high school students that cared about their education. I could almost

feel the group dynamics change drastically once David settled down and became engaged, even if it was only because he had a chance to win the tangible reward. David had accumulated a sufficient amount of points during the Wheel of Fortune game and despite believing the odds were stacked against him due to missing the first group, he managed to earn the most points.

In addition, Mark found his voice within the group this week and seemed more comfortable for some reason with his friend David in attendance. He demonstrated the capability to explain to the leadership group, how a legacy was something that a person left behind. Coincidentally, once Mark started contributing to the group, I noticed that David began to contribute more. David seemed to have the capability of remembering countless amounts of detail from the video. One part of the video that everyone seemed to relate to was when Eric Thomas stated “when are you going to stop letting the old you, get in the way of the new you,” which correlated to our discussion on cognitive dissonance.

As the group concluded this week, somehow David despite all the redirection and attention that he needed had been crowned the winner, which actually made me laugh. For the second time, I was flabbergasted because David was the second special education student to win, which now enticed me to examine how many special education students out of the nine students in our leadership group received special education services. My findings indicated that in our leadership group David and Alfonso received special education services as students with an emotional disturbance (ED), Damien and Sherman had specific learning disabilities, and Jeff was considered to have an intellectual disability because he was still learning how to read despite being 19 years of age. Fifty-five percent of the leadership group received special education services due to having learning disabilities, which meant only 45 percent of the group received regular education services.

Session Three

Slightly before session three started, Jeff walked up to me and stated “I need to go early today because I have to work on my reading this period with Mrs. Guerra,” who was the reading specialist. Jeff was met with no resistance because I wanted him to feel empowered and reinforce the fact that the group was voluntary. Once Session Three began we had 8 out of 9 students in attendance, but we were missing Damien. I hoped that it was not due to him getting ridiculed by David during the first part of Session Two.

We began the leadership group by rewarding David with a tangible reward because he earned the most points the week prior, which would become a routine practice within the leadership group. Unfortunately, this week I had to restructure the group once again because of information I received about David being disruptive and argumentative with his teachers in various classrooms between leadership group sessions. Typically, every week students received a big purple bag of Taki’s, which is a form of hot fiery rolled up tortilla chips that resemble miniature sticks of dynamite. Legend has it, that the seasoning on these tortilla chips is capable of stripping the enamel off your teeth, if one consumes too many over an extended period of time. Regardless of the dental risks, this week I seriously contemplated how to discuss changes for future recipients of the tangible reward without mentioning my knowledge of David’s misbehavior before the leadership group. Therefore, I told the group “If for some reason I receive information that a member of this leadership group commits an egregious act in a teacher’s classroom or on their living unit then their big bag of chips will decrease in size to a little bag of chips that would fit nicely inside a 1st graders lunch bag. David was seemingly quiet possibly because he was too busy devouring his chips that he was sharing with Mark, Gregory, and Sherman. Afterwards for the sake of clarity, I broke down what the word egregious meant

by telling the students, “Basically if I hear anything horrible about you, then expect a small bag of chips.” Although, I never plan to take away something that a student has earned, I believe that if you want to make a high salary than you should maintain a high performance.

Every week during the leadership group we have a review of knowledge. I ask the students to share all they can remember because I want them to be responsible for the information they receive in this leadership group. Therefore, vocabulary words and the definitions of those vocabulary words are both given a value of 3 points on a weekly basis and any random information that a student can recall is worth 1 point. The starting point will continuously change from week-to-week just to ensure that no matter where a student sits in the restorative justice circle, they will not gain an advantage.

As we reviewed the first two sessions, it became almost painful to watch the students struggle to remember the lessons. However, it was a necessary struggle because students began to understand that I was not just teaching to hear myself talk, but so that they could learn. Ideally, students would take part in the learning process and be responsible for the information being discussed. At times, I heard Alfonso and David cracking jokes as if somehow that was going to help lessen the high expectations and break the existing silence as I patiently waited for the leadership group to demonstrate some proof of knowledge. Although I permitted them to be funny, I refused to let them get off the hook. Time seemed to move slower in the quietness that occurred while awaiting responses, but eventually the awkward silence was broken as more and more students began to recall information.

The vocabulary word of the week was *esoteric*, which meant only for a chosen few. Although it was a small word in regards to playing Wheel of Fortune, it played a big role in creating a bridge that reinforced the idea of challenging the master narrative of offender-labeled

youth and the students becoming responsible for their own learning. For group activity, I asked the leadership group to define esoteric. After listening to an audio clip from the famous African American Actor Will Smith, who stated “Greatness is not this esoteric, illusive, God-like feature only for a chosen few,” the group was able to make educated guesses. Although, it was initially difficult for the group to define given the context, overtime the group came to understand that greatness was obtainable for all and not only for a chosen few. Consequently, every individual in the room potentially could become great.

Alfonso for the first two sessions participated with enthusiasm, but his enthusiasm seemed to be dwindling as he started to fall behind in points. Once he realized that he probably was not going to be crowned the winner, he threatened to quit. His actions led to the group being asked, “Who knows what it means to win the battle, but lose the war?” Miraculously, the restorative justice circle stopped on David’s seat, which meant it was his turn to talk. David wanting to ensure that he earned the points sought clarity, “Can you give us an example.” I smiled and said, “Your elective classes.” David grinned as if he knew I had become privy to his behaviors prior to the leadership group and then proceeded to confess to the group that he had cursed out his teacher and was kicked out of her culinary arts class, but now he needs to find another elective class or he won’t graduate. I reiterated the phrase using his confession to the group by saying, “David appeared to win the battle because he was able to give his teacher a piece of his mind, but he lost the war because if he doesn’t find another elective class soon, then he will not graduate this semester.” David received the points for his answer, but the lesson he taught the leadership group was powerful because his circumstances were captured in real time.

Session Three, was by far better than Session Two because students actively participated and less redirection was needed within the group. Mark and David worked together throughout

the leadership group, as if they understood by collaborating with each other that they increased their odds of winning. No longer did it matter who won between those two, because they would share the reward with each other regardless of who won. One student I became concerned about during Session Three was Gregory because when it was his turn to speak in the restorative justice circle, he often stated “I can’t remember.” He was the one student that wrote in his journal after Session One:

Education is not really that important to me because growing up all I wanted to do was graduate to make my Granny proud, but I also wanted her to be there when I graduated, but she died, so now I honestly don’t care about my education.

During session three Greg haphazardly went through group and his body language reflected that sullen student in his journal, which he often tended to mask with laughter. In addition to Gregory, I was still worried about Damien who was not in attendance for reasons unknown. I could only hope Damien’s absence was not because he was called a booger by David the week prior.

Noteworthy, was an act of kindness I saw in the leadership group from Devon. Devon got up and walked across the room and helped Manuel earn points by making sure that his answer was correct before he shared it with the leadership group. The group seemed to be collectively trying to learn instead of solely competing against each other. David with assistance from Mark was crowned the champ for the second consecutive week. We concluded the group by asking each students to answer the following two journal questions:

- 1) What do you want to become great at and why?
- 2) What are you willing to sacrifice to become great?

Table 2
Session Three Journal Entries

Journal	Names	What do you want to become great at and why?
1	Manuel	I want to be great at successfully raising my daughter and becoming a good dad, so I can have a good life.
2	Sherman	No answer
3	Jeff	Left early
4	Damien	Absent
5	Mark	I want to become great at people skills, like being able to adapt to different situations and communicate effectively because I want a job where you need to have good people skills.
6	Gregory	I want to become greater at reading people, so I can know how to react to certain things
7	Alfonso	No response
8	Devon	I want to become great at creating a legacy more than being great at one thing. I want to impact others by never giving up on myself and if that makes me great then so be it.
9	David	I am willing to sacrifice the negative things I do to become greater than what I am now

Journal	Names	What are you willing to sacrifice to become great?
1	Manuel	I am willing to sacrifice myself hanging out with friends to be with my family and have a successful career.
2	Sherman	No answer
3	Jeff	Left early
4	Damien	Absent
5	Mark	I would put everything on the line to become great cause sometimes you have to risk everything to get what you want.
6	Gregory	I want to become greater at reading people, so I can know how to react to certain things
7	Alfonso	No response
8	Devon	I would be willing to sacrifice my friends because they could be my downfall because they may not have my best interests in mind or help me to achieve my personal goals.
9	David	I am willing to sacrifice the negative things I do to become greater than what I am now.

Session Four

Session four was the first time that we had a leadership group following a group disturbance within the juvenile correctional facility. A group disturbance is when multiple individuals get into a fight at one time and the response of several correctional officers is required to stop the violence and reestablish the safety and security within the juvenile correctional facility. Typically, after a group disturbance, if it is determined that there is an overrepresentation of any group or living unit, then those involved are placed on lockdown. A lockdown is when any particular group or living unit can no longer move freely within the institution until suspected issues are resolved for safety and security reasons. Although, Devon has a calm presence and seems mature for his age, he resides on a high core living unit that houses youth with the highest risk factors for recidivism. Consequently, Devon who was not involved in the group disturbance, will not be able to attend because his living unit was heavily involved in the group disturbance. Interestingly, Devon is on the highest incentive level a student can be on because he has exhibited good behavior for over 3 months, but refuses to transfer when given the opportunity to move to a less restrictive environment. A part of Devon embraces the self-identity amongst his peers that they are dangerous and wants to keep the high core status associated with the population on his living unit, even though it implies the likelihood that Devon will recidivate is high.

Once everyone was in attendance except for Devon, we began the leadership group. We reviewed the first 3 sessions as a group, but despite the review session and the rotation of the restorative justice circle becoming more structured and routine the leadership group continued to struggle with reinforcing oppressive narratives. For example, Alfonso was becoming overly focused on competing against his peers rather than learning. The competition component of the

group seemed to be interfering with his learning because the more he fell behind in points the more disruptive he became in group.

Alfonso started to talk about my head shape, skin color, and anything else that he felt would make his peers laugh. Following his comments, David would instigate by saying “Did you hear what that nigga said” and repeat the joke to Greg, Sherman, and Mark. Disparagingly, week four began to feel similar to week two because students were using derogatory statements like terms of endearment. Consequently, I had to restructure the leadership group and remind them that this leadership group was strictly voluntary. Therefore, if I continued to hear people talking when it was not their turn to speak, then points would be deducted from their scores. After discussing how the purpose of the leadership was to challenge the master narrative associated with offender-labeled youth and not to reinforce oppressive narratives the leadership group began to settle down.

As an African American Psychologist and researcher within this qualitative study, I explained to the leadership group that I could play the dozens with the best of them, which meant that I could easily demean the students who thought that they were being funny. However, I intentionally choose not to because I would rather take this opportunity to talk about oppression and how most of the students in this leadership group have experienced some sort of oppression from authority figures. Ironically, now in the absence of an oppressor you are oppressing each other for the sake of making someone laugh or to make yourself feel better than those around you. Gregory who I was concerned about the week prior stated, “We were just playing around Mr. Gibbs” and as if to express his agreement with Gregory, Sherman said “Yeah, it is not that serious.” The silence in the room seemed to confirm the group understood that I was

disappointed in their behavior, but the discourse had sparked a conversation about challenging oppressive narratives, such as using derogatory statements to address one another.

After a short period of time, Alfonso began to crack jokes in poor taste again. However, this time he was not getting the same support from his peers as he was earlier. In spite of his lack of peer support, he continued to utter words under his breath to get attention from his peers, but when I held Alfonso accountable by deducting points from his score, his behavior diminished quickly. He stood up and threw his journal into the center of the restorative justice circle and walked out of the circle and over to the large rectangular table. As he paced around the room using profanity, he often said “you got me fucked up” because he thought that it was unfair that he was the only student that lost points for talking when other group members were talking. Familiar with his antics in relationship to receiving negative consequences, I simply watched him as he became more animated and theatrical. As a School Psychologist, I knew how Alfonso tended to go through this almost rehearsed performance when he was upset. He initially makes himself the victim of some injustice, then he attempts to intimidate the person holding him accountable, and frequently concludes with, “I put that on... (something important to him), which is often gang related and followed by gang related hand gestures. After he got out of his seat and walked out of the restorative justice circle, I asked Mrs. Jackson to call security and allow him to go back to his living unit with no consequences. Alfonso remained within Room 21 because no matter how bad a student wants to leave, he has to wait for permission from security to leave without consequences. Security was dealing with another issue within the juvenile facility, therefore Alfonso had to remain in the room. The leadership group seemed to be overfamiliar and somewhat desensitized to these circumstances because despite Alfonso pacing

around the room and ranting and raving in the background, the leadership group demonstrated the capability to ignore him and continue to participate in the leadership group.

The vocabulary word for the week was *paradigm shift*. We first defined the word *paradigm* as “the way that a person sees the world.” Then we discussed a *paradigm shift* and defined it as when a person’s perception changed and they began to see the same thing or circumstance differently. We showed a picture, which was considered an optical illusion because a person could see either a young woman or an old lady. Mark was able to see both the young and old lady instantly. Subsequently, he was given the assignment to assist people who were having trouble seeing both people in the optical illusion. Mark taking his job seriously began to point out the features of the old lady for those who could only see the young lady. Then Mark did the opposite for those who could only see the young lady, but not the old lady. Manuel, Gregory, and Jeff were able to identify both faces quickly, but it took a while for Damien and Sherman to see the second face. Once a student was able to identify the two faces, then they became responsible for teaching someone else how to see both faces. David was the last student in the leadership group to see both faces, but once he did I was able to share with the group that they had all just experienced a paradigm shift in real time. The picture never changed, the only thing that was different was their perspective.

Table 3
Session Four Journal Entries

Journal Week 4	Names	How do you perceive yourself?
1	Manuel	I see myself as a role model and a big help to my peers. Although I can be passive aggressive at times. I'm well respected and I like to be prosocial and a proactive human being
2	Sherman	I see myself as a successful young man having a good job
3	Jeff	I see myself as a business man and someone who wants to go to school. I also see myself as a good Dad
4	Damien	I see myself as a person who wants to do new things..
5	Mark	I see myself as a person who is trying to change his ways and mindset. Somebody who wants to help others and his family/community. Someone who wants to make change in peoples in lives.
6	Gregory	I see myself being successful and making a change in the community and staying positive.
7	Alfonso	He attempted to leave group early, but had to remain in the room because of safety and security reasons
8	Devon	Absent – unable to attend because his living unit was on lockdown
9	David	The way I see myself is someone who is headed in the right direction, but still needs some guidance. I also see myself as smart and outgoing, but I get myself in certain situations that are hard to get out of.

Session Five

Prior to the leadership group, Alfonso and I discussed his behavior and whether he wanted to return. He stated that he would come back to the leadership group, *only* if I was willing to hold everyone accountable and not just him. I smiled and responded “I don’t think you are ready to come back to group then. If you think that I need to do something differently. Like a referee, I stand by my call.” After a long discussion he admitted that in the last group that he was talking, but he was upset because other people were talking also. Once he took

ownership of talking, I asked him “What could you possibly do, if you don’t want to lose points?” Alfonso smiled and began to brush the waves that he had so proudly created by brushing his hair forward and stated “I could stop talking.” Then feeling like a proud father, I discussed cognitive dissonance and paradigm shifts. However, this time the information from the leadership group was used to solve real life situations. Alfonso stated that “I use to punch the walls in my cell, but then I stopped because I realized I was never going to win. Those cement walls are undefeated, and now instead of punching walls I can find peace in my room.” Then I asked, “Is the room the same?” Alfonso replied yes, so then I told him “you realize that you just had a paradigm shift.” Alfonso seemed to see the benefits of the leadership group when he could apply what he had learned to various real-life situations, therefore he agreed to continue to participate in the group. Shortly after our conversation, I called security and they began sending students to the leadership group.

After missing session four due to a group disturbance, Devon returned to the leadership group. The limited program was lifted from his living unit, which meant that security deemed it safe for those uninvolved students to return to school. Devon unlike David in Session Two returned to the leadership group motivated and never complained about missing information from the week prior instead he just listened and caught up quickly. He shared with the group that he had plans to return to the community in April, therefore he did not plan on getting involved in any group disturbances or nonsense because he was trying to get ready to transition back to the streets.

The vocabulary word of the week was *master narrative* and the group activity was to watch a video clip from *The Wiz*. The video clip consisted of a scene from *The Wiz* that featured Michael Jackson as the scarecrow singing the crow anthem “You can’t win.” The song

represented the power of a master narrative written by an oppressor to create self-doubt and impede ones' progress. The crows were the oppressors and the scarecrow represented the oppressed because he believed the master narrative that he was not smart.

We concluded the group by challenging the master narrative associated with offender-labeled youth in relationship to their education. I shared with the group that if I had to write about offender-labeled youth based on the first four sessions that I would report the following:

- Offender-labeled youth are highly verbal individuals that could probably sell sand in the dessert, but if they had to write a business plan then it would be weak because they can't expand their ideas on paper.
- Offender-labeled youth like many high school students want to be successful, but either don't have a specific plan or have no idea of how to become successful.
- Offender-labeled youth want to be challenged and enjoy learning new things that expand their horizons.

As a researcher collecting data, I began to believe that these students could not write. Consequently, I found myself buying into the master narrative that offender-labeled youth could only write at a 3rd or 4th grade level. Therefore, I sought assistance from the reading specialist Mrs. Guerra a short Puerto Rican woman with the charm of a New Yorker. She was straight forward and tough on her students, but her students would often rise to her expectations. Mrs. Guerra was a close friend of mine, so when I sought her assistance she designed a reflection worksheet for our leadership group to discuss what they learned over the first four weeks. The reflection worksheet had all the vocabulary terms on the bottom of the page that had been introduced throughout the leadership group to assist students with their writing.

After giving the group my personal reflection about the leadership group, I allowed the members of the group to give me their reflections with the stipulation that each member of the group would incorporate 4 vocabulary terms in their reflection from the bottom of the page. So

today when Jeff who was Mrs. Guerra student left before he could write his reflection sheet to attend Mrs. Guerra's class, I found it almost comical that he was leaving my group to attend hers. He was allowed to leave early for the second time, but he stayed the majority of the group. On average the groups were about 90 minutes, which increased from the original 60-minute sessions that the students agreed upon. Consequently, once the group went into the next class period Jeff asked to leave early so he could see the reading specialist Mrs. Guerra, which I anticipated would happen.

As I attempted to counter the master narrative that offender-labeled youth can only read and write at the 3rd or 4th grade level, the students rose to the challenge within the counterspace and wrote substantially more than they had ever written before. For the first time I saw students like Mark, Devon, and David look for quiet areas within room 21 to write. As students were writing some students came up to me and began to defend themselves in relationship to the reflection I read about them during the leadership group.

Devon discussed how he used to have a specific plan, but after being shot twice his plans changed. As a result of being shot, he now has a collapsed lung and also experiences a significant amount of leg pain from time to time due to being shot in the back of his legs. Devon's collapsed lung and gunshot wounds have disrupted his plans to play sports in college because he gets fatigued easily. His second plan was to join the military, but due to having a gun charge, he does not think the armed services are an option. Devon appeared to want me to comprehend that he has continuously having to reinvent himself due to associating with negative peers. Devon wrote the following:

What I think about the leadership group is that it has changed my *perspective* on everything that I do. People have written a *master narrative* about me saying that I would not become *great* or have a *legacy* later on in life. However, I see myself as an *entrepreneur* based on

that I strive to *succeed* and my *paradigm* is *esoteric*. My goals are not to be *average* but to demonstrate *consonance* and be consistent with my behaviors.

Manuel who is a Hispanic student with long semi-wavy hair and pretty soft spoken, walked up to me with his journal in his hand and asked “Can you read my reflection? As I took the time to read his reflection, Manuel waited patiently for me to silently read all the way through it. Afterwards, I told him that his reflection was really well written and I thought that he was one of the top writers in our leadership group. He smiled in an authentic way, which almost looked forced and somewhat difficult for him because he was always so serious. Nevertheless, his smile appeared genuine. Manuel wrote the following:

What I’ve learned in this leadership group is that in the past four weeks, I came into this group with *cognitive dissonance* and with a weak mind set. But coming to this group, week-in-and-week-out and knowing that iron sharpens iron I have gained the maturity to *succeed* and reach my goals. Many people have seen my life as a *paradigm shift* because I have changed my life from bad to good and from ugly to great. Life can be *exhausting*, but this group helps me not stay on that *average* level and makes my mind more effective to do what I want to do in life. When I get out I want to be an *entrepreneur* and raise enough money to build my landscaping company from the bottom up. So, when I get old and weak I will have a *legacy* from the work that I was able to provide for my family. This is what I have learned in this group.

Session Six

Session Six was actually held in the 7th week of the planned 12-week study because another group disturbance occurred, which involved an estimated 40 high school students. Subsequently, several living units were placed on a limited program for safety and security reasons. As a result, Devon, Gregory, David, Alfonso, Mark, and Jeff would not be able to attend the group if the leadership group was held in the sixth week as planned. Therefore, Week Six was postponed until the following week because only Sherman, Manuel, and Damien would have been able to attend if it was held in the sixth week. Since the 12-week schedule had been disrupted by extraneous variables, I decided to change the tracking system from weeks into

sessions. The utilization of the term *session* is a more accurate descriptor of the 12 times that the leadership group would meet rather than the original 12-consecutive weeks scheduled that had already been extended one week due to the cancellation of the leadership group in week six for safety and security reasons.

Session Six, which was held in the 7th week, started with an unusual call from security. Unexpectedly, security called to inform me that Jeff had assaulted a security staff. As a result, he was removed from his living unit to an Intensive Behavioral Treatment Program. Furthermore, in addition to Jeff missing, the leadership group would also be missing Devon, Alfonso, and David due to their living units being placed on a limited program for safety and security reasons. Consequently, the leadership group would be temporarily reduced to Mark, Sherman, Damien, Manuel, and Gregory. During week seven, we had 5 out of 9 students attend the Session Six leadership group.

During Session Six the leadership group was on point, as if they had begun to understand that this group was to support them. Manuel requested a paper and pencil before Mrs. Jackson could even handout journals and started to write down information that he could remember since leadership group was postponed a week due to the group disturbance. The numbers 1 through 8 were written on the white dry erase board, and methodically the group was able to recall all 8 vocabulary words and their definitions. The tangible reward seemed to be losing its importance because whoever won at the end of the group seemed to always share their tangible reward with the leadership group the following week. As we reached the midpoint of the leadership group, I began to witness the students in the group share information and knowledge with each other. In spite of the fact that the leadership group cannot resist making jokes, they are starting to respond quicker when reminders are given in relationship to the purpose of the leadership group.

The vocabulary term for the week was epistemology and the definition that accompanied the vocabulary term was “epistemology is your theory of knowledge.” The deeper we get into the leadership group the longer it seems that the review is taking, but the more engrained I feel the content is becoming. As a facilitator, I am not all about drill and kill in relationship to vocabulary terms, but to view the leadership group actively discussing the leadership curriculum reinforced that learning was taking place. The deliberate use of a restorative justice circle within Room 21 allowed everyone to have a voice and also hear their own voice in relationship to learning. Quiet students like Manuel and Damien who almost seemed like ghost in large classrooms, became visible in Room 21 because they had a voice and the restorative justice circle required that they be present. Damien who rarely smiles and often appears as if he just woke up out of bed and walked to school because he is ungroomed, has gone from saying “I can’t remember” when being called on to requesting that his peers stop helping him. Overtime, Damien has proven that he independently recall information without the assistance of his peers when it is his turn. As the group shrinks in size, Damien appears to be gaining more confidence especially in the absence of David whose dominant personality required more attention than would be needed for students that were introverts like Damien or Manuel. Although Manuel was an introvert, he seemed to embrace academic activities more than Damien who received special education services and struggled with mental health issues. Manuel leaves the impression that he wants to strive educationally because he often writes the most in his journal and wants to talk to instructors individually after group, as if being a good student will help him regain a sense of self-worth and temporarily overshadows his committing offense. The upside of having less students in the leadership group is that more is required from seemingly unheard students like Damien. As I watched Damien recall vocabulary terms such as cognitive dissonance and

esoteric during the review period, I was allowed to observe how Damien grasped the information and the various concepts of change. My epistemology is that if people can help themselves, then they can help each other. Damien who use to receive assistance from his peers was now flying on his own and when given the opportunity to speak more than usual due to the reduction of students in the leadership group, he was prepared like a second-string athlete who was just waiting to get into the game to prove himself.

As Session Six was concluding, I asked all the students to pick a theme song. A song that would let me know something about them and their mindset. The group seemed to be excited about the assignment, but Damien asked “What is a theme song?” Then I asked the leadership group “Can someone define what a theme song is? To which Mark replied, “I think it’s some type of song that goes with a T.V. show, but I am not sure.” As the group struggled to answer the question, I began to realize that I needed to breakdown what I was saying by first telling the leadership group what a theme song was *not*, before I explained what a theme song was. I told them that a theme song was *not* just one of your favorite songs that you liked to hear on the radio. It was that song that represented who you were and that you wanted to hear playing as you walked into a room because it identified who you are. I warned the students about picking songs that they wanted to hear instead of songs that let me know something about them, but it seemed to fall on deaf ears. As I rattled off countless of out-of-date theme songs that were as corny as “Spiderman, Spiderman if he can’t do it no one can, watch out! Watch out for Spiderman! Eventually, the leadership group began to understand that their theme song should tell me something about them and that it should be something that they could listen to on a daily basis because it represented their theory of knowledge.

As an educator, it was a privilege to watch the leadership group struggle with picking a theme song because they slowly were beginning to realize that a lot of what they listen to would be unacceptable to play for the leadership group. Through my years of experience prior to this leadership group, I knew that after the first presentation when students had to defend their song selection to the group that most of them would want to change their song. I made sure to tell the group that they had at least one week to select a theme song, but once it was selected it could not be changed so to make sure that they chose their song carefully. Mark and Sherman said that they did not need a week because they already knew what song they were picking. Mark went as far as to say “Get my song and I will be ready to present next week for sure.” As I wrote down the various theme song selections on the dry erase board, I explained to the group that I would not lock in any songs until the following Thursday except for Mark’s theme song because he wanted to be the first to present during Session Seven.

Shortly after the leadership group, I was informed by educational staff that due to Jeff’s behavior continuing to decline that he was placed on suicide watch. He was transferred from an Intensive Behavior Treatment Program to a Mental Health Unit for safety and security reasons. For the purposes of keeping this study bound within the counterspace, I went to visit Jeff on his living unit, but our discussion will remain confidential.

Session Seven

Our leadership group drastically declined in number due to a group disturbance. Two weeks prior to Session Seven, the leadership group was cancelled due to the majority of the participants being placed on a limited program. As a result, the 12-week timeline is slowly being dismantled to the point that it continues to become easier to manage the leadership group by sessions instead of weeks.

During Session Seven, we only had 4 students in attendance. Jeff was still being housed on a Mental Health living unit due to being deemed a danger to himself. David was transferred to an Intensive Behavior Treatment Program for being noncompliant. Rumors suggest David became argumentative with correctional officers on his living unit and told them that they could not transfer him to another living unit just for being argumentative and shortly afterwards he was transferred. Alfonso was on suicide watch, but students within the leadership group referred to him as being in protective custody. In some cases, when juveniles perceive a threat or the danger of being harmed by their peers, they will seek protective custody by reporting that they feel suicidal to a correctional officer. Subsequently, based on policy and procedure the student will be placed on suicide watch regardless of whether or not the statement was to avoid a conflict or a perceived threat amongst his peers because all suicidal statements are taken seriously in a correctional setting. Alfonso as much as he liked to throw up gang signs when making a point to demonstrate his gang affiliation, his self-identification is *not* part of his identity within the Juvenile Justice System because under gang affiliation it states “denies.” Consequently, according to the leadership group Alfonso is experiencing problems with one student from the same area or region that he claims to be representing with his gang signs and expressive language. The student that openly has a problem with Alfonso is identified as gang affiliated within the Juvenile Justice System in comparison to Alfonso who publicly gang bangs, but secretly denies his gang affiliation within the Juvenile Justice System. In addition to missing Jeff, David, and Alfonso, we were also missing Gregory and Devon due to a group disturbance. Despite, neither Gregory or Devon being involved in the group disturbance, they were placed on limited program until security can determine which uninvolved youth will be able to reintegrate back into the school area.

After all the mayhem that happened between Session Six and Session Seven the leadership group was left with four students. Since Sherman, Mark, Manuel, and Damien were not involved in the group disturbance and their living units were not placed on limited program they were able to attend group. Despite what was going on outside of Room 21, Sherman arrived with a big smile on his face and rubbing his hands together like he had just inherited a fortune and asked “Did you get my song?” To which, I replied “No, but I listened to your song along with everybody else’s. However, since Mark was the first student to volunteer during Session Six, his theme song will be the only song we play today unless we have time afterwards.”

As we reviewed the first 6 sessions, the restorative justice circle seemed to move swiftly. Then we introduced the vocabulary term of the week, which was *resistance narrative*. As an example, I discussed with the leadership group how hip-hop artist Jay-Z wrote in his book *Decoded*, that often marginalized populations feel as if they only have two options to either live in poverty or get money by breaking the law. Therefore, in his song *Renegade* where he said, “I drove by a fork in the road and I went straight” he was talking about not accepting these two options and creating a new path. To illustrate his point, I drew on the white board a picture symbolic of a road that split into two roads. On one road, I wrote live in poverty, and on the other road I wrote get money by breaking the law. Then, I reiterated what Jay-Z said in his song by drawing an additional road that continued to go straight and not accept these two master narratives, which created a picture that resembled a 3-pronged fork. The resistance narrative for Jay-Z was his music, but the question that I posed to the leadership group is what in their lives would help them go straight? How will you develop a resistance narrative to the master narratives associated with offender-labeled youth that says that ½ of you will re-offend and end

up back in prison or continue to live the same life-style? How will you go straight? The group was quiet, which gave the impression that they were seriously thinking about it.

In order to lighten the mood, I asked Mrs. Jackson to return the journals to the students in attendance. Then I explained to the leadership group that after listening to everybody's song, I provided feedback in their journals. In each journal, I wrote my impression of their song and how it might influence their self-identity. As the students received their journals they looked like children unwrapping Christmas gifts as they tore through their journals trying to find and read my constructive criticism. Then I heard Sherman say, "Wow that's how you feel, Gibbs." As the leadership group began to openly read to each other my comments and some brutally raw criticism in relationship to their song selections. Sherman said, even though I wrote verbatim the lyrics from his song that, he didn't even feel comfortable reading my comments aloud. Sherman appeared to realize that the derogatory statements and the lifestyle that the rapper in his song was boasting about only supported the master narrative of breaking the law to overcome poverty. The hip-hop artists that Sherman chose reinforced the master narrative that marginalized populations need to do something illegal to become rich. Unlike Jay-Z who alluded the two options of either poverty or breaking the law by creating his own road with music, this artist went down the road of breaking the law to become successful and glamorized men that were associated with drug cartels.

As the buzz of conversations continued throughout the leadership group, I asked "How many of you would play this song for board?" Everyone indicated that they would not play their song for board. Board was a panel that determined whether or not offender-labeled youth were ready to transition back into society. The leadership group knew that their songs were inappropriate for a Board hearing, but expressed that since this group was to support them, they

chose songs that they really listened too. As a researcher, I was flattered and concerned at the same time in relationship to their theme songs. I was flattered that within the counterspace the students felt safe enough to express themselves, but concerned about the development of resistance narratives to those master narratives that could be detrimental to their self-identity if accepted.

Our last activity was to listen to *Nowadays* by PNB Rocks, which was Mark's theme song. Before I allowed him to discuss why he chose the song, I allowed the students to watch the video. The first disturbing image I saw was an African American female selling drugs on the block get robbed by an African American male. After watching her make a drug transaction, a man jumped quickly out of his car reached into her jean pockets and stole her money. Then he knocked her to the ground and punched her right before he ran off. The video started with much more pleasant imagery such as the rapper PNB coming out of a mansion to get his newspaper with two beautiful females, but then it bounces back and forth from the urban neighborhood that he was raised in as a child to the lavish lifestyle and rich neighborhood that he lives in as an adult. Similar to the song Sherman chose, Mark's song also reinforced the master narrative that to overcome poverty that you had to do something illegal.

As Mark approached the podium positioned slightly to the right of the white dry erase board and at the opening of the horse shoe shaped restorative justice circle, he began to tell why he chose *Nowadays* by PNB Rocks as his theme song. Mark had a raspy distinct voice, but the way he made eye contact with the leadership group gave those listening to him a sense that his words came from a place of truth. Mark discussed with the group how he was raised in a single parent home by his mother. Initially, he stated the song reminded him of how when he was a child, he had to put syrup on bread to make pancakes. He indicated that he was the second oldest

of 9 children in his home, therefore he had to help raise his 7 younger siblings. In the video, Mark explained how the woman at the beginning of the video getting robbed selling crack reminded him of how his mother who got her neck broke, which left him and his older sibling to help take care of his mother and his younger siblings. He explained how he had to grow up fast and live a certain way to help provide for his family, which led to criminal activity and carrying guns. He stated “We did not have a father figure in our house, so we had to figure out a way amongst ourselves how to make it.” He reported that when he was younger he thought that criminal activity was the answer, but once he got locked up he realized that he couldn’t really help anybody, especially his mother. Consequently, his current plans are to do better when he transitions back into the community. As he concluded his heartfelt speech, it was like he took the air out of the room because his peers were speechless. His truth had made him vulnerable, but this time his peers responded appropriately by simply being silent. Despite how raw the truth felt, I wanted to push further into the dangers of his truth. In the second part of the song the rap artists PnB Rock talk about gun play and shooting at people who tried to test him. Therefore, I asked Mark did he carry a gun when he was in the community? To which he just shook his head up and down, before hesitantly saying “yes.” Mark also seemed uncertain if he was going to carry a gun in the future because carrying a gun was normal to him, so to think that he would be unarmed in the future was something he had not even tried to fathom.

As we brought Session Seven to a close, I thanked Mark for sharing about his circumstances and his theme song once again. Then I explained to the group that although I was initially concerned about Marks selection, after he explained why he selected the song I had a paradigm shift. I went from being extremely concerned about Mark’s theme song to a person that wanted to help him figure out decisions he may face in the future, that he has not considered yet.

I concluded the leadership group by announcing, “Next week we will have my graduate advisor from the University of the Pacific in attendance, he is looking forward to meeting all of you guys and I am excited to show him how much you guys have learned throughout this leadership group.” However, we will need someone to volunteer to present their theme song next week. Sherman said, “Yup, that’s me.” Sherman came into the room eager to hear his song, maintained his enthusiasm and seemed as if he wanted to guarantee that his song was the next song to be played in the rotation of theme songs. Ironically, despite his unwillingness to read my criticism aloud to the leadership group earlier, Sherman still wanted to present in front of a university professor. I applauded his willingness to present his theme song and looked forward to hearing why he selected his theme song in Session Eight.

Session Eight

As the students nonchalantly walked into room 21, they quickly noticed that we had our first guest. Presumably the leadership group thought our Caucasian male guest dressed in casual business attire was the university professor that we had discussed would be coming to visit our leadership group the week prior. His demeanor was nonthreatening and he effortlessly became acquainted with the students within the counterspace. Prior to initiating group, I formally introduced Professor Hallett as my graduate advisor. Then explained briefly to the group, how he was the one who oversees the qualitative research that I was conducting in Room 21. The students were noticeably entertained by the thought that I was still in school pursuing a doctoral degree from the University of the Pacific. Shortly after introducing our esteemed guest, Professor Hallett independently began to develop rapport slowly with various students while sitting comfortably within the restorative justice circle.

In Session Eight, we had 5 out of the 9 students in attendance. Jeff did not attend group because he was being housed on a Behavior Treatment Program. Alfonso did not attend group due to safety and security reasons. Devon and David could not attend group because their living units were on a limited program. However, Gregory was allowed to return to the leadership group because his living unit was determined to be uninvolved. As a result, all the uninvolved high school students on Gregory's living unit were able to reintegrate back into the school community.

During Session Eight, the structure of the leadership group had become routine, but the list of vocabulary terms and definitions were vastly growing. Regardless of the abundance of information, the students rapidly reviewed the material and demonstrated a proof of knowledge that not only reflected the hours that we had studied together, but the transference of knowledge. As I listened to Mark explain to the leadership group how epistemology was considered a persons' theory of knowledge, Manuel discuss cognitive dissonance, and Damien discuss a master narrative, I began to realize that the leadership group was mirroring the conversations that I had in graduate school with professors like Dr. Hallett. As I wrote each definitions and vocabulary term on the white dry erase board, I remember thinking that I was extremely proud of our high school students because they were fully engaged in the learning process and their knowledge of concepts related to change superseded my knowledge as a high school student. Furthermore, I knew my graduate advisor was not only listening, but actually witnessing the energy and enthusiasm that the leadership group had in regards to exploring their self-identity prior to transitioning back into their communities. Professor Hallett seemed to be intrigued as he watched my university coursework being intertwined in the leadership curriculum from his black lounge chair within the restorative justice circle.

The vocabulary term for the week was *contemplation*, which seemed to align with the vibe of the group since we were reviewing individual theme songs. Especially since Mark who had introduced his theme song *Nowadays* by hip hop artist PnB during Session Seven was now contemplating whether carrying or owning a gun was a necessity or a desire for him. During our weekly game of Wheel of Fortune, Manuel seemed to be strategically choosing all the vowels first. His strategy helped him guess the majority of the letters, but once he guessed the wrong letter he gave Mark the opportunity to solve the puzzle. Excitedly, Mark walked up closer to the board as if being closer would increase his odds of figuring out the vocabulary term. He slowly talked his way through his educated guesses as his peers Damien and Manuel began to give him suggestions and eventually through deductive reasoning realized the vocabulary term was *contemplation*.

After Wheel a Fortune we quickly moved to the group activity, where the leadership group watched a scene from *Bagger Vance*. I wanted the leadership group to see an example of a paradigm shift using the powers of cinema. In this particular movie scene, Bagger Vance an African American caddy was giving advice to Junuh a Caucasian golfer about how to see the field. However, in order for Junuh to see “the field” in the movie, a paradigm shift had to become a necessity. Since Junuh was losing badly in the golf tournament, he found himself contemplating whether or not to listen to his caddy Bagger as he was walked towards his next golf swing, but given his desperate circumstances he decided to walk back towards Bagger as if his advice had become a necessity. Junuh through feelings of desperation and necessity was able to have a paradigm shift and find his authentic golf stroke.

Originally, I wanted to project this movie scene on the big video screen inside Room 21, but due to technical difficulties we ended up turning off the lights and huddling around a

computer monitor. These types of adjustments were typical because of the thick cement walls within the correctional facility that made wireless technology seem unreliable and somewhat temperamental because it could be working one minute and not the next. Consequently, the leadership group along with Professor Hallett resembled a tight knit family watching a small screen television as they circled around the computer screen to watch how the caddy Bagger Vance helped Junuh experience a paradigm shift by explaining to him how it was time for him to see the field. The exercise was designed to show the leadership group how sometimes if we just allow ourselves to look at things differently, we can have a paradigm shift.

The leadership activity became the perfect segue for the hermeneutic discussions related to the theme songs within the restorative justice circle that would occur shortly after the movie clip. These types of discussions were scheduled to occur on a weekly basis until every student in the group completed their theme song presentation. Impatiently, Sherman for the second week in a row asked, “today we get to listen to my song, right?” I assured Sherman prior to group starting that we would play his song right after the review of knowledge and group activity to which he replied “I can’t wait because that song slaps!” As he walked away from me, he reached out his right hand toward Gregory as to welcome him back to the group and simultaneously get an endorsement, to which Gregory obliged by shaking his hand and stating “That Every Season do slap!” Then he partially embraced Sherman giving him what appeared to be half a hug, right before he plopped down into the black lounge chair next to him. Despite, Sherman weighing about 250 pounds he landed in his black lounge chair as softly as a baseball landing in an outfielders’ glove. Sherman’s eagerness to present his theme song was surprising since just a week prior he was unwilling to read my comments to the leadership group. As if he had amnesia, Sherman eagerly popped out of his black chair and walked up to the podium and

began to share how his theme song was Every Season by Roddy Rich and how it reminded him of “how you have to keep pushing no matter what and you can never give up.” Sherman was a former football star and viewed the song as nothing short of inspirational because of the first line that stated “I just been ballin’ out every season” which reminded him of his glory days as a football player and how people outside of his immediate family would pay for some of his football expenses to ensure that he would be able to play on their team. Reinforcing the master narrative that talented athletes get taken care of when people see potential in them. The rap artist Roddy Rich at the beginning of his music video encourages a young basketball player who is *contemplating* giving up basketball to go to the gym and not worry about the financial stress that his family was under by simply stating, “I got you.” Sherman identified with the athlete at the beginning of the video who was *contemplating* not playing the sport that he loved so that he could chase money, but resisted the temptation to quit playing sports by receiving financial support from those around him. As I watched Roddy Rich portray himself as an African American Robin Hood in his music video, I began to realize Sherman viewed the song “Every Season” as a reimagined narrative where football would provide the financial freedom, women, and independence that Roddy Rich had in his video.

I did not play the music video for the class because I did not want to glamorize the life style of a drug dealer inside of a juvenile correctional facility. All of a sudden, I found myself feeling as if I was a father trying to reach his son who was blinded by ambition. Sherman appeared to totally disregard how the hip hop artist glamorized the drug game and how he indicated through his lyrics how the people within his inner circle committed murders and robberies. In this song Roddy Rich openly admits he grew up looking up to Pablo Escobar, Money Meech, and Chapo as his top three drug dealers. Then poetically Roddy Rich lets his

listeners know in a blatant and explicit fashion that he is about having sex with women and avoiding commitment to any female. As the song played loudly through the speakers within Room 21, it began with the prelude of a musician miraculously creating music with his fingertips by intentionally plucking at individual guitar strings until they led listener directly into an up-tempo beat. The beat was strong but not overpowering and allowed Roddy Rich to set the tempo with his lyrics, which almost made the beat feel like it was constantly trying to catch up to the vicious flow of words coming out of his mouth. The song had energy and a rhythm that was moving at a speed that an athlete like Sherman could easily do a workout to, while visualizing himself like Roddy Rich, “ballin’ out every season.”

Regardless of whether or not I could dance to the song in a club, in the spirit of the doctrine *Parens Patria* (the State as the Parent) I listened to the song with a parental ear and all I could hear was a song that endorsed making illegal money, using women strictly for sex, and making the people that you hang around, look and feel like bosses. Historically, the images of luxury and independent wealth associated with a drug dealers life style has been an easier sell to adolescents because they do not understand the cost, in comparison to an adult who understands that the life style of a drug dealer can cost you your life as you know it. As an adult, I hear and know through my epistemology that the glamorized master narrative of a drug dealer has been over told and oversold to adolescents because traditionally it excludes the downsides of the drug game or the oppressive narratives associated with selling drugs. However, Sherman as an adolescent hears a resistance narrative because the athlete at the beginning of the song chooses sports over becoming a drug dealer, and seems less concerned or oblivious to the oppressive narrative behind the scenes. All he is certain of, is that the song “slaps” and is entertaining. In an effort to support Sherman, Mark said that he believed the kid represented Roddy Rich when

he was a kid and how he played basketball to stay off the streets. Nevertheless, I could not ignore my parental views about the derogatory statements in the song or how the lyrics represented the misleading master narrative of a drug dealer because they excluded the mass incarceration of minorities, drug addiction, crack babies, and the destruction of families and communities. Therefore, as I became mentally exhausted and desperate for a new perspective, I asked Professor Hallett, “What do you think of this song?” Then I witnessed something miraculous happen.

Professor Hallett from my perspective became like the caddy Bagger Vance, but only this time Bagger was a Caucasian male in casual business attire. Sherman magically became the golfer Junuh, but only this time he was a 250-pound African American male in State issued attire in desperate need of a paradigm shift. Professor Hallett in a delicate manner disclosed to Sherman “Most of the professors at the university that Mr. Gibbs attends look like me and not Mr. Gibbs, therefore if you were to submit this song to the university as your theme song and I had to compare the song to other applicant theme songs, do you think this song would be the best representation of who you are?” The room became uncomfortably quiet and almost in slow motion I watched Sherman turn his head like the golfer Junuh and look directly at Professor Hallett as if he was seeing the field for the first time, right before he uttered “No, it would not.”

Sherman has dreams to play football for a university, so for someone to even hypothetically suggests that his theme song could have hindered his opportunity caused him to think. All of a sudden when the stakes seemed higher, Sherman became worried about how the theme song would hold up if he had to play it for a bigger audience outside of his leadership group. Before we concluded the group, I asked the leadership group to write about something they were contemplating changing. Sherman was seemingly distraught after the leadership

group asked me to assist him with his journal writing. Sherman wrote the following in his journal:

“What I feel like changing is my way of thinking sometimes, especially towards the music I listen to. I just really thought about it today because I did not represent the best of me when we had a guest. I may have blown an opportunity.”

Sherman began to see the field as Professor Hallett began to ask him questions about his theme song and the lesson that Sherman learned about situational appropriateness was invaluable. Professor Hallett was the third party that Sherman needed because he looked at his theme song through a different lens, which consequently allowed Sherman to see things differently or have a paradigm shift.

Session Nine

During Session Nine, we had 7 out of 9 students in attendance. David and Devon both returned to the leadership group after missing two weeks. Although, Devon was uninvolved in the group disturbances his living unit was on limited program, which meant he would have to remain on his living unit for safety and security reasons. David had similar circumstances, however after he became argumentative with correctional officers while his living unit was on limited program he was transferred to a more restrictive environment. David resided on an Intensive Behavior Treatment Program for a short period of time, but eventually he was able to return to his living unit, which was still on limited program. Prior to Session Nine, the limited program status was lifted from their living units, therefore Devon and David were allowed to reintegrate back into the school community and attend the leadership group. Once both of them returned to the leadership group, we were only missing Alfonso and Jeff. Alfonso was called for group, but did not attend for reasons unknown and Jeff continued to be restricted a Mental Health Unit, therefore he was unable to attend.

During Session Nine, the dynamics of the group change drastically even though we only had two additional students. As David walked into the room he seemed discontent. He instantly shook hands with Mark, Gregory, and Sherman, but intentionally left out Damien and Manuel because he just looked in their direction and then sat down. Devon's return was subtler and less dramatic. He sat down quietly in his light grey beanie with his hands closely fit together in front of his upper chest. Devon rested his arms on the arm rests and leaned backed like an obtuse angle in his black lounge chair. Devon nonchalantly discussed prison politics amongst his peers and appeared to appreciate being back in the group. Unlike David who seemed disgruntled and distracted by prison politics because his name and how he would respond to various situations was continuously circulating around the issues being discussed amongst his peers. As the leadership group waited patiently for Damien who had to walk the farthest to the leadership group because he resided on a Mental Health Unit, the students continued to discuss who might fight who and for what reasons. Typically prison politics are coded in a manner where staff cannot understand. For instance, if he does this, then whoever will do that, and then it's all bad because you know oh boy got that from yo' boy, you know what I am saying. This is what prison politics sound like, but normally the students will use monikers (nicknames) so that staff cannot know exactly who they are talking about. As I ear hustled I heard David tell students what he was going to do in certain situations, which was a clear indicator that his program was about to deteriorate. Depending on a students' mindset, some students will fight everybody that they have a problem with while they are on the lowest incentive level because they feel as if they have nothing to lose. Unfortunately, David was one of those students with that exact mindset.

As soon as everybody was in attendance and before we started our weekly review, I quickly welcomed back David and Devon. Devon unsure of all that he had missed asked, "What

week are we on now?” I told him that we were on our 9th session and only had three weeks left. As we began to review the leadership curriculum, Manuel, Damien, and Mark began to rattle off information which allowed us to rotate quickly around the restorative justice circle. Although, Gregory and Sherman seemed distracted with the return of David, their peers Mark, Damien, and Manuel seemed to remain focused. Meanwhile, Devon continuously wrote down information in his journal and worked like a student with the intention of obtaining all the knowledge that he had missed.

I found myself needing to restructure the group as we moved from the knowledge review to the vocabulary term of the week, which was *reimagined narrative*. Although Gregory hardly uttered a word during Session Eight, today he had jokes along with Sherman who sat next to him for the second week in a row. As Gregory and Sherman told the jokes, David provided extra loud laughter. David’s laughter was his way of encouraging his peers to keep joking around, while he received consequence free entertainment. Reminiscent of Session Two and Four, I found myself reminding the students about what an oppressive narrative was, and occasionally needing to pause in silence to remind the leadership group of the high expectations required to create a counterspace. Unfortunately, the long silence was not enough because I was forced to remind them that the leadership group was strictly voluntary, therefore they needed to act as if they truly wanted to be in the group or leave. Gregory sensing my seriousness said “Gibbs don’t get so serious we want to be here, we will stop talking about each other.” Then Sherman sat up in his black lounge chair and said “Alright for real lets’ go!” but then quickly asked, “What are we talking about again?” To which I responded, “Exactly, we have to practice being students and try to stay engaged with teachers even when we want to socialize,” which undoubtedly was my personal *reimagined narrative* for all disengaged students.

After the group was restructured, I asked, “Who would like to present their theme song this week?” Typically, I know prior to the session beginning whose theme song will be presented, but this week was different because I forgot to ask the group the week prior when my graduate advisor was in attendance. Thankfully, Devon volunteered without hesitation to present his theme song. As he walked up to the podium and said, “My theme song is *Sleep Walkin* by Mozzy” and almost instantly the majority of the group wanted hear his song. Mark, Sherman, Gregory, and even Damien who rarely spoke at all, requested that we listen to the theme song before Devon presented it. The request was granted because it provided me the time that I needed to review the feedback I had written in Devon’s journal.

As I pushed play on my iPod and the music pushed through the portable stereo speakers and hit the eardrums of its listeners. I witnessed Mark, Sherman, and Devon reciting the lyrics of *Sleep Walkin* as if it was the pledge of allegiance. Almost instantly, I became aware of how popular Mozzy was amongst offender-labeled youth within this Northern California facility. The beat played like an infectious slow jam that changed the physiology of the students as the music spread throughout the room. Students either had their eyes closed or their heads were swaying from side-to-side slowly. Most the students were moving their upper bodies with the rhythm as to keep pace with the lyrics and what sounded like two fingers continuously snapping in between a crisp repetitive beat. The beat hit hard, but complimented Mozzy’s distinct raspy voice without overpowering his lyrics. The message however undoubtedly came with a parental advisory label. As the leadership group listened to the song, I quietly reviewed what I had written to Devon in his journal. I wrote the following:

“This song starts off with Mozzy expressing a state of gratitude to all those in the streets that helped him. He thanks God for being good, God for being great, and for letting him see another day. He stated “I don’t do this shit for the fame bitch. I do this for the gang.” In his song it sounded like his brother was shot and that all changed him. I take it that

you may relate to this song because you have been shot. The overall theme of the song seems as if this guy was going through so much pain that he simply felt like he was sleep walking through life using Oxycontin as a pain reliever.”

As the song came to an end, Devon stepped behind the podium and rested his forearms on top of it. Then resembling a Baptist Preacher with his hands gripping each side of the podium, he began to explain why he chose *Sleep Walkin* by Mozzy as his theme song. He stated as a child growing up in a gang that he could remember sitting on the floor with his brother holding a gun in his lap to feel safe after his house had been shot up in a drive-by shooting. Devon slowly began to sound more like a war veteran who suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder than a high school student as he divulged that in his neighborhood he could just remember hearing gunfire all the time as a child. Devon never mentioned his parents but he did say, “I was basically raised by the streets and although I wanted to do good, I felt like I was just sleep walking through all the crazy stuff going on all around me.”

As an educator, I felt obligated to ask him did he hear an oppressive narrative, resistance narrative, or a reimagined narrative. Devon responded, “I know it sounds bad, but all I hear is the truth. When Mozzy says, ‘thank you to the prostitutes, thank you for the 100k,’ I could relate.” Devon explained that he never had a 100k, but he had managed to save up about 20k and that although he had a main girl that he also had other females with a willingness to support him knowing that they would never be his girlfriend. Devon always had a cool, calm, and collected demeanor and seemed mature for his age, but he was a teenage father who loved his daughter. Similar to Mark who had to help his mother raise his 7 younger siblings, Devon had to grow up fast because he had a daughter to support. As a result, when he stated “although I wanted to do good,” earlier in the session. I believe that he was talking about his daughter more than himself. Devon had discussed with me privately towards the end of Session Three about how he just wanted to be remembered as a good person more than anything, which left me with

the impression that he had lost his credibility with someone close to him. Not to mention the term *although* means in spite of the fact, therefore in spite of the fact that Devon wanted to distance himself from the master narrative associated with gang members, he was sleep walking through life because he knew the way that he was earning money to support himself was not legit. His behavior as a gang member was not in alignment with the good person that he wanted to become. Consequently, his circumstances were a real-life example of the vocabulary term *cognitive dissonance* that we discussed in Session Two. Weeks prior to his presentation Devon wrote in his journal:

“I plan to change my old habits in order to support me and my family because being in a gang or in the streets would not support us in the long run because I have nothing to show for it, so I plan to own my own company.”

This response reflects a reimagined narrative because Devon expresses how he wants to one day own his own company. Despite a big part of Devon’s identity being his gang affiliation, he knows that in the long run he will need to change if he wants to be able to provide a better life for his daughter. His adverse childhood experiences have changed the course of his life and forced him to reinvent himself. He no longer imagines himself playing sports in college due to being shot. He no longer can think only of himself since he is a teenage father and he no longer can naively participate in illegal activity because he understands what his actions will truly cost him. Consequently, if Devon does not change his gang lifestyle then he will continue to feel numb like Mozzy in his theme song “Sleep Walkin” because his desire to be a “good person” will continue to create feelings of cognitive dissonance when his behavior does not align with his goals.

Prior to concluding the group, I realized that within the leadership group thus far each student has chosen a song that embraces a truth from their childhood. Each theme song seems to

relate somehow to their life stories from the past, but they struggle with creating a reimagined narrative that does not just sound like a pipe dream, but a realistic goal. As a high school student, I did not dream about having a realistic 9 to 5 job because there was nothing glamorous about working 40 hours per week. Typically, most high school students do not come into the counseling center wanting to discuss easily obtainable professions, they want to talk about reaching for the stars like starting their own businesses, becoming a real estate mogul, or becoming a professional athlete. As a School Psychologist and the facilitator of this leadership group my pedagogical approach has always been to encourage those reimagined narrative and place an emphasis on the journey. The journey alone will often birth new dreams and kill unrealistic ones. Consequently, I believe educators should always encourage the journey and allow reality to set the limits.

At the end of the leadership group, we decided that we would need to speed up our presentations in order for everyone to get a chance to present before Session Twelve. Therefore, Gregory, Manuel, and Damien were all instructed to be prepared to present during Session 10 or 11. I was also proud to announce that Mark, Gregory, Damien, and Sherman were all on B phase, which meant that they were now eligible to become members of the Student Council. Devon and Manuel both maintained their A phase status, which is the highest incentive level within the juvenile correctional facility. However, overall the leadership group has had 3 students drop to the lowest incentive level (Jeff, David, and Alfonso) and 6 students increase or maintain their incentive levels, therefore the majority of our leadership group has been able to maintain their prosocial behaviors amidst all the prison politics and group disturbances.

Session Ten

In Session Ten we had 6 out of 9 students in attendance, which was one less student than we had in Session Nine. David was unable to attend the leadership group because he was placed on (TIP) which is an acronym for a Temporary Intervention Placement. Students that are placed on TIP typically are considered a danger to others or themselves, therefore they are placed in a temporary cell. David was placed on TIP due to being involved in a fight and not allowed to attend school for safety and security reasons. Jeff on the other hand, had returned to the mainline school community for the first 3 periods of the school day. However, since I had the leadership group during 4th period, security informed me that Jeff would not be able to attend. Jeff was restricted to educational classes on his Mental Health living unit during the second half of the day. The idea of having Jeff slowly reintegrate into the school community was basically to test the waters before committing him back to a full school schedule. If Jeff was able to stay out of fights while attending school, then he would eventually return to having all 5 class periods with the general population. In addition, I was informed by security that Alfonso had been transferred to another facility, which was closer to his family. Alfonso had not been in attendance since Session Five, but he remained on the leadership group roster. No matter what the circumstances, all participants were called to attend the leadership group on a weekly basis, so they understood that they were still considered a part of the leadership group regardless of the limits or restrictions placed on their individual program. Unfortunately, the Juvenile Justice system routinely moves students overnight, which often leaves educators and students with no closure. According to the leadership group, Alfonso's program was deteriorating out of fear of being harmed by one of his peers. Alfonso went on suicidal watch for reasons unknown and was transferred to a new living unit for safety and security reasons. While on his new living unit an effort was made to re-integrate Alfonso back into the school community, but he would often

refuse to go to school. After receiving multiple behavioral writes up that would impact his release date back into the community, Alfonso began to attend school again. I found out that Alfonso had returned to the school community during the week of Session Nine, but since he refused to come to school during certain class periods he missed the leadership group. When a student does not attend school for more than 10 consecutive days then a School Consultation Team (SCT) will typically meet to help the student resolve his issues. However, since Alfonso was in special education additional support would have to come through an amendment to his IEP. Although, Alfonso received educational services on his living unit with special education support, often high school students do not complete the work that is delivered to them without the supervision of a teacher, which can impact their ability to earn high school credits at a sufficient rate. Historically the master narrative of safety and security trumps educational services within correctional facilities, which makes the academic progress of a student secondary to providing a safe and secure environment. Consequently, with the transfer of Alfonso to another juvenile correctional facility our leadership group roster would be reduced to 8 participants instead of 9 for the last three sessions. As a school psychologist working within a correctional facility, I often feel as if the relationship between education and security within this juvenile correctional facility feels like a rocky marriage. Security is the more dominant partner in the relationship and for the marriage to work education must be submissive.

During Session Ten as I watched with gratitude, I witnessed the six students in the leadership group rapidly discuss vocabulary terms and definitions amongst each other. It was pleasing to hear the students in the leadership group talking more than the facilitator because it was a good indicator that learning was occurring. The students seemed more focused and relaxed without David in attendance. The group dynamics were changing, Damien's confidence

was continuing to grow, students were walking up to the boards and actively working on solving the vocabulary term for the week, and they were no longer concerned about tangible rewards like at the beginning of the leadership group. Collectively the leadership group is beginning to reflect a community where Gregory and Sherman often provide humor, Damien and Manuel normally strictly focus on leadership content, while Devon and Mark seem to enjoy working independently, but collectively they all add value to the leadership group by sharing with each other.

The vocabulary term for the week was the *Extraordinary BEAT*, which is the nonprofit that I created. The Extraordinary BEAT represents how your Beliefs, Education, Achievement, and Time come together to make extraordinary moments. I explained to the leadership group how The *Extraordinary BEAT* was my resistance narrative to being average and how I would like to use it as a platform to encourage students to excel academically. After, I genuinely thanked the leadership group for participating in the research related to creating a counterspace for offender-labeled youth transitioning back into the community, I shared my plans to enter a 3-minute thesis competition. The 3-minute thesis competition was a research communication competition developed by the university where graduate students had three minutes to present a compelling speech on their thesis and its significance. The following is the 3-minute thesis that I read to the leadership group before the group concluded:

“I’d like to reference Biz Markie, 1988. What if someone were to tell you that you would grow up to be nothing but a hoodlum, or that you may end up in jail or someone would shoot you? What if I were to tell you that you were the worst thing your mom ever had? You see I read somewhere, if you want to learn about a culture, listen to their stories. If you want to change a culture, change their stories. Therefore, the purpose of my research was to gain a deeper understanding of how a classroom designed to challenge the master narrative influences the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth.

My study is unique because I mixed 2 concepts like an old school DJ mixing two records. You see in one hand I spun a record titled restorative practices, which focuses on inclusion

because research states people are happier when authority figures do things with them rather than to them or for them. In the other hand I spun the record Narrative Identity Work, which challenges the master narrative or should I say the story that is usually told about a particular group when it's told. want to embrace and how much of the master do you want to distance yourself from. By blending these two concepts together I created something new, Restorative Identity work. Restorative Identity Work brings the offender, the victim, and the community together to make amends like restorative justice but differentiates itself because it pushes beyond individual circumstances and looks at the educational system as a whole.

As I listened to the stories of the 9-offender-labeled youth in the Juvenile Justice System, I went from wanting to help them to understanding what it would take from both of us to defy the master narrative. I found that as educators we cannot allow marginalized populations to be victims of a master narrative they did not write. We must re-examine the exclusionary practices, the school to prison pipeline, and the lack of cultural responsiveness within our educational system. So unapologetically the offenders in my research were educators. Educators who have bought into the master narrative that these kids don't care about their education, can only read or write at an elementary level, and they should be excluded from the school community.

You see during my 12-week study. I myself came dangerously close to believing our students couldn't write because they only wrote 2 to 3 sentences. However, after I sought help from a reading specialist named Mrs. Guerra the participants in my study went from writing 2 to 3 sentences to an entire page simply by introducing a vocabulary sheet. So to the community, I would like to throw one last record on the turntable "don't believe the hype." Help these students challenge the master narrative, despite their transgressions. Why should you care about my research? Because to serve the underserved these students can't afford mediocre teachers, they can only afford excellence."

As I concluded my speech, Mrs. Jackson told me, "you just made it under 3-minutes."

Gregory stated "You said a whole lot in 3 minutes, but it was cool. You got a chance." Sherman wanted to negotiate having a party after discovering that if I won there would be a monetary prize. Nonetheless, I wanted to share with the leadership group that their participation in university research mattered because it had the potential to shape restorative practices with offender-labeled youth and marginalized populations in the future.

Session Eleven

We began Session Eleven with 7 out of 9 students in attendance. Since Alfonso was transferred to another facility, we actually were only missing David. As I read through my morning emails, I saw that David's living unit was placed on lockdown, which meant the high

school students that resided on his living unit would not be attending school. As luck would have it, Jeff returned to the leadership group the same week David was missing. Jeff had been missing since Session Five due to assaulting a correctional officer. After his staff assault, Jeff was placed temporarily on suicide watch and then transferred to a Mental Health living unit. A week prior to Session Eleven, he had begun to reintegrate into the mainline school with the general population for half a day, but Jeff missed the last leadership group due to the time it was held. As a result, Session Eleven was held when Jeff would be available to attend.

Since we were in Session Eleven the leadership group had to be structured differently because we needed to review three theme songs and plan for our last session. Therefore, Manuel, Gregory, and Damien who had been told during Session Nine to be ready to present their theme songs, were all prepared. Although as a leadership group we still reviewed vocabulary terms and definitions, the knowledge review began to feel more like a warm up drill that helped us slowly lead to deeper dialogues.

We began the group activity by turning off the lights and watching a motivational video as it was projected on the big screen. This particular YouTube video was called “Never Give Up,” which was about resiliency and ones’ capability to get up no matter how many times that life hits them in the mouth or knocks them down. The video started with the raspy voiceover of Sylvester Stallone discussing how in life, “it’s not about how hard you can hit, it is about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward.” As the leadership group watched in the darkness of Room 21 how countless amounts of athletes have experienced career ending injuries, missed game winning shots, and have failed in front of humongous crowds, they gradually became silent. The silence almost feelings as if the leadership group could relate to the humiliation of not getting what they wanted out of life or the pain associated with failure. After

about 2 minutes into the video, various motivational speakers began to shift the focus from the pain associated with failure to the power of deciding not to give up. The video seemed to strategically shift its emphasis from failure to placing an emphasis on making the personal decision to be resilient. One message in particular resonated within my heart, it was when motivational speaker Eric Thomas stated “don’t cry to give up, cry to keep going. Don’t cry to quit, you are already in pain, you are already hurt, get a reward from it.” As I watched athletes fight through pain and overcome adversity I was reminded of one my most recent failures that I would later share with the leadership group.

As the video came to an end Mrs. Jackson who had an innate ability to do things before I even asked her, turned the lights back on. As we regained light in Room 21, I welcomed Jeff back to the leadership group and expressed to him that I was glad that he was able to recover from his recent setbacks. He smiled to acknowledge my words, but remained silent about his circumstances. Almost in the same breath, I quickly moved on to acknowledge the leadership group for remaining a group, despite the recent group disturbances that had occurred within the correctional facility. As a result, I proudly announced “we currently have 6 out of the 9 students from this leadership group on the Student Council.” Unbeknownst to the leadership group, they were developing a resistance narrative by consistently not participating in the group disturbances and not giving up on making a positive change.

As I praised the leadership group, I was interrupted by Gregory who asked, “What happen last week with that competition?” Hesitantly, I responded with two words “I froze.” In between Session Ten and Eleven, I was scheduled to deliver a 3-minute speech related to my dissertation. Unfortunately, when I delivered my 3-minute thesis, the words initially flowed out of my mouth like I had rehearsed them a million times, but after an estimated 90 seconds they

abruptly stopped and all I saw was bright lights and blank expressions in the audience. Since I had practiced the 3-minute speech to the point that I could recite it without thinking, that was exactly what I did. In the middle of the speech, I literally forgot what I was saying and froze. I found myself on center stage staring at the people as they waited for me to regain my thoughts, but those thoughts never came and I was embarrassed. I even remember stating to the audience “I forgot what I was saying, which is a cardinal sin in a speech competition.” Sherman quickly responded, “Well, I guess we won’t be having that party.” The group laughed, but Devon tried to be empathetic and asked “How does that happen?” To which I responded, “I don’t know, all I can say is that I made the competition more important than I should have and the stage began to feel too big.” Although I lost, I did not lose the lesson. The lesson was for me to relax and enjoy the educational process because by making the competition so important, I created self-induced pressure. As soon as I became attached to the outcome instead of focusing on being of service to offender-labeled youth by sharing my ideas with other educators, I lost my original purpose along with my train of thought because I was no longer attaching it to the faces in this room. The group slowly stopped laughing and became more supportive. Manuel said, “Wow, that’s too bad because I think you could have won.”

Similar to Sherman, I was blinded by own ambition. My ambition to win resulted in an epic failure, but the loss resulted in a reimagined narrative where I focused on being of service to others rather than personal gains. Consequently, earlier in the session when I heard Eric Thomas say in the motivational video “Don’t cry to quit, you are already in pain, you are already hurt, get a reward from it,” I regained perspective and realized that the reward was gaining a deeper understanding of how to work with offender-labeled youth and developing the capacity to share my ideas with other educators. The resistance narrative in the YouTube video “Never give up”

is universal and serves as a reminder to anyone with a reimagined narrative that they will undoubtedly experience failure in their pursuit of becoming something greater.

After the confession of my university debacle, the leadership group shifted its energy towards the theme songs selected by Manuel, Gregory, and Damien. Surprisingly, Manuel volunteered to be the first person to present his theme song “Don’t Call,” which was so offensive that I could only play ½ the song for the leadership group. Unlike previous theme songs, Manuel’s song did not have a dramatic interlude it started out with a voice that stated, “Bitch don’t call my phone/ right now I ain’t fucking with you/ I’m too on.” The song was by rap artist June ft. T20AM and the content was explicit and demeaning to women. The oppressive narrative glamourized the lifestyle of a person with a substance abuse problem who did not want a female calling him while he was under the influence because it would lessen his high. Unlike the rap artist Mozzy whose vernacular was expressed using street code, meaning that only certain people that lived that lifestyle truly understood what he was talking about, the rap artist June’s lyrics were more blatant and less complex. The rapper June left nothing to the imagination just clear images of how grimy life can be for a person on drugs who views women as purely conquests and vessels for sex, which left me wondering why Manuel would choose this song as his theme song. As I cut the song off, Manuel did not act surprised at all by my actions especially since Mrs. Jackson said “oh wow” as the song played and looked directly at him as if she was truly concerned. Mrs. Jackson enhanced our leadership group because as a dark skinned African American woman she often gave the leadership group a female perspective during controversial dialogues. As a student intern, she typically observed and assisted with the leadership group, and although she did not typically sit in the restorative justice circle she had a strong presence because of her listening skills. Mrs. Jackson would listen with the intent of

understanding and would often purposely steer dialogues in the desired direction that the leadership group was designed to go. Overtime we developed a rhythm, so today as I watched her eyes enlarged a little bit and her mouth slowly drop just before she uttered the words “oh-wow,” I knew it was time for me to steer the dialogue in another direction. My intuition was tapping me on the shoulder and turning my head towards Mrs. Jackson whose facial expression was professionally asking “Manuel, why would you choose this song?” and patiently waiting for an answer. Manuel was the only Hispanic student in the leadership group and had a poker face, which was hard to read because it often remained stoic unless he was engaged in reviewing the leadership curriculum. As the music was turned off, he asked “Can I present from my chair or do I have to go up to the podium,” to which I replied “I will leave it up to you.” Manuel opted to present from his chair because unlike other songs that were chosen, he did not seem to receive the same support from his peers. While the song was still playing, Gregory asked with disdain “Who picked this song?” Manuel hesitantly replied, “I did” with an uncomfortable disposition after nobody in the group claimed his song, which was another indicator that I needed to turn it off and allow him to explain his selection. Manuel’s explanation was that when he was in the streets and did not want to deal with people he would listen to this song to justify how he was feeling. However, now he realizes that he was suffering from depression at the time and by listening to this song he felt supported. Manuel explained how in the past he had a strong desire to push people away and when he did not want to listen to people judge his lifestyle, this song made him feel as if he had a voice. Although his explanation gave some light on why he chose the song, similar to the other theme songs chosen by his peers the song still placed an emphasis on where he was mentally before he came into the Juvenile Justice System. As the leadership group dissected his song with an intense dialogue, the leadership group came to a consensus that

unlike other songs his song lacked a reimagined narrative or a resistance narrative. The song simply embraced the oppressive narrative of a “tweaker” (person on drugs) on the streets.

Manuel argued that his theme song reminded him that he needed to deal with his problems and not avoid them like in the past. However, the leadership group concluded that Manuel should find a song that supported his reimagined narrative of dealing with his problems instead of a song that supported the master narrative of a depressed male who wants to avoid his issues by using drugs and women to escape.

Gregory was the next student in the leadership group to present his theme song, which was by Sean McGee called “My Story.” The song began with an intense dialogue between what sounded like a verbally abusive father figure within the home threatening to beat up one of his children who has embarrassed him with their actions. After threatening a child, you hear the singer Sean McGee paint a picture of how it feels to be homeless and live in the streets. The song played like an anthem for those who feel as if they do not matter or do not have a voice. As the song played, Gregory closed his eyes and pounded the beat out on his chest as if it were a drum and the room remained silent as if they understood the song was something personal to Gregory. The lyrics were heartbreaking and pleading for empathy because the vocals of Sean McGee undeniably caused listeners to gain a deeper understanding of what it feels like to be completely on your own with no family support. Gregory stated, “Similar to the lyrics in his theme song, my dad was never there and my mama didn’t care.” Gregory shared with the leadership group, how his mother was on drugs and how she often compared him to his sister as if she was better than him. Gregory discussed openly with the leadership group that when he was living in the streets, he basically felt as if nobody cared about his story and as if he did not matter. Sensing his vulnerability, I chose to focus on the theme song and discussed how I

thought his song was the most transparent because it let the listeners know exactly what he was going through before he even presented the theme song. The theme song played like a master narrative for a homeless youth who lacked family support, but wanted people to understand the plight of the homeless and the unheard. Gregory was the only student who stated that he would actually play his theme song at his Board hearing because he wanted the Board to understand that he feels compelled to tell them what they want to hear. He expressed how the Board does not actually want to hear your story or truth, instead they want to hear acceptable lies that indicate that you are ready to transition back into society. Gregory left the impression that when in jail, the truth will not set you free. If Gregory was to admit that he came from an unstable home, it could postpone his release date or result in another out-of-home placement. As he concluded his presentation, only negative feedback that Gregory received was not to become a victim of his circumstances, instead take full ownership of what he could do to change the trajectory of his life.

For the last theme song presentation, Damien presented the song “Dead and Gone,” which was the second selection by rap artist Mozzy. The song shockingly started with the lyrics “Suicidal thoughts my n-word” and went on to glorify gang lifestyle. Immediately I was not a fan, but almost instantaneously the group began to get turned up or come alive. Gregory, Devon, Sherman, and Mark were all standing up and reciting the words as if it was a church hymnal. I jokingly stated, “All of you better know your times tables as well as you guys can recite these lyrics.” Somehow, once again I felt like a father figure who was concerned about his kids, but confusingly honored that they felt comfortable enough to let loose and show their true identity. After the song played, Damien was smiling because his theme song seemed to promote some form of comradery within the leadership group because it spoke of the master narrative

associated with how a gang member wanted to be remembered. Damien stated, “I thought this was a reimagined narrative because he stated in the record he did not really care about selling records, he just wanted to live his life in the streets and nobody would doubt that he was a real n-word.” As the leadership group laughed, I explained to Damien that if his theme song was a reimagined narrative then it would still be considered an oppressive narrative because it was basically about gaining street credit and never telling on those whose committed crimes. Mozzy’s reimagined narrative was to become somewhat of an outlaw. As I explained this to Damien he stated, “That’s is probably why my treatment team is not recommending I get discharged and are saying that I am gang entrenched.” Damien seemed to be slowly understanding how his core values that aligned with the rap artist Mozzy’s lyrics were hindering his rehabilitation.

As we brought Session Eleven to a close, I told the leadership group that the Student Council would like to fund a party for our last group session. Since this leadership group was part of the recruitment process for students who were initially found not eligible for Student Council. The Student Council would sponsor the leadership group party, which meant the leadership group would be able to purchase a meal with Student Council funds, but the meal could not exceed 50 dollars because that was the amount budgeted for their party. All of sudden everyone was doing math on the board as if they were trying to get the state budget approved. Mark, Devon, and Sherman took the lead on creating a menu and within about 15 minutes the leadership group had decided on a 16-piece bucket of chicken from Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), with 4 sides and 8 biscuits. In addition, they wanted 2 dozen donut-holes and 3 liters of soda from the Dollar Store. Mrs. Jackson agreed to get the 3 liters of soda from the Dollar Store, which left me responsible for getting KFC and the donuts for the party.

Session Twelve

We began Session Twelve with the same 7 out of 9 high school students that were in attendance during Session Eleven, which meant we were still missing David. Despite, David knowing that the leadership group was having a party, he still managed to get into trouble. About an hour before the party began, David became argumentative and disrespectful towards one of his teachers and with the school security that responded to the classroom incident, which resulted in him not being allowed to attend the leadership group. However, Jeff was able to attend the leadership group for the second consecutive week, which meant that he was successfully reintegrating into the school community. Almost naturally the leadership group began to play the role of s support group for Jeff as he transitioned back into the school community.

Since Session Twelve would be the last time the leadership group met and ate together, it was deemed the last supper. Symbolically the leadership group understood that their budgeted meal represented the last tangible reward that anyone in the group would receive. However, before the table could be set for the last supper, the leadership group had to review all the vocabulary words and definitions. Following the fundamental law upheld in Room 21 that “if you don’t work, you don’t eat,” the structure of the leadership group remained the same and all the purchased food was kept hidden in the office. Understanding the high expectations, the leadership group went to work immediately and started reciting information like lyrics from one of their favorite songs in order to gain quicker admission to the preplanned party. Mark, Jeff, Manuel, and Damien stood at the dry erase board ensuring that I heard everything that was recited, while Gregory, Devon, and Sherman shouted out answers from their black lounge chairs. The rotation of the restorative justice circle stayed the same though, because I followed the

sequence of names that represented how they originally sat in the circle. After about 20 minutes, the work of the leadership group was completed, therefore they could eat.

As the leadership group strolled over to the long pine wood rectangular table that sat about 18 people, I began to bring out the food from my office. The last supper consisted of 16 pieces of Kentucky Fried Chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw, corn on the cob, 8 biscuits, and 2 dozen donut holes for dessert. The leadership group had created quite the feast with their fifty-dollar budget provided by the Student Council funds. Once I placed all the food on the table, Mark and Devon seemed to take charge of how the food would be distributed and shared. Mark passed out the plates and cups and Devon broke down who would get what in regards to chicken. Sherman and Gregory appeared to know exactly what they wanted to eat because they immediately began to negotiate with their peers about what they would be willing to give up to have additional pieces of chicken or mac and cheese. Manuel, Damien, and Jeff sat quietly and waited patiently for the food to be passed their way. Jeff attempted to sit on the outskirts of the leadership group until Devon stated, "Man, come closer to the group, so we can fix your plate." Shortly afterwards, Jeff scooted down and appeared to slowly integrate into the leadership group.

After all the food was distributed, I stood at the end of the table and said, "Before we eat I want to thank you. Thank you for participating in this research project and being a voice for offender-labeled youth. By hearing the individual stories told within this leadership group, I have gained a deeper understanding of how leadership groups similar to this one could be beneficial for high school students and educators that work with marginalized populations. So, although I know you want to eat, I want to quickly do one last group activity." Sherman was like "Nope! We trying to eat, group is over" but then laughed and said, "Go ahead, but make it

quick.” After Sherman granted me his alleged permission, I began to tell a story from *The Wizard of Oz* movie. In the movie, the main character Dorothy was lost and was told that the Wizard of Oz would be able to help her get back home. As she sought out on her journey to find the Wizard she met a Scarecrow, Lion, and a Tin Man who were also seeking some type of change in their lives. Dorothy wanted to get home, the Scarecrow wanted to be intelligent, the Lion wanted to be courageous, and the Tin Man wanted a heart. Everyone that became part of Dorothy’s crew had visions of a reimagined narrative that they believed would enhance their psychological well-being given their life experiences. However, her crew also believed that change would only occur if the Wizard of Oz could show them the way.

Surprisingly, the Wizard of Oz was actually not a wizard at all. He was an educator who taught each member of Dorothy’s crew how to examine their journey to change. In the movie, as each character reflected on their personal journey they began to realize that the journey was part of their resistance narrative. As Dorothy’s crew pursued becoming something greater, they were all provided real-life experiences to exhibit signs of change. The journey exposed the existence of resistance narratives where individuals either embraced or distanced themselves from a master narrative, in order to draw closer to their own reimagined narrative.

I am not the Wizard of Oz, but I am an educator with the epistemology that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. Over the last 12-Sessions, I have listened to the reimagined narratives of this leadership group and quietly observed members work on resistance narratives. I saw Sherman who wants to be football player in college become more cognizant of his decisions because even something as simple as selecting a theme song could influence a potential University. I witnessed how Gregory could become a voice for the less fortunate and make a difference in his community. I observed Damien open his eyes and realize that he needs

to find a way to become less gang entrenched without losing his self-identity. I saw Mark contemplate whether or not carrying a gun in the future was necessary and observed Manuel inadvertently begin to confront his feelings of depression. I was able to witness Devon toil with identifying himself as a good person and how to create a new legacy for his family, despite his transgressions. Lastly, I was able to see Jeff return to the leadership group and reintegrate back into the school community like the prodigal son who was destitute, but finally returns to his family and is greeted with compassion.

After spotlighting each student in attendance, the leadership group began to feel more like a family rather than a group of individuals. Almost magically, the room appeared to shrink and the faces of the students seem to enlarge as I told their stories, which gave me a sense of connection to this particular leadership group. I concluded the group activity by saying, “The last thing I’m going to say is, sometimes the journey is more important than the destination because it prepares you for when you arrive.” To which Sherman quickly responded by raising his arm up and pointing directly at me and saying, “Yup, you said those were your last words, so now let’s eat!” Shortly afterwards, as everyone ate together I could not keep myself from rereading the sign above the front window, which read in all black capital letters: A COUNTERSPACE CREATED TO CHALLENGE THE MASTER NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Track #7/Stereo Hearts

Shortly after concluding Session 12, I found myself back in the studio of my mind. In the same exact studio that I discovered my teenage anthem the song *Boys to Men* by New Edition. As I closed my eyes almost effortlessly, I was able to revisit the studio and start searching for the best way to tell the stories of the nine offender-labeled youth residing in a state juvenile correctional facility. Subconsciously music remained the gateway for helping me to understand my thoughts, therefore almost innately the studio tucked in the recesses of my mind was re-opened for business. Consequently, as a graduate student at the University of the Pacific, I found myself unlocking the studio door with the same exact key that I possessed as an adolescent, which magically cracked open and exposed my imagination and ontological knowing. According to the Athenian philosopher Plato, “Music gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.” So unapologetically, I feel compelled to continue to write my dissertation from an ontological perspective with subheadings reflecting a musical playlist symbolic of a new beginning for offender labeled-youth. Oliver and Gershman (1989) describe ontological knowing as “organic life and transcendent dance” (p.3), which has always helped me to visualize content and context intrinsically.

As a result, when I first heard the attention-grabbing song *Stereo Hearts* by the music group Gym Class Heroes featuring Adam Levine, my imagination went wild. The song starts off with an ever-changing radio dial searching for an extraordinary beat, until it miraculously finds one. As the radio dial comes to an abrupt stop, the singer Adam Levine flawlessly belts out from what seems like the bottom of his diaphragm, “my hearts a stereo, that beats for you so listen close.” Metaphorically, his heartbeat becomes the music pumping through the speakers and

physically he is the radio requesting to be turned up by a person feeling emotionally low. Likewise, the heart of this qualitative ethnographic study will be the voices of the nine offender-labeled youth preparing to transition back into society. Metaphorically, the reconceptualization of restorative practices and narrative identity work, which I have termed restorative identity work will be the heartbeat of Chapter 5 pumping the typically unheard stories of offender-labeled youth through the speakers, while physically Room 21 (the counterspace) will be the *Stereo Heart* requesting the resistance narratives of offender-labeled youth to be turned up when the master narrative of marginalized populations makes them feel emotionally low.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the average recidivism rate for offender-labeled youth is 55% after 12 months from their release, which means more than half of incarcerated youth are returning to prison within a year (Mathur & Clark, 2014; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Statistically, the State is failing as parents, if only half of incarcerated youth can make it on their own after residing in a state correctional facility (Snyder et al., 2006). No longer is recidivism blamed solely on incarcerated youth the fault has now shifted to the juvenile justice system itself, indicating the need for innovative programs that understand that real community engagement will only occur when stakeholders have common goals, resources, and supports to help youth reintegrate into the community (Mathur et al., 2014). Consequently, more research is needed on how state correctional facilities can support offender-labeled youth prior to reintegrating into the community.

The purpose of my study was to gain a deeper understanding of how counterspaces influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society. A counterspace has been defined as a social setting where two or more individuals come together to challenge deficit notions (Case & Hunter, 2014). As a result,

Room 21 was defined as the counterspace that bound this qualitative ethnographic study designed to answer the research question “How does the existence of counterspace influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society?”

Throughout this chapter, I return to the theoretical framework of restorative practices and narrative identity work to make sense of data collection. Over the last two decades the reconceptualization of Restorative Justice has expanded with an emphasis being placed on restorative practices that examine how relationships are either punitive, neglectful, permissive, or restorative while narrative identity work within counterspace has been theorized to enhance ones’ psychological well-being by challenging deficit-oriented social narratives concerning marginalized individuals’ identities through oppression, resistance, and reimagined personal narratives within counterspaces (Case & Hunter, 2012) From an ontological perspective, I discuss where restorative identity work situates amongst previous research and assert the reconceptualization of restorative practices and narrative identity work termed “*restorative identity work*” influences the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth through a new restorative justice lens.

Track #8/Restorative Practices: Rollercoaster of Love

Restorative practices are inclusionary practices that work *with* students and polar opposites of zero-tolerance policies that do things *to* students without giving thought to the potential opportunity for students to learn about their behavior (Gonzalez, 2012; Wilson, 2013). Consequently, during session four when Alfonso became disruptive by making derogatory remarks about my physical appearance in front of his peers, I chose as the facilitator to take the opportunity to discuss oppression. Since the majority of the offender-labeled leadership group

had experienced or been victims of oppression from authority figures, when the opportunity for a restorative dialogue was created I explained how “even now in the absence of an oppressor, you are oppressing each other for the sake of making someone laugh or to make yourself feel better than those around you.” Through this vicarious leadership group experience, the group found itself needing to revisit the purpose of the group, which was unapologetically to challenge the master narrative associated with offender-labeled youth and not reinforce oppressive narratives that may have a negative influence on their psychological well-being.

The restorative approach taken in this qualitative ethnographic study is situated in the *Restorative Social Discipline Window* where “human beings are happier, more cooperative, and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in position of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them (Wachtel, 2013, p.8), but the foundation of the leadership group was built from *the 5 core beliefs of Hopkins 2015*:

- 1) *Everyone has a unique perspective on a situation or event and needs an opportunity to express this in order to feel respected, valued and listened to.* The unique perspectives of offender-labeled youth were shared on weekly basis through a restorative justice circle, which allowed each unique perspective to be heard. The structure of the restorative justice circle required each participant to participate in order for the dialogue to continuously move from person to person in a circular motion, which allowed all participants to feel respected, valued, and listened to.
- 2) *What people think at any given moment influences how they feel at that moment, and these feelings inform how they behave.* I witnessed firsthand, Alfonso become irate when he felt treated unfairly, and how his feelings influenced his behavior. The moment he felt treated unfairly, he threw his journal into the center of the restorative justice circle and began to pace around the room using profanity. Likewise, when David thought that something was unfair, he often became disruptive and argumentative, which typically hurt him in the long run. David often would “win the battle, but lose the war,” like when he cursed out his teacher, but then found himself without a class that he needed to graduate. Jeff and Alfonso when they felt threatened, according to their peers would intentionally go on suicide watch in order to be placed in protective custody and avoid perceived threats from their peers. Over the 12-session study I observed how the thoughts of offender-labeled youth at any given moment influenced how they feel, which often shaped their behavior.

- 3) *Empathy and consideration for others is crucial to the health and wellbeing of us all. Everything we do is likely to have an impact on those around us.* Sherman realized that even something as simple as the selection of a theme song could have repercussions when the leadership group was visited by a college professor, who asked Sherman if he thought his theme song was the best representation of who he was? Through this leadership project, Sherman was able to gain a deeper understanding of how everything we do is likely to have an impact on those around us because he would never get another chance to make a first impression. In the long run, he became aware that if he wanted to become a college athlete that he needed to think about the big picture and not just his immediate group of peers.
- 4) *Our unmet needs drive our behavior. If our physical and emotional needs are met, we are able to function at our best— and if they are not we are under resourced and less able to cope – especially in challenging situations.* When David perceives that authority figures are abusing their power, his behavior suggests that he may feel under resourced and less able to cope. For instance, David became disrespectful, argumentative, and disruptive, with custody staff when he perceived they were abusing their power, which resulted in his removal from his living unit. David qualified for special education as a student with an emotional disturbance and was one amongst five students in our leadership group that received special education services. It should be noted, that the three students who did not become eligible for Student Council were all special education students, who at some point in the 12-week study, all felt under resourced and demonstrated an inability to cope in challenging situations. David, Alfonso, and Jeff missed a substantial amount of the leadership group due to circumstances that occurred outside of the counterspace deemed Room 21.
- 5) *The opportunity to engage in empathic collaborative problem-solving affirms and empowers people* (Hopkins, 2015). Sixty-seven percent of the leadership group selected theme songs that resulted in an empathetic collaborative process where individuals were able to share personal stories while simultaneously creating a sense of community. The restorative justice circle allowed typically unengaged students like Damien to find his voice.

The restorative component of Restorative Identity Work is deeply rooted in creating a sense of community. Over time, the power of being the facilitator gradually diminished and offender labeled youth became empowered through creating a restorative dialogue that centered around their own self-identity. The more information that was disseminated to offender-labeled youth during the leadership group, the more evenly the distribution of power became, which resulted in me feeling more like a member of the community than a facilitator because we were all learning from each other. According to Wachtel (1997), “Community is not a place. Rather

it is a feeling, a perception. When people see themselves as belonging to a community, they feel connected” (p.193). Over time, Room 21 became a counterspace, which by definition is a social setting where two or more individuals come together to challenge deficit notions (Case & Hunter, 2014). During week five, Mark wrote this reflection on the leadership group:

This leadership group is a great group. I have learned a lot of new vocabulary words and about how a lot of people reach their goals and get complacent. From my perspective this group is helping us, just like how “iron sharpens iron” we are learning ways to succeed and make a legacy and not just be an average person. This leadership group makes us esoteric because it is not for everyone.

The understanding that disengagement or engagement of youth is a relational issue between an individual and the context for him is essential to the trajectory for reengaging youth (Zaff et al., 2014) helped influence the restorative approach and practices displayed throughout the leadership group. When the group dynamics changed, patience was needed. When offender-labeled youth made derogatory statements, context was needed, and when they were engaged, praise was needed. After working with offender labeled youth for nearly two decades, I understand how easy it could be to give up on them when they misbehave. However, as an authority figure I prefer to create a dialogue that is centered around accountability and helping them resolve their problems before they result in severe consequences rather than participate in dialogues that solely places an emphasis on consequences or potential punishments for their behaviors. Attention is the most elementary form of mattering (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), therefore creating an inclusionary atmosphere where students feel as if they were wanted and their participation was needed was essential for creating a sense of community.

From an ontological perspective which requires metaphors of organic life and transcendent dance, the restorative approach differs from the traditional approach to discipline which is high in control and low in support. Throughout this qualitative ethnographic study, I

found restorative practices to move with a steadfast rhythm like the song Love Rollercoaster by the Ohio Players. The beat in the song similar to the leadership group began with an upbeat repetitive tempo and overtime became more complex. Metaphorically, the love rollercoaster represents the week-to-week ups and downs of offender-labeled youth and the person who interjects their voice into chorus "Rollercoaster of Love" by shouting "Say What?" is the teacher reassuring the students that no matter how bumpy the ride gets they will always have a seat. During the first six weeks, the leadership group was as unpredictable as a rollercoaster ride, but by the eighth week the turbulence seemed to decrease. The ride smoothed out and the twists and turns became more exciting than worrisome. As I listened to the offender-labeled youth share their stories, it seemed as if they began to ride the rollercoaster of love with their hands up because they were no longer worried about getting thrown out. As the leadership group began to settled down between the sixth and eighth week the opportunity for narrative identity work readily presented itself.

Track #9/Talk: Narrative Identity Work

I have always been motivated by naysayers because they often make assumptions based on what they have seen or heard. When I played sports, I was told that I was too small. When I went to graduate school, I heard it was a waste of time and money because it rarely provided any additional income. When I took on more than the average person at work, I was told that I was doing too much or I would eventually burnout. However, from an early age, no matter how unfavorable the master narrative was for the *average* African American male, I believed that I was equipped in some way to challenge the master narrative. Similar to W.E.B DuBois and Booker T. Washington, I share an oppressive narrative with the offender-labeled youth including Jeff who appeared white, but identified as a Native American. I have the shared experience of

two realities, which are being a minority (person of color) and an American, which W.E.B Dubois termed double-consciousness (Nyawalo, 2013).

As an adolescent, I was raised in a two-parent home, went to a diverse high-school, and played sports. Through my lived experiences, I have learned that rather than simply accept master or oppressive narratives to gravitate toward individuals, organizations, and environments that would help counter them. Consequently, I listened to the football coach who told me that if I wanted get an advantage over football players that were bigger than me, then I could not afford to let them out perform me in the classroom. When I went to graduate school, I gravitated toward a graduate advisor that encouraged me keep my voice and peers that encouraged me to be fearless. When I took on more than I could handle, I prayed continuously and leaned heavily on my wife, family, and friends. No matter how crazy or impossible a venture seemed to be, I have always been drawn to individuals or people who have had the courage to write their own stories despite existing norms or master narratives. Consequently, when I heard the definition of a counterspace was when two or more individuals came together to challenge the deficit notions typically associated with an individual or particular group, I became interested in creating a counterspace to influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society?

From the very beginning the plan was to mix two concepts like a Dee Jay mixes music and create something new that would be deemed “Restorative Identity Work.” Initially, the leadership group placed an emphasis on the reconceptualization of restorative practices. During the first six to eight weeks, the first concept of “restorative practices” played heavily to reassure offender-labeled youth that regardless of the ups and downs within the group the leadership group would be able to withstand the turbulence on this metaphorical love rollercoaster. After

six weeks of working with offender-labeled youth, the rollercoaster began to smooth out and students seemed to feel more at ease within the leadership group. As a result, the second concept “Narrative Identity Work” was thrown into the mix. Identity work within a counterspace has been theorized to enhance one’s psychological well-being by challenging deficit-oriented social narratives concerning marginalized individual identities through oppression, resistance, and reimagined personal narratives within the counterspace (Case & Hunter, 2012).

An oppression narrative is a shared narrative which articulates the nature of an individual’s lived experiences (Balcazar et al., 2011). As we began to challenge deficit-oriented social narratives through individual theme songs chosen by six out of the nine youth offender-labeled youth that were in the leadership group, I quickly realized that figuratively I was W.E.B Dubois because I have always been free in America, meaning that I have never been incarcerated and my educational experiences and upbringing has been vastly different from the reported adverse childhood experiences that these offender-labeled youth within this leadership group have experienced. Mark reported he had to support his family after his mother “got her neck broke, Damien witnessed someone being shot directly in front of him, Devon despite still being in high school had already suffered two gunshot wounds which changed the trajectory of his life as an athlete, and Gregory was raised on the streets because his parents struggled taking care of themselves. Metaphorically, offender-labeled youth are symbolic of the slave Booker T. Washington because they have lost their freedom, although it was due to their transgressions the consequences undeniably robbed them of opportunities to practice typical developmental skills, such as developing healthy relationships with pro-social peers and a sense of personal mastery due to being incarcerated (Steinberg et al., 2004).

As a researcher, I shared an *oppression narrative* of dealing with two realities of being a person of color and American, but I never had to face the dual-challenge. The dual-challenge for offender-labeled youth is being both a young adult and formerly incarcerated young adult transitioning into adulthood (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). The *oppression narrative* in identity work discusses the commonalities and shared experiences of a group, like the common thread that bonds incarcerated youth with similar stories of being pushed to the margins (Case & Hunter, 2014). However, in this leadership group the oppressive narrative provided an additional purpose that expanded beyond shared experiences. Offender-labeled youth began to realize that unintentionally they were reinforcing oppressive narratives in the absence of an oppressor by calling each other derogatory statements or by selecting personal theme songs that reinforced the pushing of offender-labeled youth into the margins. Through restorative dialogues the leadership group began to realize that they had the power to either *distance* themselves or *embrace* master or oppressive narratives, which could potentially shape or form their self-identity differently. Offender-labeled youth began to realize that they no longer had to be victims of an oppressive narrative or circumstances, if they chose to resist.

A *resistance narrative* has been described as a point of critical and counter-hegemonic discourse with thoughts and dreams “that speak of a world that can be” (Case & Hunter, 2012; Fine et al., 2004 p. 140; hooks 1990). The leadership group became a way for these high school students to show self-improvement and demonstrate how motivated they were to become a part of the Student Council by working *with* the facilitator to reinforce the resistance narrative that asserts that offender-labeled youth have “uninterrupted potential” regardless of their involvement within the corrective system (Case & Hunter, 2014). Although, motivation does not guarantee or

ensure that a person will reach their goal, it is necessary for change to occur (Panuccio et al., 2012).

In this ethnographic qualitative study, six out of nine students became members of the Student Council, which aligns with the research of Paternoster and Bushway (2009), that contends motivation is created from when one has the goal of self-improvement combined with specific and realistic resources for achieving those goals. Therefore, weekly reviews of the leadership material combined with the introduction of new vocabulary words related to change such as cognitive dissonance, consonance, and terms like paradigm shift resulted in the leadership group becoming a specific self-improvement resource for offender-labeled youth with the goal of becoming eligible for student council. Offender label youth were able to recognize through weekly restorative circles and countless competitions when their behavior did not align with their goals, when their actions were oppressive, and how knowledge could feel empowering as they gained mastery of the content. Ironically, the resistance narrative just like in the Wizard of Oz seemed to go unnoticed by the nine offender-labeled youth. Since the change happened gradually over an extended period of time the change went unnoticed like weight loss that goes unnoticed until someone tells them they look skinnier.

As an educator, I found myself playing the role of the Wizard in the Wizard of Oz because I needed to highlight the resistance narrative for the leadership group to ensure that their personal growth did not go unnoticed. For instance, when negative environmental factors like a group disturbance (a fight when multiple people or groups fight) occurred it was important as an educator to acknowledge that all the members of the leadership group *resisted* getting involved. Furthermore, as an educator I found that I had to *resist* subconsciously accepting the master narrative that offender-labeled youth can only read and write at an elementary level and seek out

resources and ways to ensure that students within the counterspace did not have their potential limited by my inability to teach them. Regardless of whether or not offender-label youth within this leadership group chose to relive an oppressive narrative or boasted about their reimagined narrative, it became apparent that more emphasis needed to be placed on developing specific plans for offender-labeled youth, so they could self-monitor and recognize their own progress towards obtaining their reimagined narrative.

A reimagined personal narrative is an individual-level construct (Balcazar et al., 2011) which differs from an oppression and resistance narrative that derives from setting-levels that invariably influence the content of the reimagined narrative (Salem, 2011). Sherman dreamed of becoming a college athlete, Manuel wanted to own a landscaping business, while Jeff and Mark aspired to be businessmen, despite being unsure of what their business would be. As I listened to the dreams and aspirations of offender-labeled youth, undeniably I was reminded of the doctrine *parens patriae* (the State as the parents) and I felt compelled to have the arduous conversations that typically a parent would have with the offender-labeled youth. Together, we discussed the relationship between their oppression and resistance narratives, in addition to their self-identity affirming experiences that set the stage for their reimagined narratives. Therefore, when the upbeat week-to-week tempo of the rollercoaster smoothed out within the leadership group and the tempo slowed down to where the group began to feel like a community more emphasis was placed on challenging the master narratives associated with offender-labeled youth.

Undoubtedly by the eighth week, Room 21 could be recognized as a counterspace because students began to challenge deficit notions and were more open to the constructive criticism needed to help them form new self-concepts. For example, Sherman questioned whether he missed an opportunity to impress a college professor after playing his theme song during week

eight, and by week ten Manuel had gained insight on his symptoms of depression, and by week twelve Mark was seriously beginning to pre-contemplate personal decisions that would be a necessity for him to transition back into society successfully.

Through restorative practices the Love Rollercoaster was able to smooth out after six weeks and from an ontological perspective the second concept of narrative identity work was ready to be mixed in. The initial engaging up-tempo beat of Love Rollercoaster by the Ohio Players would gradually fade out and a new beat would be introduced that repeatedly knocks until the contemporary rhythm and blues singer Khalid interrupts the beat and asks two times, “Can we just talk? Can we just talk, talk about where we’re going?” The song plays as if the singer understands that a reimagined narratives stem from the counterspace where individuals draw from their oppression and resistance narratives as well as identity-affirming experiences to set the stage to re-craft self-concepts that have been “devastated by the larger culture” (Fine et al., 2000, p. 23.). Metaphorically, the constant request to talk by the singer represents the restorative dialogue and questioning often needed by educators to gain a deeper understanding of how a counterspace can influence the psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society? As the second concept of narrative identity work blends with the first concept of restorative practices it gives birth to a new sound called Restorative Identity Work, which influences the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society by looking at the educational system, offender-labeled youth, and the community through a restorative justice lens.

The basic concept behind restorative justice is to allow the offender who has caused harm to encounter the victim or victims of an offense, which in turn draws the offender closer to the community and making reparation to the victim (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). Therefore, the

reconceptualization of restorative justice in Restorative Identity Work posits that the educational system is the *offender*, offender-labeled youth are the *victims* of exclusionary practices, and that society represents the *community* that offender-labeled youth will transition to. Through exclusionary practices the educational system has caused a school-to-prison pipeline which has caused harm to offender-labeled youth, therefore through the use of restorative practices the offenders (educators) are able to encounter or re-engage with their victims (offender-labeled youth) through inclusionary practices, which in turn helps them transition back into their community (support systems). Through the use of a counterspace (Room 21), offender-labeled youth became engaged in a school setting where their voices were heard through restorative practices and individual stories were shared through narrative identity work. According to Hopkins (2015) healing and closure occurs after genuine communication of all parties are involved, which demonstrates a shift in mind-set *from a punitive* approach that typically has the deep seeded need to punish the wrongdoing of the offender *to a restorative* approach that places an emphasis on mending the fractured relationships between the victim and offender (Roberts & Hough, 2002). So metaphorically, educators will need to have a shift in mindset and be willing to ride the restorative love rollercoaster with high expectations and a profound belief in their students (restorative) along with a willingness to challenge the master narrative (school-to-prison pipeline) associated with offender-labeled youth in order for them to become a community (a group) by asking questions repeatedly like, “Can, we just talk? Can, we just talk, talk about where we’re going?”

Track #10/“The Street Sweeper” by Dr. Martin Luther King

Educators must be cautious about oppressive narratives because a shared narrative does not predict desired individual outcomes. For instance, just because I am an African male and the

majority of students in the leadership group identified as African-American males, does not mean that our life experiences were the same. For instance, picture two red apples in a truck traveling together amongst hundreds of apples to a store. Depending on the experiences and the journey of these apples they may look, feel, and even taste differently upon arrival, but regardless they are still apples from the same farm. Consequently, African-American educators and African-American students despite sharing the experiences of being black and Americans, does not predict the desired outcomes for one's life. However, I would contend that the development of resistance narratives determines one's harvest and the development of counterspaces provide the fertile soil for seeds to grow. Through participation in this leadership group, I witnessed firsthand how knowledge becomes power for offender-labeled youth and transcends beyond their transgressions and race.

The use of restorative justice circles within a counterspace allowed each students an opportunity to be heard and for knowledge to become a form of power that could be disseminated throughout the leadership group. Regardless of their knowledge of the leadership group material offender-labeled youth were require to be engaged in the learning process because there are no hiding spots within a restorative justice circle. Restorative justice makes practical use of the theoretical perspective known as re-integrative shaming, which rely heavily on emotions like shame and guilt in the restorative process (Kim & Gerber, 2012). Therefore, when offender-labeled youth were required to admit on a weekly basis whether or not they knew the material, the shame and guilt of not knowing or taking responsibility for their own learning appeared to weigh on them within the restorative justice circle. Damien was the best example because by week six, he began to request that his peers no longer help him by giving him answers instead he wanted to demonstrate to the leadership group that he could remember the

information on his own. Through the restorative justice circles, I began to gain a deeper understanding of how Braithwaite (1989) argued that “reintegrative shaming is not only more effective than stigmatization; it is also more just” (p.159).

Since research indicates that the restorative justice process relies heavily on interpersonal communication skills, which is problematic when considering that 50-60% of juvenile offenders have clinically significant levels of language impairment (Snow, 2013), the decision to have offender-labeled youth select theme songs was beneficial to compensate for language impairments. Through narrative identity work the leadership group was able to discuss oppressive, resistance, and reimagined narratives by carefully listening to individual theme songs that gave listeners insight into the presenting offender-labeled youths life. Through the use of music, offender-labeled youth seemed to be able to express emotions that may have not have been revealed if the youth was left on his own to express his feelings. For instance, I learned about Mark’s mother getting her neck broke, Manuel having symptoms of depression, Gregory being homeless, Devon’s doubt about whether he was a good person, Sherman’s blind ambition, and Damien being gang-entrenched to the point that it was significantly shaping his self-identity. During the last six weeks of the leadership group, music became a universal language that helped offender-labeled youth discuss their cultural and traumatic experiences through the of extraordinary beats and heartfelt chorus’s that seemed to capture their story possibly better than they would have been able to express if they suffered from a language impairment.

Through this qualitative ethnographic study, I learned that teachers must resist the acceptance of master narratives that have been written about offender-labeled youth and be willing to persevere through the ups and downs needed to create a community. The duration of time needed for this group of individuals to become a leadership group was about eight weeks.

Consequently, offender-labeled youth can only afford exceptional teacher with a willingness to ride this so called restorative “love rollercoaster” and seek-out resources to best serve their students when they cannot help them. For example, as an educator, I sought assistance from a reading specialist in order to increase the writing samples being produced by offender-labeled youth, and almost magically the writing samples doubled with the use of some simple strategies. However, prior to her assistance, I came dangerously close to buying into the master narrative that offender-labeled youth can only write at an elementary level and don’t really care about school. As a result, this qualitative ethnographic study implicated that educators and offender-labeled youth must continuously develop resistance narratives for self-improvement and transformation of one’s self-identity.

As I conclude the implications of Restorative Identity Work, my mind becomes clear, my eyes close, and the music in my head becomes silent as my ancestry awakens to the speech of “The Street Sweeper” by Martin Luther King Jr which is congruent with the work of Patricia Hill Collins (2000) who posits that the resistance narrative is a “hidden space.... of consciousness” (p. 98) where marginalized individuals refuse to accept the status quo as normal and the notion that they are somehow inferior and their oppressed condition is somehow their deserved lot. Over this 12-session qualitative study on leadership, I realized that the leadership group we were promoting a resistance narrative where despite ones’ lot in life whether they are incarcerated or not that they must resist being a victim and work towards their reimagined narrative. The timeless voice of Martin Luther King Jr. embodies the resistance narrative needed within a counterspace (Room 21) to eliminate the excuses of being a victim of social narratives or ones’ circumstances and fosters a mind-set of striving to make the best of ones’ situation until a breakthrough happens. The prison classroom is a space of interest because both educators and

students are obliged to deal with the experiences of possibilities and humanization under dire conditions (Castro & Brawn, 2017), therefore more counterspaces are needed to promote resistance narrative which influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr:

If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, sweep streets like Beethoven composed music, sweep streets like Leotyne Price sings before the Metropolitan Opera. Sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will have to pause and say: Here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well

Track #11/Locked Up: Recommendations for Research

Qualitative research indicates the consequences of exclusionary practices, which remove or “push-out” students from the school community and academic instruction contribute to delinquency, dropout rates, and ultimately what researchers refer to as the school-to-prison pipeline (Fowler, 2011; Gonzalez, 2012). However, little to no research is available about the prison-to-prison pipeline, where offender-labeled youth miss out on a substantial amount of their education for safety and security reasons. Offender-labeled youth are often placed on limited program (LP) due to their gang affiliation or history of gang related behaviors when there is a group disturbance (GD), even if they did not participate in the fight with multiple youth.

During this 12-week qualitative study, although David, Jeff, and Alfonso missed the majority of the leadership group due to their own behaviors. Devon missed several groups because of incidents that happened on his living unit or in the school area, which he was not involved. When a substantial amount of offender-labeled youth from his living unit participated in a group disturbance, Devon along with his entire living unit was placed on a limited program for safety and security reasons. The following is a record of the leadership groups attendance and absence are in coded in red:

ALT – Altercation	GD – Group Disturbance	MH – Mental Health reasons
SA – Staff Assault	SW – Suicide Watch	TIP – Temporary Intervention Program
LP – Limited Program	BTP -Behavioral Treatment Program	UNK – Unknown reasons

**Group
Participants**

Manuel	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sherman	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jeff	•	•	•		•	•	•	SA	MH	MH	•	MH	•	•
Damien	•	UNK	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mark	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Gregory	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	LP	•	•	•	•	•
Alfonso	•	•	•		•	•	•	GD	SW	SW	•	TIP	TIP	TIP
Devon	•	•	•		•	GD	•	GD	LP	LP	LP	•	•	•
David	ALT	•	•		•	•	•	GD	BTP	LP	LP	TIP	TIP	TIP
	Wk	Wk	Wk		Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk
	1	2	3		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Figure 4. Leadership Group Attendance

Although Devon was A phase, which is the highest level within the Juvenile Justice system he remained on a high core living unit with offender-labeled youth that have the most high-risk factors for recidivating. Despite Devon maintaining prosocial behaviors he chose not to transfer off of his living unit to a less restrictive environment. Similar to labeling theory, within narrative identity work marginalized individuals that *embrace* master narratives of self often find social value in their self-identity when the identity provides leverage, even a stigmatized identity (Case & Hunter, 2014; Leinsring, 2011). Devon’s behavior aligned with labeling theory, which argues that delinquents who are identified and sentenced may associate their “offender” stigma as a badge of honor where they embrace the label, which results in changes to their social identity and their behavior (Ascani & Braithwaite, 1989). Consequently,

more innovative programs are needed to help offender-labeled youth develop resistance narratives that lead towards their own self-actualization and disrupt the prison-to-prison pipeline.

Dismantling the prison-to-prison pipeline will require a paradigm shift where education and correctional officers will place an emphasis on the inclusion of offender-labeled youth into the school community rather than exclusion. Over the span of twelve weeks through inclusionary practices, I was able to assist six students in becoming eligible for the student council who typically would have been excluded from participating in extra-curricular activities due to their behavior. During that time, I learned that these students are searching for an identity, therefore vocational programs and post-secondary job opportunities are needed to help offender-labeled youth develop and possess viable skills that can satisfy their basic physical needs in order for their higher psychological needs to be met. The inclusion of vocational classes would provide offender-labeled youth the chance to relabel themselves as plumbers, electricians, or mechanics, replacing the typical stigma of being gang affiliated, foster youth, mental health recipients, and juvenile delinquents. Breaking the oppressive narrative of offender-labeled youth that plays like the hegemonic rap song “Locked up” by Akon, where he expresses the social practices of an offender-labeled youth while complaining “I’m locked up, they won’t let me out” dismissing his role in his life experiences. Hegemony is the struggle of when the powerful win the consent of those oppressed, with the oppressed unknowingly participating in their oppression. Consequently, more research needs to be conducted on how to help offender-labeled youth develop resistance narratives that will disrupt the prison-to-prison pipeline.

Track #12/Vapors: Restorative Identity Work Conclusion

“How does the existence of counterspaces influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society?” Counterspaces help develop resistance narratives and give educators the opportunity to make amends with offender-labeled youth and repair the harm of exclusionary practices by working *with* students instead of doing punitive things *to* them. Through the reconceptualization of restorative practices and narrative identity work offender-labeled youth are able to grab the microphone like MC’s in a cypher. Each and every individual awaiting the microphone to be passed to them within the restorative justice circle, so they can tell their stories to the beat of their choice, while simultaneously breathing life into “Restorative Identity Work.”

I assert counterspaces influence the psychological well-being of offender-labeled youth because they provide a space for marginalized populations to develop resistance and reimagined narratives. Over time Room 21 became a classroom setting where as an educator I was able to make amends with the nine-offender-labeled youth through continuous inclusionary practices and a willingness to ride the so-called restorative “love rollercoaster.” After the rollercoaster smoothed out, the offender-labeled youth appeared to be more vulnerable and began to slowly transform into fully engaged students with a willingness to share their personal stories. Each and every theme song resulted in hermeneutic discussions related to social narratives, but drew recipients of criticism closer to understanding their own self-identity.

As I mixed restorative justice and narrative identity work together to create something new termed Restorative Identity Work. Restorative Identity Work began to sound different from restorative justice because it pushed beyond simply being concerned with the recidivism rate of juvenile offenders and into restoring the self-identity and psychological well-being of offender-

labeled youth by exploring oppressive, resistance, and reimagined narratives through a restorative justice lens. Restorative Identity Work is designed to help offender-labeled youth understand that despite their transgressions that they can still make a difference. The shaming component of restorative justice is needed, but at least an equal amount or more effort needs to be placed on restoring the self-identity of offender-labeled youth. Offender-labeled youth need to be able to rediscover who they are. Therefore, the new concept of Restorative Identity Work has promise because its designed to assist offender-labeled youth with restoring their identity through education and exposure to new ideas and opportunities.

As I conclude this qualitative ethnographic journey that was designed to gain a deeper understanding of how the existence of counterspaces influence the psychological well-being and self-identification of offender-labeled youth transitioning back into society. I feel obligated to share one last song from 1988 when I was a freshman at Benicia High School before I turn off the lights and walk out of the studio. As a 14-year-old, I blasted this song constantly called the *Vapors* by Biz Markie. The *Vapors* was a song with a hard-repetitive beat that was constantly being disrupted by an awkward sound of someone blowing on a saxophone every few seconds, which was hypnotizing to me. Biz would tell stories about an epidemic that spread throughout his crew that he termed the "Vapors". The entire song was about how nobody believes in people when they are down and out; however, as soon as they accomplished their reimagined narratives, people seemed to magically remerge in their lives. Restorative Identity Work is designed to create counterspaces for the down and out (marginalized populations) and helping to develop resistance narratives that lead toward ones' reimagined narrative through a restorative relationship *within* the educational system. In the perfect world, all nine of the offender-labeled youth that participated in the leadership group would strengthen their resistance narratives, re-

engage in the educational process, and become so successful that those around them would catch the vapors. In the perfect world, none of my students would recidivate, I would not have to hear about students that I have worked with overdosing and being found dead on the streets, I would not have to hear about former students returning to prison for new crimes, and I would continue to receive positive feedback from students that decided to build on their resistance and reimagined narratives and no longer accept oppressive narratives. However, for now I will just take pride in the six out of nine offender-labeled youth that were able to reach their goal of becoming members of the student council and in all nine of the student labeled youth that voluntarily decided to work on developing resistance narratives despite their transgressions. I will take pride in initiating the hermeneutic discussion about how to disrupt the prison-to-prison pipeline. I will take gratification in the development of something new termed Restorative Identity Work for the offender-labeled that has the potential to reduce recidivism and restore the self-identity of offender-labeled youth.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, L.S. (2006) Listening to juvenile offenders: Can residential treatment prevent recidivism? *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 23 (1), pp. 61–85
- Akers, Ronald L. and Gary F. Jensen. 2006. “The Empirical Status of Social Learning Theory of Crime and Deviance: The Past, Present, and Future.” Pp. 37–76 in *Taking Stock: The Status of Criminological Theory. Advances in Criminological Theory, Vol. 15*, edited by Francis Cullen, John Paul Wright, and Kristie R. Blevins. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Ahmed, E. & Braithwaite, V. (2004) “What? Me Ashamed?” Shame management and bullying. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 41(3), 269-294
- Ahmed, E. & Braithwaite, V. (2004) Bullying and victimization: Cause for concern for both families. *Social Psychology of Education* 7, 35-54.
- Alexander, M. (2010) *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Altschuler, D. M. & Brash, R. (2004). Adolescent and teenage offenders confronting the challenges and opportunities of reentry. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 2(1), 72-87.
- Balcazar, F.E., Suarez-Balcazar, Y., Adames, S.B., Keyes, C.B., Garcia-Ramirez., & Paloma, V. (2011). A case study of liberation among Lantio immigrant families who have children with disabilities. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. Advance online publication., doi: 10.1007/s 10464-011-9447-9
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman

- Bernburg, J. G. (2006). Official labeling, criminal embeddedness, and subsequent delinquency: A longitudinal test of labeling theory. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 43, 67–88. doi:10.1177/0022427805280068
- Bernburg, J., & Krohn, M. (2003). Labeling, life chances, and adult crime: The direct and indirect effects of official intervention in adolescence on crime in early adulthood. *Criminology*, 41, 1287–1318. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2003.tb01020.x/abstract
- Bilchik, S. (1999). *Juvenile justice: A century of change*. Washington, DC: U.S.
- Bullis, M., Yovanoff, P., Mueller, G., & Havel, E. (2004). The importance of getting started right now: Further examination of the facility-to-community transition of formerly incarcerated youth. *Journal of Special Education* 38, 80-9
- Bilchik, S. (1999). *Juvenile justice: A century of change*. Washington, DC: U.S.
- Braithwaite, J. (1989) *Crime, shame, and reintegration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carroll, A., Gordon, K., Haynes, M., Houghton, S. (2013). Goal setting and self-efficacy among delinquency, at-risk and not at-risk adolescents. *J Youth Adolescence* 42: 431-443. DOI 10.1007/s10964-012-9799-y
- Case, A. D., & Hunter, C. D. (2012). Counterspaces: A unit of analysis for understanding the role of settings in marginalized individuals' adaptive responses to oppression. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 50, 257–270. DOI: 10.1007/s10464-012-9497-7.
- Castro, E.L., (Spring 2017) Critiquing critical pedagogies inside the prison : A Dialogue between student and teacher. *Harvard Educational Review* 87 (1), 99-121

- Chung, H. L., Little, M., & Steinberg, L. (2005). The transition to adulthood for adolescents in the juvenile justice system: A developmental perspective. In D. W. Osgood, E. M. Foster, C. Flanagan, & G. Ruth (Eds.), *On your own without a net: The transitions to adulthood for vulnerable populations* (pp. 68–91). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Cherniss, C., & Deegan, G. (2000). The creation of alternative setting. In J. Rappaport E. & E. Seidman (Eds.) *Handbook of community psychology*. New York: Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Cohen, M. A. (2010). Valuing crime control benefits using stated preference approaches. In J. K. Roman, T. Dunworth, & K. Marsh (Eds.), *Cost-benefit analysis and crime control*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- D.E. Barrett, A. Katsiyannis, D. Zhang (2010) Predictors of offense severity, adjudication, incarceration, and repeat referrals for juvenile offenders: a multi-cohort replication study. *Remedial and Special Education, 31*, pp. 261–275.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1968) *Identity, youth, and crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton Company.
- Erlich, R.J., Russ-Eft, D. (2011). Applying social cognitive theory to academic advising to assess student learning outcomes. *NACADA Journal Vol 31* (2). 5-15.
- Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S., & Wong, L. (2000). For whom? Qualitative research, representations, and social responsibilities. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 107–131). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gonsoulin, S., & Read, N.W., (2011). *Improving educational outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems through interagency communication and*

- collaboration*. Washington, DC: National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk (NDTAC).
- Gonzalez, T. (2012). Keeping Kids in School: Restorative Justice, Punitive Discipline, and the School to Prison Pipeline. *Journal of Law & Education* Vol. 41(2)
- Hahn, A., Leavitt, T. D., Horvat, E. M., & Davis, J. E. (2004). *Life after Youthbuild: 900 Youthbuild graduates reflect on their lives, dreams, and experiences*. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild U.S.A.
- Hertz, D.C., Ryan, J.P., Bilchik, S., (2010) Challenges facing crossover youth: An examination of Juvenile-Justice decision making and recidivism. *Family Court Review* Vol. 48 (2) April 305-321.
- Hoedel, J. (2005). *Role Models: Examples of Character & Leadership (2005)*. MI: Character Development & Leadership.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Hopkins, B. (2004). *Just Schools*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Jenning, W.G., Gibson, C., Lanza-Kaduce, L. (2009). Why not let kids be kids? An exploratory analysis between alternative rationales for managing status offending and youths' self-concepts. *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 34: 198.
doi:10.1007/s12103-008-9054-y
- Jung, A.K., (2015). Interpersonal and Social Mattering in Work: A Review and Critique. *The Career Development Quarterly* 63: 194-208. DOI: 10.1002/cdq.12013
- Lavie-Ayaji, M., & Krumer-Nevo, M. (2013). In a different mindset: Critical youth work with marginalized youth. *Children and Youth Service Review*, 35, 1698-1704

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.07.010>

- Leone, P., & Weinberg, L. (2010). *Addressing the unmet educational needs of children and youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems*. Washington, DC: Center for Justice Reform. Retrieved from <http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/edpaper.pdf>.
- Liebmann, M. (2007). *Restorative Justice: How It Works*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Lerner, R. M. (2004). *Liberty: Thriving and civic engagement among America's youth*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mahoney, J. L., & Stattin, H. (2000). Leisure activities and adolescent antisocial behavior: The role of structure and social context. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23(2), 113–127.
- Mathur, S.R., Clark, H.G. (2014). Community Engagement for Re-entry Success of Youth From Juvenile Justice: Challenges and Opportunities. *Education and Treatment of Children*, Volume 37(4). p. 713-734.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdale, E.J, (2016) *Fourth Edition Qualitative Research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, Ca: Jossey –Bass A Wiley Brand
- McCord, J. (1992). The Cambridge-Somerville study: A pioneering longitudinal experimental study of delinquency prevention. In J. McCord & R. Tremblay (Eds), *serious and violent juvenile offenders* (pp. 313-345). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morrison, B., Blood, P., & Thorsborne, M. (2005). Practicing Restorative Justice in school communities: Addressing the Challenge of Culture Change. *Public Organization Review*, 5(4), 335-357. doi:10.1007/s11115-005-5095-6

- Nyawalo, M. (2013). From “Badman to “Gangsta”: Double consciousness and Authenticity, From African-American Folklore to Hip-Hop. *Popular Music and Society* Vol. 36(4) 460-475 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2012.671098>
- O’Connell, T., Wachtel, B., Wachtel, T. (1999) *Conferencing Handbook: The new real Justice training manual*. Pipersville, PA: The Piper’s Press.
- Oliver, Donald W., & Gershman, Kathleen. W (1989). *Education, modernity, and fractured meaning: Toward a process theory of teaching and learning*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Opal, T.D. (2011). Women disrupting a marginalized identity: Subverting the parolee Identity through narrative. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 40(2), 135-167. doi: 10.1177/0891241610384995.
- Panuccio, E.A., Christian, J., Martinez, D.J., & Sullivan, M. (2012). Social support, Motivation, and the process of juvenile reentry: An exploratory analysis of desistance. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 51: 135-160. Doi: 10.1080/10509674.2011.618527
- Paternoster, R., & Bushway, S. (2009). Desistance and the “feared self”: Toward an Identity theory of criminal desistance. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 99 (4), 1103-1156.
- Payne, Y.A. (2008). “Street Life” as a site of resiliency: How street life-oriented Black men frame opportunity in the United States. *Journal of Black Psychology* 34 (1), 3-31. doi: 10.1177/0095798407 310852.

- Puzzanchera, C. (2009, December). Juvenile arrests 2008 (Juvenile Justice Bulletin NCJ 228479). Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Rappaport, J. (2000). Community narratives: Tale of terror and joy. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 28 (1), 1-24. doi:10.1023/A: 1005161528817
- Rosenberg, M., & McCullough, B.C. (1981). Mattering: Inferred significance and mental health among adolescents. *Research in Community & Mental Health*, 2 163-182.
- Rossing, B., & Glowacki-Dudka, M. (2001). Inclusive community in a diverse world: Pursuing an elusive goal through narrative based dialogue. *Journal of Community Psychology* 29 (6), 729-743 doi: 10.1002/jcop.1045.
- Ryan, T.G., Ruddy, S. (2015) Restorative Justice: A changing community response. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education* (7) 2, 253-262.
- Siegel, G., & Lord, R. (2004) *When system collide: Improving court practices and programs in dual jurisdiction cases*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.
- Slattery, P. (2013) Curriculum development in the postmodern era: Teaching and learning in an age of accountability. Rutledge
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1), 60–73. doi:10.1080/095183998236926.
- Smith, C. (2009) Deconstructing the Pipeline: Evaluating school to prison pipeline equal protection cases thorough a structural racism framework. *Fordham Urban Journal*, Vol. 36, (5) p1009, 41 p.

- Snow, D.A., & Anderson L. (1987). "Identity work" among the homeless: The verbal construction and avowal of personal identities. *American Journal of Sociology*, 92, (1336-1371).
- Snow, P. (2013) Restorative justice conference, oral language competence and young offenders: Are these high-risk conversations? *The Prevention Researcher Vol 20* (1) p.18-20
- Snyder, H.N., Sickmund, M. (2006). Juvenile offenders and victims: 2006 National Report. Washington DC: U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Snyder, H.N., Mulako-Wangota, J. (2011) Arrest data analysis tool. Bureau of Justice statistics. Data source: FBI, uniform crime reporting program. (2011).
- Stafford, M. (1989) W.E.B Du Bois: Scholar and Activist, Danbury, CT: Grolier Incorporated by Chelsea House Publishers
- Steinberg, L., Chung, H.L., Little, M. (2004) Reentry of young offenders from the justice system: A developmental perspective. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 2 (1) (2004), pp. 21–38
- Tarolla S.M., Wagner, E.F, Rabinowitz, Tubman J.G., (2002). Understanding and treating juvenile offenders: A review of current knowledge and future directions. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 7 (2002) 125-143.
- Unruh, D., Gau, J., & Waintrup, M. (2009). An exploration of factors reducing recidivism rates of formerly incarcerated youth with disabilities participating in a reentry intervention. *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, 18, 284-293.
- Verity, F., & King, S. (2008, October). Responding to intercommunal conflict- what can

restorative justice offer? *Community Development Journal*, 43 (4), 470-470.

Retrieved from Academic Search Premier database.

Wachtel, T. (1997) *Real Justice: How we can revolutionize our response to wrongdoing.*

Pipersville, PA: The Piper's Press.

Wachtel, T. (2013) *Dreaming of a new reality.* Bethlehem, PA : International Institute of Restorative Practices.

Wachtel T., McCold, P. (2001) Restorative Justice in Everyday Life. In H. Strang, J.

Braithwaite (eds), *Restorative Justice and Civil Society* (114-129). Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Wenzel , M. Okimoto, T.G., Feather, N.T., Platow, M.J., (2008). Law and Human

Behavior. *Spring Science and Business Media B.V. Volume 32 (5)*, p375-389.

Williams, M., Teasdale, J. (2007). *The Mindful Way Through Depression: Freeing*

Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness. New York: The Guilford Press.

Wilson, M.G. (2013). *Disrupting the Pipeline: The Role of School Leadership in*

Mitigating Exclusion and Criminalization of Students. *Journal of Special Education Leadership* 26 (2), 61-70.

Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice: A bestselling book by one of the*

founders of the movement. The little books of justice & peacebuilding.

Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

APPENDIX A: WEEKLY LESSON PLANS

Week 1

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): “Mediocrity and living above the average.”

Topic or Unit of Study: Complacency

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
--

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss what their work ethic looks like on a typical day of school.
Students will understand and be able to discuss what it means to become complacent
Students will understand and be able to discuss what the word legacy means.*

Lesson Objective(s):

After examining what a typical day looks like for the majority of the students on the white board and discussing the work ethic of students usually seen within the school culture.

Students will listen to an audio clip that starts with “You and I have not been called to live an average life” by Glen Berseau.

Students will review audio clip and be given 1 points for everything they can remember. All answers should be given in a Round Robin fashion where each participant will be given an opportunity to answer based on the seating arrangement and the opportunity to respond moving from person to person in a circular motion. All participants have the right to pass when it is their turn. After all responses are exhausted.

The facilitator will set-up opportunities for success by having them fill in the blanks as the facilitator repeats the speech. Give clues related to missing words. For example “You and I have not been called to live an _____ . Proper response (average life).

*Introduce topic: Today we are going to talk about “**Mediocrity and living above the average.**”*

Proceed to the word of the day activity:

Place 11 blanks on the board

*-----
The game will be played similar to “Wheel of Fortune” and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with audio clip. Each letter will be worth 1 point.*

The word is: COMPLACENCY

The word should be read aloud and pronounced correctly/ worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B. Response: (No B)

C _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Y Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: BXRT

After the word of the day has been solved. Then the facilitator will tell a story about a commentator who is calling a fight and states “The champ looks like he has lost a step and has become complacent.” Then the group will discuss the meaning of complacency. Facilitator should continuously discuss topics in the sequence of the sitting arrangement.

Conclusion: Play audio clip titled “Legacy”

Ask students, “Tell me what you can remember from clip.” Responses worth 1 point

Ask “Why do you think that I would play this clip to conclude this group?”

Hint: Starts with an L, if students can’t figure it out play wheel of fortune.

Word: Legacy / letters = 1 point / word = 4 points

Conclude with Journal Entry:

How significant of a role does education or school play in your future plans?

Allow students 15 minutes to write.

Teaching Assistants, Foster Grandparents or facilitator will assist if need help spelling words.

Prize: Tangible reward for students with the highest amount of points. Only 1 tangible reward given

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

iPod, Audio speakers, Audio clip titled “Simply Average” & Audio clip titled “Legacy” both narrated by Glen Berteau, White board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources:

List supplementary information and/or places where you found information for the lesson in APA format

Week 2

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): “Creating a state of consonance”

Topic or Unit of Study: Cognitive Dissonance

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
--

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss and define cognitive dissonance
Students will understand and be able to discuss what is a state of consonance
Students will understand and be able to discuss what the word legacy means.*

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet

Students will Review Week 1

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

Vocabulary words: Complacency and Legacy

3 points will be given for the definitions of each vocabulary word.

Students can only give one response (cannot say vocabulary word and definition at same time), if it is not their turn to speak then no points shall be rewarded. Students must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.

Ice Breaker: Steph Curry <http://youtu.be/UsmTqvX2qZw>

Group review of video will be conducted and students will receive 1 point for each response. Go clockwise around the group until answers are exhausted.

Ask “Why did he say most of you won’t be successful?” If nobody can remember the answer is: “Most of you won’t succeed not because you can’t do it, but because you can’t get past your old you long enough to get to your new you.” What action word did he use repetitively: FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT!

Today’s word of the day is two words

Place 9 blanks for first word and 10 blanks for the second word

The game will be played similar to “Wheel of Fortune” and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with audio clip. Each letter will be worth 1 point.

*The word and topic for today is: **Cognitive Dissonance***

Should be read and pronounced correctly and answer is worth 4 points

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B. Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: BXRT

Tell a story about a person trying to lose weight, but eating the wrong foods or story where behavior is incongruent with goal.

The definition of cognitive dissonance for group will be defined as when a persons’ behavior is not in alignment with their goal.

*Introduce the vocabulary word: **Consonance***

Consonance is when a person’s behavior is in alignment with their goal.

Journal Entry

How do you plan to support yourself in the future and what type of lifestyle will you have?

Read entries and look for cognitive dissonance or consonance related to how they answered their first journal question.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

iPod, Audio speakers, mp4 video of “Steph Curry” narrated by Eric Thomas, white board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources: Steph Curry Mp4

<https://youtu.be/UsmTqvX2qZw>

Week 3

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): “Becoming Something Greater”

Topic or Unit of Study: Greatness

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss and define esoteric
Students will understand and be able to discuss what the term “Iron Sharpens Iron” means.*

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet

Students will Review Week 1&2

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

Vocabulary words: Complacency, Cognitive Dissonance, Consonance

3 points will be given for the definitions of each vocabulary word.

Students can only give one response (cannot say vocabulary word and definition at same time), if it is not their turn to speak then no points shall be rewarded. Students must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.

Write all responses on the board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information.

Examine responses and fill in the important missing information. For example, “Nobody told the story about how the boxer became complacent the first week or nobody talked about the consonance of Steph Curry where he made the 77 three pointers before the game then brought his team back when they were down by 20 in the fourth quarter.

Today's word of the day is 1 word and 8 letters. Place 8 blanks on the board.

*-----
The game will be played similar to "Wheel of Fortune" and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with Review of Week 1&2. Each letter will be worth 1 point.*

*The word and topic for today is: **Esoteric***

Should be read and pronounced correctly and answer is worth 4 points

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B. Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: BXLZ

Play audio clip from Will Smith and ask students to define esoteric based on audio clip that states:

"Greatness is not this esoteric, illusive, God-like feature that only the special among us will ever taste."

Conclusion

The definition of esoteric for group: Something only intended for a small group or a few.

Discuss how if he states that greatness is not esoteric, then what does that mean for the members of the group?

Show the Mp4 video of Will Smith shares the secrets to success

Discuss the phrase "Iron sharpens iron."

Students can play Wheel of fortune using phrase if time allows.

Journal Entry: What do you want to become great at and why?

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

iPod, Audio speakers, Mp4 video narrated by Will Smith, white board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources: Will Smith Shares his secrets to success <https://youtu.be/q5nVqeVhgQE>

Week 4

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): The Eye of the Beholder

Topic or Unit of Study: Paradigm Shift

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
--

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss and define paradigm
Students will understand and be able to discuss what is a paradigm shift*

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet.

Students will Review: Week 1-3

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

Complacency	Cognitive Dissonance	Esoteric
Legacy	Consonance	

3 points for definitions of vocabulary words.

Students can only give one response, if it is not their turn to speak no points shall be rewarded. Must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.

Write all response on board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information. Examine responses and fill in important missing information. Use vocabulary words when applicable.

Introduce the topic through word of the day. Today's word of the day is 2 words

Place 8 blanks on the board for first word and 5 blanks for second word

The game will be played similar to "Wheel of Fortune" and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with review of knowledge.

The word of the day and topic is: **Paradigm Shift**

Should be read and pronounced correctly worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: BXLZ

Show picture of woman that portrays a young/older woman depending on your perception (Picture from 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, page 12).

Conclusion:

Asks students to write down the age of the person in picture. Then have to two people with different perceptions try to help the other person see their perspective. If person is able to see the changes and view the picture differently they would have experienced a paradigm shift

The definition of paradigm and paradigm shift for group:

Paradigm: The way one perceives something

Paradigm Shift- When ones' perception of that something changes.

Tangible Reward for person with most points.

Journal Entry:

How do you perceive yourself? 3 to 5 sentences

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

Projector, Picture from 7 habits of Highly Effective People (page 12), White board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources: *7 habits of Highly Effective Peopl*

Week 5

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): Don't Believe the Hype and Find a Way to Win

Topic or Unit of Study: Master Narrative

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

Students will be able to discuss and define master narrative

Students will understand and be able to discuss what is an oppressive narrative

*The word of the day and topic is: **Master Narrative***

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet.

Students will Review: Week 1-4

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

Complacency

Cognitive Dissonance

Esoteric

Paradigm shift

Legacy

Consonance

Paradigm

3 points for definitions of vocabulary words.

Phrase: Iron sharpens iron - worth 4 points

Students can only give one response, if it is not their turn to speak no points shall be rewarded.

Must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.

Write all response on board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information.

Examine responses and fill in important missing information. Use vocabulary words when applicable.

Today's word of the day is 2 words. Place 6 blanks on the board for first word and 9 blanks for second word

The game will be played similar to "Wheel of Fortune" and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with review of knowledge.

Should be read and pronounced correctly worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B

Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: BXLZ

Conclusion:

The definition of Master Narrative for the group: The big story that all the little stories come from or the story that is often written when a story is wrote about a particular group.

List on the board

10 things that students from the group have heard about incarcerated youth.

Then play: A Mp4 video from The Wiz and discuss an oppressive narrative

<https://youtu.be/3r1ssg1Llt4> Crow Anthem (1978)

Tangible Reward for person with most points.

Journal Entry:

Then ask the group how many of these things that have been written about incarcerated youth do you embrace and how much of what has been written are you trying to distance yourself from?

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

Projector, Picture from 7 habits of Highly Effective People (page 12), White board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources:

<https://youtu.be/3r1ssg1Llt4> Crow Anthem (1978)

Week 6

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): Theory of Knowledge

Topic or Unit of Study: Epistemology

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss and define epistemology
Students will understand epistemology and be able to choose a theme song that best represents their epistemology.*

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet.

Students will Review: Week 1-5

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

<i>Complacency</i>	<i>Cognitive Dissonance</i>	<i>Esoteric</i>	<i>Paradigm shift</i>
<i>Legacy</i>	<i>Consonance</i>	<i>Paradigm</i>	<i>Master Narrative</i>

3 points for definitions of vocabulary words.

Phrase: Iron sharpens iron - worth 4 points

*Students can only give one response, if it is not their turn to speak no points shall be rewarded.
Must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.*

*Write all response on board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information.
Examine responses and fill in important missing information. Use vocabulary words when applicable.*

Today's word of the day is 1 words. Place 12 blanks on the board

The game will be played similar to "Wheel of Fortune" and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with review of knowledge.

Should be read and pronounced correctly worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B Response: (No B)

E _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Y

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: BXRZ

*The word of the day and topic is: **Epistemology***

Students will discuss meaning of epistemology, which for this group will be defined as one's theory of knowledge

Then facilitator will ask all group members to pick a theme song that represents who they are?

Then facilitator will record all theme songs on white board.

Conclusion

Explain to the group no theme songs would be changed until week 12 once their song was submitted. So, if the person was uncertain about choice and needed more time before they locked in their song then they would be allowed up to one week to choose song.

Discuss the group beginning to create a *legacy* that would affect those outside this group, but also teach them about themselves in the process.

Mission to make a difference by hosting a school event that raises awareness about an issue or raises money for an organization of their choice to address an issue of importance to them.
Tangible Reward for person with most points.

Journal Entry:

Why did you choose that particular theme song to represent your identity? If have not chosen a theme song then what songs are you considering?

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

White board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Week 7

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): Rise and Grind

Topic or Unit of Study: Resistance Narrative

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss and define resistance narrative
Students will understand the definition of the word “grind” for the purposes of obtaining a goal.*

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet.

Students will Review: Week 1-6

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

<i>Complacency</i>	<i>Cognitive Dissonance</i>	<i>Esoteric</i>	<i>Paradigm shift</i>
<i>Legacy</i>	<i>Consonance</i>	<i>Paradigm</i>	<i>Master Narrative</i>
<i>Epistemology</i>			

3 points for definitions of vocabulary words.

Phrase: Iron sharpens iron - worth 4 points

*Students can only give one response, if it is not their turn to speak no points shall be rewarded.
Must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.*

*Write all response on board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information.
Examine responses and fill in important missing information. Use vocabulary words when applicable.*

Today’s topic is **Beliefs** and I would like to share a video with you called “Rise and Grind”:
https://youtu.be/_jHeqfZO69o

Today’s word of the day is 2 words. Place 10 blanks on the board for first word and 9 blanks for second word

Each letter will be worth 1 point and the word is:

Resistance Narrative

The game will be played similar to “Wheel of Fortune” and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with review of knowledge.

Should be read and pronounced correctly worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: BXLZ

*After game is played display on video monitor a visual image that reads
Grind /grind/ to perform repetitive actions over and over in order to attain a goal*

Conclusion

Group will discuss what it means to grind. Facilitator will discuss how your beliefs shape your behavior. Have our first presentation related to theme songs.

Transformative inquiry by School Psychologist and group members. Facilitator and group members will give constructive criticism and then ask the student if he wants to keep or change his theme song. Then Group will discuss the project related to restorative practices and making a difference in the community.

Journal Entry:

What motivates you and if you lack motivation then why do you think that is?

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES**Instructional Materials:**

Video screen, Rise and Grind Mp4, visual image of definition, white board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources:

Rise and Grind Mp4: https://youtu.be/_jHeqfZO69o

Week 8

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): “Education allows you to see things differently”

Topic or Unit of Study: Education

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):**

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

Students will be able to discuss and define contemplation

Students will be able to understand when a paradigm shift occurs.

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet.

Students will Review: Week 1-7

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

<i>Complacency</i>	<i>Cognitive Dissonance</i>	<i>Esoteric</i>	<i>Paradigm shift</i>
<i>Legacy</i>	<i>Consonance</i>	<i>Paradigm</i>	<i>Master Narrative</i>
<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>Resistance Narrative</i>		

3 points for definitions of vocabulary words.

Phrase: Iron sharpens iron - worth 4 points

Students can only give one response, if it is not their turn to speak no points shall be rewarded. Must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.

Write all response on board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information. Examine responses and fill in important missing information. Use vocabulary words when applicable.

Today's topic is **Education**. Today's word of the day is 1 word. Place 12 blanks on the board for first word

The game will be played similar to "Wheel of Fortune" and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with review of knowledge.

Each letter will be worth 1 point and the word is: **Contemplation**

Should be read and pronounced correctly worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: PXLZ

Activity: Play video clip from Bagger Vance. The facilitator will explain to group how his epistemology led him to believe that your Beliefs, Education, Achievement and Time have a way of coming together to make extraordinary moments, Then discuss how if this group has led just one individual in this group even contemplating change then it has been a success. Share movie clip and explain what you call The Extraordinary B.E.A.T.

Conclusion:

Reiterate that *if the group has led to an individual in the group contemplating change than the group has been a success and the beginning of a legacy. The definition of contemplation is the action of looking thoughtfully at something for a long time.*

Individuals will be called up to present themes songs.

Transformative inquiry by School Psychologist and group members. Facilitator and group members will give constructive criticism and then ask the student if he wants to keep or change his theme song.

Then Group will discuss the project related to restorative practices and making a difference in the community.

Journal Entry:

To be determines based on the discussions of the group

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

Projector, video screen, Bagger Vance the Movie, white board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources: *The movie - Bagger Vance*

Week 9

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): Paid in Full

Topic or Unit of Study: Achievement

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss and define oppressive narrative
Students will be able to discuss and define master narrative
Students will be able to discuss and define resistance narrative
Students will be able to discuss and define re-imagined narrative*

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet.

Students will Review: Week 1-8

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

<i>Complacency</i>	<i>Cognitive Dissonance</i>	<i>Esoteric</i>	<i>Paradigm shift</i>
<i>Legacy</i>	<i>Consonance</i>	<i>Paradigm</i>	<i>Master Narrative</i>
<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>Resistance Narrative</i>	<i>Contemplation</i>	

3 points for definitions of vocabulary words.

Phrase: Iron sharpens iron - worth 4 points

*Students can only give one response, if it is not their turn to speak no points shall be rewarded.
Must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.*

*Write all response on board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information.
Examine responses and fill in important missing information. Use vocabulary words when applicable.*

Today's topic is **Achievement** Today's word of the day is 2 words. Place 10 blanks on the board for first word and 9 blanks for second word

The game will be played similar to "Wheel of Fortune" and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with review of knowledge.

Each letter will be worth 1 point and the word is: **Reimagined Narrative**

Should be read and pronounced correctly worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: PXLZ

Activity: Play “Paid in Full” Mp4 video https://youtu.be/E7t8eoA_1jQ and ask if the students can identify the various narratives:

Oppressive Narrative

Master Narrative

Resistance Narrative

Re-imagined Narrative

Conclusion:

Individuals will be called up to present theme songs.

Transformative inquiry by School Psychologist and group members. Facilitator and group members will give constructive criticism and then ask the student if he wants to keep or change his theme song.

Then Group will discuss the project related to restorative practices and making a difference in the community.

Journal Entry:

To be determined based on the discussions of the group

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

Projector, video screen, Mp4 “Paid in Full White board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources: *Paid in Full Mp4 video. https://youtu.be/E7t8eoA_1jQ*

Week 10

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): “Never Give up”

Topic or Unit of Study: Time

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating

arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

Students will be able to understand that we all get the same amount of time in a day, but what you do with that time is up to you.

Lesson Objective(s):

Welcome students and take roll with sign-up sheet.

Students will Review: Week 1-9

Each response is worth 1 point/ 3 points for each vocabulary word:

<i>Complacency</i>	<i>Cognitive Dissonance</i>	<i>Esoteric</i>	<i>Paradigm shift</i>
<i>Legacy</i>	<i>Consonance</i>	<i>Paradigm</i>	<i>Master Narrative</i>
<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>Resistance Narrative</i>	<i>Contemplation</i>	
<i>Reimagined Narrative</i>			

3 points for definitions of vocabulary words.

Phrase: Iron sharpens iron - worth 4 points

Students can only give one response, if it is not their turn to speak no points shall be rewarded. Must answer in the rotation decided upon. Start anywhere then move clockwise.

Write all response on board to avoid duplicate responses. No points for repeated information. Examine responses and fill in important missing information. Use vocabulary words when applicable.

Today's topic is **Time** Today's word of the day is 3 word. Place 3 blanks on the board for first word and 13 blanks for second word and 4 blanks for the third word.

The game will be played similar to "Wheel of Fortune" and designed to even the playing field if students struggled with review of knowledge.

Each letter will be worth 1 point and the word is: **The Extraordinary B.E.A.T**

Should be read and pronounced correctly worth 4 points.

Students can guess until they guess the wrong letter.

Example: B Response: (No B)

Then place wrong letters in a letter bank: PXLZ

Discuss the last component of the B.E.A.T, which is time and express to students how proud you are about the time that they have put in but the real challenge will be after this group is over and for them not to give up. Ask them to watch the video and how many times that time is refenced.

Play video “Never Give Up” <https://youtu.be/41Zjh3AirjU>

Question for group: Why do you think this video was played for this group?

Activity: Complete presentations related to theme songs. Give the students an opportunity to change their theme songs if they feel as if they could have chose a better one.

Conclusion:

Individuals will be called up to present themes songs.

Transformative inquiry by School Psychologist and group members. Facilitator and group members will give constructive criticism and then ask the student if he wants to keep or change his theme song.

Then Group will discuss the project related to restorative practices and making a difference in the community.

Journal Entry:

To be determines based on the discussions of the group

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials:

Projector, video screen, Never Give Up, White board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources: *Never Give Up Mp4 video. <https://youtu.be/41Zjh3AirjU>*

Week 11 & 12

Facilitator: Jahmon L. Gibbs

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Title & Subject(s): Week 11 – Guest Speaker (no group/ assembly set-up)
Week 12 – “Wizard of Oz”

Topic or Unit of Study: Restorative Identity Work

Instructional Setting:

The group will consist of 6 to 8 members, in Room 23 on the vocational side of the high school that is utilized as a counseling center and for community college classes. The seating arrangement will consist of 6 tables configured in the shape of a horse shoe with a white board in the front along with a video screen.

STANDARDS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your State Core Curriculum/Student Achievement Standard(s):

Go to your State Office of Education Website, Core Curriculum Achievement Standards. Highlight, copy and paste the specific standard(s) this lesson will focus on (include any identifying numbers with text).

Lesson Goal(s):

*Students will be able to discuss narrative identity work
Student will know at least 5 to 7 new vocabulary words related to change
Students will understand that they are extraordinary, but it is their responsibility to tap into their extraordinary gifts.*

Lesson Objective(s):

Students will demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary words, definitions, the four different narratives in identity work – oppressive narrative, master narrative, resistance narrative and re-imagined narrative.

Party activity: We will set up a board like Jeopardy but we will call it “Jay- pardy” after the facilitator Jay Gibbs.

*The categories will be: Narratives, Definitions, Fill in the blank, and Vocabulary
Can choose the category and the point value which will range between 100 to 500 points*

The group will be divided into 2 groups- as they answer questions they will be able to go up to the table to get pizza until everyone has been served.

Conclusion:

We will discuss the Wizard of Oz and how at the end of the movie they all found out that what they have been looking for has been in them the whole time.

Facilitator will review notes and highlight accomplishments of each member in the group that have occurred.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES**Instructional Materials:**

iPod, Audio speakers, Audio clip titled “Simply Average” & Audio clip titled “Legacy” both narrated by Glen Berteau, White board and markers, Journals for each member of the group, and pencils.

Resources:

List supplementary information and/or places where you found information for the lesson in APA format