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Embodied Critical Analysis: Exploring the Impact of Systemic Oppression on Black, Public School Educators Through Supervisor Relationships

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EMBODIED CRITICAL ANALYSIS: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION ON BLACK, PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS THROUGH SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIPS

A DISSERTATION

Submitted by

Myisha R. Rodrigues

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Dedication

I dedicate this body of work to my ancestors, James Rodrigues, Esma Goodridge, and Goldburn Goodridge whose love, wisdom, and work ethic were imparted in my youth and whose legacies live on in every word typed. I dedicate this work to my grandmother, Myra Rodrigues, a Black, woman leader and clinical practitioner who understood the importance of showing me other Black women leaders that I may be positioned for greatness. I dedicate this work—this labor of love—to my mother, Juanita Rodrigues, a Black woman artist and educator who instilled pride in my Blackness, my ethnic heritage, my creative spirit, and my being. I love you, and I thank you.

Abstract

This critical qualitative dissertation aimed to highlight the experiences and amplify the voices of Black, public school educators in the Boston metro area. Grounded in critical race theory and further defined by trauma and organizational/systems theories, this study illuminated the historical foundation of education as well as the dehumanizing treatment and resilience of Black Americans. This illumination provided a socio-political context that shaped the development of institutional injustice as well as Black educator well-being. With a specific focus on Black educator experiences with supervisors in public schools, specified methodology allowed for most impactful practice leveraging creativity through artistic means.

Critical qualitative methodology explored data generation through phenomenological interviews, the selection and exploration of visual aids, and video recording. Embodied critical analysis (ECA), a method I developed and coined, included four phases where participants' beliefs, feelings, and actions were explored as well as school culture and power. Finding Black educator sustainability and thus well-being have been impacted by direct supervisors, intrapersonal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels were explored. Amidst these levels, racial trauma was present and spectrums of health remained highly subjective and non-binary.

Broader themes from findings included that: a) a critical hierarchy of needs for the Black educator must be engaged in order to secure Black educator well-being and holistic sustainability at work, b) individual and community actualization as well as cultural perpetuity are key factors that lead toward self-fulfillment and support a whole-person paradigm grounded in one's ethnic cultural identity, and c) critical reconstruction or re-

imagination of systemic levels are needed to create a conducive environment toward

Black educator well-being as well as healthier supervisor relationships. Thus, integrating

a multi-dimensional approach to healing where focus on the Black educator, the

supervisor, and the organization are interwoven serves as an integral implication for

research and practice.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> I believe that God has strategically placed me where I need to be and has
> surrounded me with people that I need to be around.
>
> –I Poem: Alicia

Working late one evening, I overheard a kindergarten student and teacher talking
in the hallway. The teacher was helping the student get ready to go home, and the student
asked the teacher if she was going home too. The teacher replied that she would not be
going home until much later—about 3–4 hours later. "Well, that's not fair," the student
replied. In a mater-of-fact way, the teacher answered, "Well, I agree, but that's the way it
is sometimes." It was 4:00 p.m.

Unfortunately, there are many educators who can identify with this story. This
level of commitment (often bearing exhaustion) extends beyond teaching staff. School
support staff as well as school administrators also find themselves going to great lengths
to help students of all ages grow and develop to live healthily, sustainably, and
successfully. Reflecting on this exchange, I wondered how often educators are supported
by direct supervisors let alone the educational system within which they work to fulfill
such a strenuous responsibility. I also wondered about the plight of Black educators in
particular, as I too—a Black educator—was working well beyond the designated end of
day. Beyond strenuous hours, Black professionals—including Black educators—endure a
gross, unique, and complex reality while navigating their Blackness at work.

The Unsolved Problem

In an op-ed, Williams (2020) identified seven prominent factors when navigating
Black trauma in predominantly white workspaces. Williams began by sharing
experiences with racialized trauma and how on a particular morning "there was a

heaviness that overtook [her] body. It was a feeling [she] wouldn't be able to shake […].

In the elevator ride up to the office it felt like [her] anxiety had somehow multiplied"

(para. 3). Williams went on to identify the importance of genuine and authentic

recognition of Black trauma, the impact of performative allyship, and the emptiness of

claims toward support of Black people and Black trauma in the workplace without true

systemic change. When describing an interaction with a white colleague, Williams shared

that "in that moment, just as it had in others, it became clear that Black trauma had no

place, no weight of relevance in white workplaces. This wouldn't be the last time Black

trauma was ignored, displaced or misunderstood" (para. 5). Taking a broader look,

Wilson (2020) wrote an article exploring the impact of racialized trauma on the brain and

body. Through conversation with field experts, Wilson named irregular sleep patterns,

under- or over- consumption of food, increased stress hormones, increased anxiety,

depression, and hypervigilance as symptoms. Additionally, Wilson identified that racial

trauma can be intergenerational, vicariously experienced, and registered as toxic stress.

Further exploring well-being or the lack thereof, the need for a whole person approach

that better supports workplace sustainability is explored in this next section.

Situating Holistic Practice at Work

Critical community psychology (CCP), a discipline that supports individual and

collective well-being, positions helpers to foster liberation and wellness within

communities, institutions, and other systemic entities. Through identifying and defining

cultural values (i.e., group vision, context, needs, and action), CCP engages well-being

on personal, relational, and collective levels (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). This theory

posits that at the personal level, health and well-being require attention paid to the whole

person from intrapersonal and interpersonal perspectives where holistic sustainability is

procured. Identifying individuals from a whole person paradigm, Hesselbein and Shrader

(2008) used a similar worldview that recognizes and creates a more comprehensive

approach to supporting one's mind, body, spirit, and heart at work. Although this

perspective has been primarily applied to community mental health and other non-profit

sectors, I believe it can and should also be applied to education as well.

  Regarding the education sector, reformers have argued over the past few centuries

for new and radical approaches to education. However, these reform movements "have

consistently been plagued by the reformers' lack of knowledge and appreciation of the

history of education" (Kretchmar, 2013, p. 1) maintaining an emphasis on the student

sans the needs of the educator providing the service. Although the broader elements of

education reform, funding, and academics have been highlighted throughout history, the

holistic sustainability (i.e., mental health and well-being) of the educator also needs to be

addressed. While scholars have focused on student support services, academics, school

models, and even student mental health, there remains a gap in exploring and improving

the experiences of educators themselves (Gilbert & Lee, 2001; Goldman, 1997; Keeton et

al., 2012; Tashman et al., 2000; Weist et al., 2006). Within this identified gap, there is

even less of a focus on educators of color—more specifically Black educators. One could

argue that given the oppressive, socio-political history of Black people in the United

States, this focus would minimally be of note as job satisfaction, attainment, retention,

and growth can be impacted by institutional inequity. Exploring approaches that address

or attempt to address well-being in the workplace, this next section will present

approaches that aim to strengthen mental health models by way of decreasing burnout for practitioners.

Engaging Sustainability in Schools

Acknowledging that some of the most comprehensive approaches that have shaped education reform neglected to provide solutions that address the sustainability of the educator, some scholars explored the impact of human service professionals' experiences with burnout. Studying burnout among a general population of mental health workers, Acker (2012) found that there is a correlation between stress associated with one's role of helper, contributing workplace variables, and emotional exhaustion. Acker also found a correlation between emotional exhaustion, role stress, and intent to quit.

Human service is a difficult profession that weighs on one's mental health and well-being ultimately affecting one's job sustainability. Although the population represented in Acker's (2012) study was not a population of educators, one could posit that burnout could happen among educators in schools with similar populations of students and that the need for models that support said traumatized populations is imperative. Therefore, putting insurmountable effort and energy into educational systems that support students to live healthier lives and not putting equitable amounts of focus on those providing said service would be an injustice. While one could also argue that integrating marginalized, intersectional identities within this context would further complicate the matter, it would however address the problem in a more comprehensive manner as the experiences of educators in historically marginalized groups carry greater nuance and need. Framing the need to focus on Black educators' holistic sustainability in this study provided rationale for exploring research that could help fill knowledge gaps

on Black educator experiences and well-being in public schools. This next section will summarize an exploration of literature presented more fully in Chapter 2.

Current Literature

Negligence toward educator well-being and holistic sustainability at large led to an exploration of the spectrum of literature that would hopefully speak to and shed light on this dynamic. Holistic sustainability, defined as the overall quality of one's work experience and its impact on one's mental and physical well-being, shaped my initial interest to learn more about the experiences of educators of color. However, as more research was identified and a synthesis of the history of education and educators of color in the United States recognized, the need to focus exclusively on Black educators became clearer. Latinx and Asian Americans have endured different historical trajectories throughout United States history including education reform; therefore, covering multiple racial demographics would have been too broad a topic.

The review of literature begins with a theoretical exploration of critical race theory (CRT) as well as trauma and organizational/systems theories. While CRT engages both the historic development and modern-day application of its principles, trauma theory grounds context for the historic and intergenerational trauma of Blacks in the United States as well as its current impact. The content then shifts providing context for the development of organizational culture, systemic levels of impact, and the ways in which white supremacy culture have shaped them all with an emphasis on the institution of education. Through the colonization of education, education reform, and desegregation of schools, Black educators have sustained a deep history of disenfranchisement. Having provided this foundation, the content then focuses on Black educator perspectives on

CRT in education with through lines of trauma-sensitive practice. Pedagogy and the holistic experience of students as well as an exploration of Black educator roles as change agents within education supported further exploration of Black educator work experience and job satisfaction. General trends in educator retention and that of Black educators more specifically completed the arc of exploration and literature review.

Through this process, gaps in current literature were identified. While studies that explored the experiences and perspectives of Black educators were isolated, much of the work focused on disparities in school communities that identify students as targets within an ecosystem of racism and institutionalized oppression. For example, Teasley (2004), who argued that solution-focused therapy should be grounded in a cultural knowledge base centered on urban school reform, noted that understanding the Black, urban experience, implementing social welfare policy, advocating for policy reform and enforcement, and developing theoretical perspectives and research are influential factors. Using a targeted therapeutic approach as a grounding force within a larger systemic shift, Teasley posited that to accurately address the issue of effective mental health support in schools, structural inadequacies need to be addressed in addition to internal and external factors that impact urban educational systems. Teasley claimed that strategies for change occur on multiple levels that engage leadership, community advocacy and involvement, parent and school collaboration, cultural competency, and praxis. Although this approach is incredibly comprehensive, this model does not include support of the educator's well-being.

Additionally, Crosby (2015) looked at trauma informed care through an ecological model consisting of micro-, meso-, macro-, and exo- systemic levels that

account for disparities in underserved populations where "more than 25% of children encounter physically, sexually, or emotionally abusive experiences that are perceived as traumatizing" (p. 223). Crosby (2015) believed in order to engage in effective trauma informed work one must:

1. Address micro-level issues by demonstrating trauma sensitivity in their interactions with students;

2. engage in meso-level interventions by collaborating with professionals within and across systems in order to provide the best care for students and referral sources for families;

3. address exo-level issues by building trauma-related knowledge within the school setting; and

4. affect the macro-level context by further engaging with researchers to evaluate school practices (pp. 227–228).

Despite these articles' compelling and highly needed arguments for expanded systems and programs within school-based mental health, they lack a concerted emphasis on gross educator sustainability as well as solutions that address it.

Moreover, the plethora of research on job satisfaction and retention proved unsatisfactory pertaining to Black educators in primary and secondary education. Gaps also existed when looking for studies that explored the experiences of Black educators in public schools in general. Grounding in critical race and trauma theories, there was some content on Black professors in academia as well as on graduate or undergraduate students; however, a phenomenological approach to exploring the successes and challenges that come with working in higher education would yield different results than

in primary and secondary education. Because the students taught at each level of education are at drastically different developmental stages, the training and therefore experiences of the educators would also prove different. While I was able to draw some content from these studies, much more was needed. Ultimately, through a review of the literature, I was able to further solidify my research purpose, focus, and question.

Research Purpose, Focus, and Question

The general topic of this study highlighted the experiences and amplified the voices of Black employees in public schools. Furthermore, interest in how their work experiences are impacted by direct supervisors in educational settings guided my research question. The existing problem that led to this topic initially came from over 15 years of working in non-profit and educational settings that afforded the direct observation of a combination of systemic and dynamic dysfunction within departments or throughout the entirety of the organization. "Heuristics[,] concerned with meanings, not measurement; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behavior" (Patton, 2015, p. 119) was a guiding practice throughout that journey. As a result, utilization of "creative synthesis" (Patton, 2015, p. 119) not only fed curiosity in others' experiences but also drove me to look for a solution in the presence of dysfunction.

Through observing and engaging with colleagues, this dysfunction seemed to contribute to a lack of holistic sustainability for employees regardless of race or gender. Often describing their experiences with supervisors as traumatic or like abusive relationships, they shared how not feeling set up for success or being given the opportunity to thrive at work due to a lack of clarity of their role and responsibility contributed to a lack of well-being. In addition to a lack of clarity, they also reported that

the departmental structures, professional development, and resources needed to do their

jobs effectively were also lacking. A marginalized identity only seemed to further

complicate some of the employees' experiences as agency, voice, position of power, and

upward mobility were diminished. Colleagues often reported that these conditions

resulted in them leaving their jobs without feeling as though they were successful in

making an impact or staying but losing motivation and burning out in the process.

  Therefore, this topic was born out of a mindful, structural, and analytical stance

that engaged years of inquiry combined with an extensive literature review driving

curiosity about supervisor dynamics and their impact on Black educator well-being.

Moreover, the integration of a heuristic and academic process gave further impetus to the

purpose of this study that explored the experiences of Black employees in public schools.

My research question was the following: How are Black professional and administrative

employees' work experiences impacted by direct supervisors in public schools? In

addition, I hoped to explore the ways relational dynamics and identity impact Black

employees' experiences as well as experiences that lay along the spectrum of healthy to

unhealthy. Lastly, I wanted to learn more about the ways the system or institution of

education and racial dynamics interplay with supervisor/supervisee relationships. It is

important to note that supervisor in this sense is defined by the person responsible for

coaching, managing, and/or developing the Black educator—the one to whom the Black

educator reports.

  Regarding the process of exploration, critical qualitative methodology was used

allowing for innovation and creativity. Embodied Critical Analysis (ECA) was therefore

created for most impactful data analysis and practice. Through ECA, data were generated

through audio recorded, phenomenological interviews, video recordings, and visual aids

that offered an alternate presentation of participants' well-being spectrums (i.e., their

healthiest and least healthy selves at work). ECA involved a four phase, five step process

that engaged thematic, voice-centered, embodied, and reconstructive analysis. First,

transcripts were reviewed for accuracy and impactful quotes selected. Then a priori

coding was implemented to uncover themes, I poems were generated to amplify

participants' voices, and observational coding and notes were gathered to assess

nonverbal communication. Throughout findings chapters, the reader will find excerpts of

these I Poems introducing various sections as well as the full text in Appendix A. Finally,

power analysis was conducted to complete and ground the critical perspective. Thus,

ECA was heavily influenced by personal narrative that shaped my practitioner, leader,

and scholar identities. The following section provides a self-reflexive exploration of this

influence.

Reflexivity Statement

Given the nature of my research purpose, focus, and question, it is imperative that

I explored my reflexive perspective accounting for implicit bias, direct experiences that

have the potential to be projected in or on my work, and to proactively recognize what is

informing my scholarship as a researcher from a subjective perspective. Patton (2015)

described reflexivity as "a particular kind of reflection grounded in the in-depth,

experiential, and interpersonal nature of qualitative inquiry" (p. 70). Qualitative

methodology requires and affords researchers the opportunity to bring self and a more

subjective perspective to their study in a way that informs and enlightens both the content

and the context for the reader. Although I wrote with greater depth in Chapter 3 about the

notion of subjective truth, knowledge, and meaning making, I will now focus on my own personal inter-subjective identity, experiences, and the ways they may inform my research. In short, I have learned that there are three main components that shape my narrative identity: (a) the arts, (b) social justice, and (c) holistic practice.

The Artist

Throughout childhood and adolescence, literary, performing, and visual arts served as my salvation, translator, and representative. I used poetry and dance to speak what I did not understand or felt but did not have the words to express. This passion—this artistic love affair—has ebbed, flowed, and intertwined in a highly impactful way shaping much of who I am. Dance allowed me to develop a strong, intuitive skillset and attuned my consciousness to nonverbal communication. This balance of artistic experiences with academic learning formed a whole-brain, embodied approach to conceptualizing challenges that led me to be equally as creative and strategic. I found peace in trusting the strength of this artistic presence and have continued to welcome its company throughout my scholarship and development of ECA, my data analysis method, found in Chapter 3. Throughout history, arts and activism have lived and breathed together. Therefore, it is no coincidence that social justice has been a major part of my narrative as well and will be discussed in the next section.

The Social Justice Advocate

Through three prior generations of women in my family (i.e., my great-grandmother, grandmother, and mother), I have learned of the importance of not only developing my own voice but also using it through leadership and scholarship for the betterment of others. Through advocating for and positioning other marginalized persons

to also claim and leverage their own voice and power, I explored approaches and theories

that would help shape and give direction to my stance—my fight—as an advocate and a

leader.

In addition to my foremothers' tenacious spirit that shaped my grit and fortitude,

my maternal grandfather was also a driving force that set an example of humility, a

strong work ethic, integrity of character, unconditional positive regard, and authentic

love. Regarding these qualities, Salzberg (2013) spoke of "a vital link between good

communication, skillful self-expression, and integrity" (p. 136). The addition of integrity

listed with the other strengths impacted me most as I believe it creates connection and

room for mindful practice. When one operates with integrity, they consider others, act

and interact with good moral character, adopt humility, and seek to remain open and

vulnerable. As a leader, practitioner, and scholar, I have found that these qualities allow

me to pause, reflect, and not operate offensively. Thus, the idea that life is not just about

the individual but also the collective—a society of people that strive to improve systems

and challenge the status quo—has long been a part of my personal and professional social

justice framework. Ultimately, seeking justice equated holistic practice where liberation

and well-being are intertwined, and the institution and the individual can be equitably

valued. This next section will further focus on well-being.

The Holistic Practitioner

Audre Lorde once said that "caring for [one]self is not self-indulgence, it is self-

preservation, and that is an act of political warfare" (Kisner, 2014, para. 5). As I have

aligned with this statement of practice, I have experienced the beauty of self-compassion,

as it is not fixed, static, nor complete. I have learned that it is an ongoing process that I

rediscover, engage in, and extend to myself with ebbs and flows. Salzberg's (2013) chapters on "Balance," "Compassion," and "Resilience" ring ever true in my spirit, as I have learned to be gentle with myself while embodying "equanimity, the voice of wisdom that helps us accept what cannot be changed in the moment and [learn] to say, 'Right now, this is it'" (Salzberg, 2013, p. 24).

Thus, my spirituality, born out of a tradition of social justice, provided the launching pad for what later became my exploration and redefinition of faith and religion. Striving for "full hearted moment[s] of mindfulness and rest, reminding [myself] that life fluctuates and so do [I]" (Salzberg, 2013, p. 24), this holistic and spiritual element of my life has served as an undergird shaping my understanding of a higher power, myself as a multi-dimensional being, and the balance I seek between achievement and self-care. Ultimately, it is this balance that I hope to extend to others through my work as a leader, practitioner, and scholar.

Reflexive Summary

As I explored elements of my narrative identity, I recognized various identifiers fall within broader categories of privilege and non-privilege. As a Black, female scholar I have been positioned to notice, observe, and analyze oppressive, marginalizing, and privileged behavior. I looked for ways in which voice is used and represented by my interviewees as well as how I represented my own voice during the research process. There were inevitable advantages and disadvantages to being an insider to my participants' racial group (and possible gender) as I also racially identify as a Black, cis gender woman. I took great care during my interviews to not over identify or become too familiar or close with my interviewees. This ensured that I remained empathically neutral

(Josselson, 2013). Leaving judgments and assumptions at the proverbial door, I approached each interview recognizing that although I may have had professional experiences similar my participants', I could not color my interpretation of their experiences with mine.

Given that my primary role as interviewer was prominent, I was careful to not lean too heavily on my non-privileged identity in an effort to connect as a cultural insider in order to nullify the privilege inherent in my role or work experience. Given the misrepresentation of racial minorities' stories and voice in research as well as the historical exploitation of their marginalized status in unethical and unlawful ways (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008), I managed and explored any discomfort I could have felt resulting from being positioned with power if participant skepticism arose. In short, this experience was met with great complexity and required rigorous exploration with effective accountability.

Dissertation Overview

Formed by my ethnic, racial, spiritual, and creative life experience, my narrative identity was founded on moral integrity that shaped this research topic, purpose, and question. A review of the literature situated theories that grounded this topic as well as identified gaps in current research. Continuing to refine a self-reflexive stance through data collection and analysis, ECA provided enlightening moments of insight that enhanced and informed an exploration of findings. Each findings chapter presented ECA's components (i.e., beliefs, feelings, actions, culture, and power). The discussion synthesized findings with a review of high-level themes, implications for research and practice via the intersectional stages of change (ISC) framework, methodological

reflection, and considerations for future research that align with the complexity of the topic as well as the depth of work.

It is important to note that the ISC framework is a framework I developed and coined prior to this study. The empirical knowledge gained from this research experience (as well as doctoral course work) further informed its content. Drawing me to education, I originally wanted to serve as a liaison between teachers and school counselors to help close the divide between academics and students' socioemotional well-being, skills development, and trauma-informed practice. My mission was to increase mutual understanding so that wraparound services for students could truly be integrated— enabling multidimensional student development. I had a passion for healing and developing individuals through clinical practice as well as providing professional development via workshop facilitation. My passion grew as healing individuals later included healing organizations. Driving to understand the ways administrative and operational functioning intermingle with the internal dynamic functioning of a team was part of that process. The goal was and is to learn to develop both all while prioritizing employee health and well-being. Thus, this dissertation process served to further that drive and stretch my conceptualization of my personal mission and vision.

Through a spectrum of discourse from peer reviewed journals on Black racial identity, opinion-based editorials, and statements published by journalistic entities, arguments for the capitalization of Black as a racial group are vast, impassioned, and supportive of this movement (Alfonso, 2020; Eligon, 2020; Endale, 2018; Neville & Cross, 2017; Tharps, 2014; Thúy Nguyễn & Pendleton, 2021; Wallerstein, 1987; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). According to Wong (2020), capitalizing Black represents "an essential

and shared sense of history, identity and community among people who identify as Black, including those in the African diaspora and within Africa[, t]he lowercase black is a color, not a person" (p. 1). Therefore, throughout this dissertation, Black—a racial, demographic group identifying persons of African heritage—will be capitalized to align with a critical stance that centers and foregrounds historically oppressed groups. Whereas, white (i.e., a racial group identifying persons of Anglo heritage) will be lowercase in order to background oppressive power and privilege. Additionally, at the beginning of each chapter, you will find epigraphs that represent sections of I Poems that resonated with participants and were identified during member checking (further discussed in Chapter 3).

Ultimately, the intentional integration of a critical and holistic stance served to honor decolonizing research methods and challenge the status quo. Developing and using ECA sought to honor Black bodies that have historically been and are currently being murdered, ignored, and oppressed. Therefore, I am calling out to and making space for the bodies, minds, and spirits of my ancestors, my family, my colleagues, and myself. This is my stance against racialized, inter-generational trauma that hopefully pushed against its enduring impact; this is my call to action. In the next chapter, a review of the literature will present epistemological and substantive theory, socio-political and historical context, and research from scholars that explore aspects of this dissertation topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I think that's the point.
When I'm my authentic self, I celebrate myself more.
I'm happy to be myself as a Black woman.

–I Poem: Brianna

The topic of this dissertation aimed to highlight the experiences and amplify the voices of Black employees in public schools. Interest in direct supervisors' impact on Black employees' work experiences was strengthened through the exploration and syntheses of theoretical frameworks and studies that explored racism, education, and systemic structures in the United States. Therefore, the structure of this literature review begins with CRT which also serves as the epistemological framing with which trauma theory and organizational theory are integrated. Next, these theoretical stances illuminate the way organizational structure and culture create a context within which Black educators can be disenfranchised. This organizational context highlights systemic influences that may shape Black employees' experiences with their supervisors. In addition, an analysis of systemic structures grounded in the historical foundation of education reform provide a socio-political context that shaped the development of institutional injustice in education. Studies that explore general work experiences—including education—with a focus on that of Black educators will commence. To have a clear perspective on the epistemological framework and theories informing this discourse, grounding theories be will explored in this next section. Figure 1 presents an outline of the main topics covered in this chapter as well as their interconnectedness.

Figure 1

Outline of Literature Review Topics
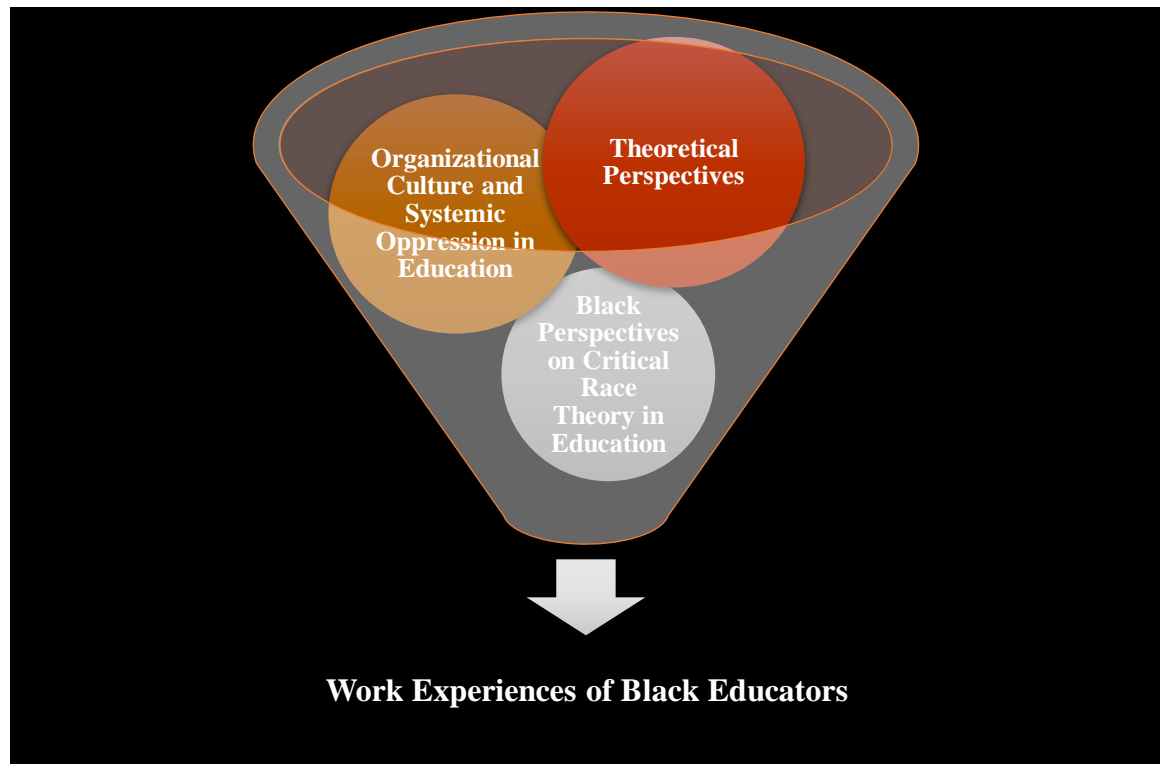
Grounding Critical Race Theory and Trauma Theory

CRT, trauma theory, and organizational theory are reviewed in this section. CRT is explored first and serves as the epistemological and theoretical foundation. Next, integrating trauma theory and CRT situates facets of trauma theory and later identifies and explores historic racialized trauma and the impact of intergenerational trauma on Black people in the United States—more specifically in schools. Lastly, a critical perspective is applied to a presentation of organizational culture and systems theories. In order to situate the prevalence and impact of white supremacy culture in schools, CRT also provides context for the supervisor relationship.

Critical Race Theory

This section will provide a brief yet comprehensive review of the history and development of CRT as a broader epistemological body of knowledge. Beginning with critical theory (CT), CRT spans space and time as critical legal studies (CLS) and the Civil Rights Movement formed its inception. Exploring the development of CRT, content will then review modern applications of the theory and its maturation over time.

The History and Aim of CRT

CT, a broader philosophy from which CRT later developed, positioned critical psychologists to challenge and dismantle the status quo (Fox et al., 2009). Critical theorists believed (and still believe) that this status quo was established by dominant, western, white, male ideologies and was grounded on an aim of "being agents of social change, not agents of social control" (Fox et al., 2009, p. 4). Therefore, critical psychologists believe in promoting equitable social welfare for marginalized groups that will not only benefit communities but also society at large. Fox et al. provided discourse on the "institutionalization" of the field of psychology naming that "dominant cultural, economic, and political institutions exhibit two fundamental problems especially relevant to the field: they misdirect efforts to live a fulfilling life, and they foster inequality and oppression" (pp. 3–4). Thus, CT supports the disruption of power and privilege that white, dominant ideology uses to control marginalized groups across the board, and psychology is no exception.

From this stance, more specified theoretical foci on race, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic class were born. With a specific emphasis on race, Simba (2021) acknowledged the contributors to CRT given impetus by the Civil Rights

era (i.e., Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Charles Lawrence, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Alan

David Freeman). They set out to dismantle dominant white ideology permeating

institutions, systems, policy, laws and by-laws, cultural norms, and everyday interactions

with a specific focus on the ways in which race was a demoralizing factor (Simba, 2021).

CRT, a meta-theoretical approach to research, pushed against the farcical notion of

equality and inclusion with beliefs in genuine, authentic, tangible, and realistic equitable

justice that bypass the "amelioration" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 156) of change

and aggressively seeks to transform the discriminative foundation on which the United

States infrastructure was built.

Crenshaw (2010, 2017), an eminent originator and author of CRT, wrote a

comprehensive discourse on its historical underpinnings, official establishment, and post-

racial evolution. Although CT provided the broader foundation for CRT to develop,

Crenshaw explained that CRT actually developed out of the pedagogical philosophy of

CLS more directly. Derived from the civil rights movement, CLS gave birth to a

generation of budding scholars in the 1970s and 1980s who saw their academic

institutions as prime mesosystems to challenge the status quo beyond moderate, liberal

ideals of colorblind equality. This educational, advocacy movement eventually stretched

beyond university walls to a convening of scholars—giving birth to CRT as it is currently

known (Crenshaw, 2010).

CRT and Modern Culture

In applying CRT to present day racial politics (e.g., post-racial ideology),

Crenshaw (2010, 2017) argued that the critical race movement adopted some elements of

a former colorblind neoliberal movement despite identifying prejudice and discriminatory

institutional constructs. This movement ended with an absence of positionality that directly opposed previous racial constructs restricting marginalized groups (Crenshaw, 2010, 2017). Similar to Bell's (1995) position that dismantling racism in the United States is more cyclical then progressive, Crenshaw (2010, 2017) believed that instead of actively fighting to dismantle said constructs, modern day radicals adopted working around them toward the advancement of marginalized groups—a seemingly more amenable approach. Crenshaw (2010) shared that it nullifies one's ability to even acknowledge racial difference let alone acknowledge discrimination's role in oppression and injustice. As the systemic impact of hegemonic practices was further analyzed and challenged, CRT further developed.

Discussing the ways in which radical reform and identity impact the complexity of experiences given impetus by said hegemonic practices, intersectionality—coined and created by Crenshaw (1995)—is grounded in the understanding that political systems and institutional structures created a society in which people of marginalized racial identity struggle more than others. Intersectionality, central to CRT, was further developed and reviewed by Cho et al. (2013), Cooper (2016), and Crenshaw (1995) who highlighted the complex nature of multiple marginalized identities encountering inter-relational and institutional levels of discrimination that impede one's access to resources as well as one's safety. It is the very presence of more than one marginalized identity that contributes to this complicated and oppressed existence; therefore, rightly positioning the aforementioned authors' arguments for the advancement of rights.

Intersectionality is an important concept to note as the experiences of Black educators are not one dimensional and are often further complicated by multiple identities

intersecting and impacting experiences (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, profession, religion,

etc.). Thus, CT created the space for CRT to revolutionize the way academics not only

perceived and understood the world within which they live but also to dare, challenge,

and ideally change the very fabric of this grounding foundation. It is this radical approach

that set the stage for CRT to grow, impacting the development and progression of

collaborative praxis, pedagogy, methodology, and restructuring of society. Moreover, this

impact also shaped our understanding and re-defining of roles, norms, and experiences.

Before engaging further in the development of the ways in which CRT transformed

education, an exploration of trauma theory and the impact the traumatic enslavement of

Africans and continued oppression thereafter on Black Americans will follow.

Trauma Theory

Trauma theory, as described by Bloom (2013a), is the resulting evolution of

psychological discovery that accounts for an "integrative framework for mind, body, soul

[and] all human systems—individual, organizational, social, Cartesian mind/body split,

developmental continuity child to adult, [and] social determinants of health" (p. 24).

Bloom (2013a) wrote that trauma theory seeks to understand human functioning through

thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and physical sensations that when integrated in healthy

ways produce optimal well-being and functioning. However, when these facets are not

integrated well, as a result of experiential trauma, people ultimately struggle to function

effectively—impacting their social life, personal relationships, work, and school as well

as their physical, spiritual, and mental health.

Bloom's theory is based heavily on Judith Herman's (1992) discourse on trauma

in *Trauma and Recovery*. Herman's book serves as one of the foundational literary

sources for comprehensive theory on trauma and how to heal from traumatic experiences.

Herman (1998), providing discourse on her own work that explored the experience of

trauma recovery, identified three components to the recovery process: "establishing

safety, retelling the story of the traumatic event, and reconnecting with others" (p. 145).

These three steps, albeit seemingly simple, can be increasingly nuanced as the level of the

clients' trauma increases in complexity.

Building on Herman's influence, Bloom conducted a series of studies and wrote a

series of books and reviews that built on trauma theory itself. Bloom's (2007, 2008,

2010) reviews highlighted strong discourse on trauma and culture, biology, etiology, and

narrative exploration of its influence. In accordance with Bloom (2013a), Maslow &

Lewis (1987) argued that people will struggle to function optimally without physical and

psychological safety as both forms of safety are basic human needs. If left unaccounted

for, individual or group reenactment of trauma will occur (i.e., where unresolved

traumatic grief causes individuals to repeat and adopt unhealthy aspects of traumatic

experiences) creating a cyclical process of re-traumatization and fostering an unsafe

environment in community and organizational culture (Bloom & Farragher, 2010).

Reflecting on Bloom's (2013a) and Herman's (1992) concepts for establishing safety, a

direct connection can be drawn to generations of unresolved trauma experienced within

cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. One could then argue that applying a trauma-informed

approach not only to support Black educators that have endured trauma, but also

organizational theory and practice would help create safety for employees.

Speaking to the complex, multidimensional understanding of the ways traumatic

experiences can impact people regardless of setting or demographic, the aforementioned

authors' contributions have laid the foundation for as well as shaped how individual and

group trauma are conceptualized within family, community, and organizational contexts.

Highlighting the historical impact of intergenerational, racial enslavement and

discrimination on Black American's well-being, this next section will integrate tenants of

CRT and explore the connection between Black American's history of racism in the

United States and its intersection with trauma—as this historical context provides

framing for the institutional structure that likely shapes interpersonal supervisor dynamics

that may or may not shape Black educators' experiences.

Historic Racism and Trauma Theory

Despite the identified, general gap in research on the effect institutionalized

racism has had on Black Americans, Danzer et al. (2016) provided a literature review and

synthesis of the historical factors that influence trauma in the Black American

community. Danzer et al. recognized that analyzing a group as a whole can detract from

its members' individuality. Yet, they also recognized that the lack of collective research

that contributes to praxis regarding that population is dismal, and their work is helping to

close that gap. Therefore, Danzer et al. wrote that historical, racialized trauma for Black

Americans has four assumptions: (a) trauma has impacted surviving populations, (b)

traumatic exposure has been continuous and prolonged, (c) traumatic experiences are

shared across and throughout the population, and (d) there is a generational impact of

developmental alterations from trauma. Danzer et al. also provided a thorough review of

the traumatic impact racism has had on socio-economic risk factors, police abuses, and

trauma symptoms such as hypervigilance, re-creation, and learned helplessness for both

Black American men and women. Despite these disparities and their effects, resilience

and positive racial identity, connection to community and family, and capacity for

hope/spiritual connection were identified as strengths. Ultimately, Danzer et al.

concluded that white psychologists need to push past white fragility and guilt and address

these issues in counseling. If not, they run the risk of displaying "a projection of

posttraumatic avoidance, as a historical trauma with the power to silence its survivors—

[Black Americans]" (Danzer, et al., 2016, p. 366). This argument, one could posit, could

also be applied to educational settings—as white supervisors and coaches of Black

employees in public schools could also benefit from addressing the aforementioned

fragility and guilt having the potential to create a safe space where posttraumatic

avoidance and historical trauma move toward healing and not perpetuation in public

schools.

At this juncture, acknowledging the impact authoritarian roles can have on

relational dynamics is necessary. Historically, alignment to power and authority (i.e., the

oppressor) have overpowered the need of the recipient (i.e., the oppressed). For example,

Milgram (1963) conducted an infamous study where participants were split into groups

(i.e., one administered independent electric shocks and the other received shocks based

on their answers). With each answer, the first group with authority was instructed to

administer a higher level of shock toward an unbearable intensity. It was found that the

majority of participants in the shock giving group succumbed to greater perceived

institutional pressure and pushed past their moral compass that would have naturally led

them to stop (Milgram, 1963). One could argue this same influence is at play in our

greater society within groups having privilege against individuals of historically

marginalized identity. It is this same dynamic that has the potential to influence

supervisor relational dynamics—should the supervisor align with a dysfunctional use of power. Despite Black supervisees' attempts to amplify their voices against injustice, well intentioned supervisors may find themselves succumbing to greater perceived institutional pressure to design against the marginalized toward inequityand push past their own moral compass.

With a continued look at power and racism's impact on American racial groups, Graff (2011) reviewed the resulting shame experienced predominantly by Black Americans and second by white Americans. Graff contended that Black Americans experience shame from being mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually denied human rights through enslavement, which speaks to the multi-dimensional impact trauma can have on individuals as shame is a known resulting factor (Bloom, 2013b). This shame, unresolved and ever present, was also due to Jim Crow laws and continued forms of institutionalized, modern racism that impact all facets of life—including education (Graff, 2011). Graff also noted that white Americans, although privy to guilt, can feel collective and individual shame for the atrocities committed as continued action occurs. Ultimately, it is this resurgence of shame on both parties that makes it incredibly difficult to relieve such heavy and collective inter-generational weight of continued racialized harm in American society.

Axiotou (2008) provided one solution addressing the shame of the African diaspora. In her thesis, she reviewed four African authors' publications that boldly aim to retell the story of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, amplifying voices that have been historically silenced. Axiotou argued that the very act of these African authors putting pen to paper on a forgotten or washed over topic is an act of resistance in and of itself.

"By bringing forth the excluded, the marginal, 'the othered' *in place* of the dominant, […] they raise the impossible, and yet imperative, question of *justice* towards the 'others' [(i.e., white dominant groups)" (Axiotou, 2008, p. ix). Additionally, Smithers' (2012) discourse on the breeding of enslaved Africans, Onwuachi-Willig's (2016) case study that explored Emmett Till's murder and its impact on trauma in the Black community, and Winter's (2007) discourse on asset-based versus affect-based reparations in response to systemic enslavement of Africans and the generational disparities produced thereafter all show how African people and their American descendants have proven to be innovative, creative, and resilient beyond measure.

Obourn's (2005) linguistic analysis of Audre Lorde's artistic use of the intersectional, traumatic experiences of marginalized groups through poetry as well as Gardullo's (2007) account of actors and artists in the 1930's both took the historical trauma of African enslavement and retold this atrocity for its victims' resilience and power. Despite the lasting impact of institutionalized racism in the United States, a breeding ground for oppression that led to generations of trauma experienced, the steadfast perseverance embodied by the African diaspora positioned them to fight for survival, to thrive, and to live on. Having looked at the ways Black American racial history has sustained traumatic impact, current accounts identifying racialized trauma's impact on Black Americans will be explored.

The Current Impact of Historic, Racialized Trauma on Black Children

"Giving name to the nameless is a linguistically traumatic process. […] It is a controlled, non-pathological, and brilliant use of language to capture the experience of living in a 'traumatic' subject position" (Obourn, 2005, pp. 226, 277). Having reviewed

trauma theory, Onwuachi-Willig (2016) provided an example of a theoretical derivative

that conceptualized the intersection of racism and trauma with her presentation of cultural

trauma theory. Onwuachi-Willig found that when cultural norms are abruptly disrupted or

harmful acts repeated and affirmed publicly, trauma results giving language and name to

the otherwise nameless subjective. Additionally, cultural betrayal trauma theory is

another derivative that Gómez (2019) wrote uses a foundation of traditional trauma

theory predicting symptoms of the community that result from the unique interplay of

racialized trauma and culture.

Looking at cultural trauma's impact on urban school children, Thompson and

Massat (2005) completed a descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional research design that

examined violence, PTSD, academic achievement, and behavior of 110 Black American,

urban school children in four Chicago public schools. They found that exposure to

violence was more positively correlated to challenging behavior in students than

academic performance; however, family violence and witnessing violence did approach

significance (Thompson & Massat, 2005). Thompson and Massat also found that

challenging behavior was significantly associated with post-traumatic stress disorder,

family violence, and witnessing violence. These findings approached statistical

significance with community violence exposure. Ultimately, one might argue that the

roots of said violence stem from the generational, traumatic impact of enslavement and

continued institutional oppression of Blacks in the United States.

While complex trauma (i.e., the experience of more than one adverse experience

with emotional, physical, verbal, or sexual abuse, traumatic loss, natural disaster,

etcetera) in childhood was found by Cloitre et al. (2009) to influence increasing symptom

complexity in adults, Goodman and West-Olatunji (2010) went a step further

conceptualizing a traumatic stress theory that served as an ecosystemic approach helping

to address systemic oppression and reverse the effects of hegemonic education. Goodman

and West-Olatunji found that their approach created space for healing through

recognition of one's cultural identity by exploring and understanding the harmful impact

of systemic oppression and recreating a new narrative through communal culture sharing.

Collectively, Thompson and Massat (2005), Cloitre et al. (2009), and Goodman

and West-Olatunji (2010) all drew connections between academic outcomes, unhealthy

interconnectedness in school communities, and exposure to types of trauma (i.e.,

domestic and community violence) with positive or near positive correlation. Given the

generational impact of traumatic, racialized experiences on children, one could argue this

impact could begin with Black adults in their formative years and develop over time as

they become working professionals. Highlighting and expounding upon Goodman and

West-Olatunji's point that reforming the system would not only impact student

performance but also Black educator experiences, this next section will explore the

impact of trauma on Black adults.

The Current Impact of Historic, Racialized Trauma on Black Adults

With a specific focus on traumatic experiences on Black adults in the United

States, Alim et al. (2006) reviewed literature addressing trauma exposure, prevalence,

and expression of PTSD. Through an exploration of various risk factors, Alim et al.

found that there was increased risk of PTSD for Black American war veterans, women of

low socio-economic status, and adolescents living in high crime, urban areas. Utsey and

Constantine (2008) also found positive results when looking at the effects the intersection of racism and poverty have on Blacks Americans.

Degruy-Leary (2017) provided an in depth look at race in the United States through her book, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*. Degruy-Leary, a clinical psychologist, leveraged an innovative yet affirming perspective on institutionalized racism in the United States attributing current ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving in the Black American community as symptoms of the aforementioned syndrome. Taking Dr. Degruy-Leary's work further, Menakem (2017) discussed not only the historic and intergenerational trauma of both white and Black people but also the ways in which this meta-physical knowing is literally embodied, shared, and impacted upon each other through their physical bodies. Menakem (2017) spoke not only for the need to understand this narrative and its impact but also to engage in healing grounded in mind-body practice. Scholars striving to close this research and knowledge gap have made their contributions through quantitative and qualitative research methods with studies focused on Black American, traumatic experiences and/or factors that contribute to symptoms like PTSD, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses (Friedman & Paradis, 2002; Nobles et al., 2016; Nugent et al., 2012; Ricks, 2018). Further supporting Bloom's (2013b) multi-dimensional framework on trauma's impact on the mind, body, and spirit, these studies show the intersectional nature of institutional oppression and its impact on one's health and quality of life.

When looking at the effects systemic oppression can have on Black Americans in the workplace, McCluney et al. (2017) found that event systems theory explained symptoms of post-traumatic stress, depression, and decreased physical health from

racialized traumatic events (e.g., police brutality and the homicide of Black men and women). Kohli (2009) explored through qualitative interviews the cyclical impact racism in education can have on students and teachers of color. Although one might think one's workplace should provide respite, education as a broader systemic institution has also been tainted by discrimination and injustice towards marginalized persons of intersectional, cultural identity. As a potential answer to this challenge, McGee and Stovall (2015) presented the notion that racialized trauma exists in Black American student populations and in order to truly utilize CRT in these instances, institutions need to implement radical healing with a focus on mental health and holistic education as a means of combating the racial inequities present in the educational system which I would argue would benefit Black educators as well.

Due to racism's effect on Black communities in the United States, it is fair to say the enslavement of and continued discrimination against Black Americans have immensely impacted the well-being (i.e., the physical, mental, and social health) of this population. Moreover, the identified traumatic, racialized experiences are not only present in one's personal life but also their professional environment. Bloom's sanctuary model (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008; Esaki et al., 2013) provided a healthy organizational alternative based on constructivist-developmental theory, burnout theory, systems theory, and valuation theory of organizational change to four levels of individual, interpersonal, organizational, and community activities and outcomes. Esaki et al. argued that in order to provide effective care for patients who have experienced trauma, the systems and the organizations providing said service need to be trauma informed also creating a healthier environment for those providing the care. I would argue that this organizational theory

could be highly influential in any number of environments where various forms of trauma impact persons within—including schools. This next section will explore two theories that situate organizational culture and systemic levels of impact.

Organizational Culture and Systemic Oppression: A Theoretical Perspective

Reviewing the components of organizational culture and systemic levels of functioning, this section will provide theoretical context that grounds future exploration of the school environment further situating the dynamic between supervisor and supervisee. While Schein (2017) provided content exploring norms, values, and the essential heartbeat of an organization, Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model will help situate organizational culture within a broader systemic context that funnels toward individual experience. As was established in the beginning of this chapter, CRT will serve as a grounding perspective through both theories presented.

Bronfenbrenner's Systemic Levels and Oppression

Fox et al. (2009) claimed that psychology has been institutionalized by hegemony (i.e., leadership or dominance by one country or social group over others) giving impetus to inequality and oppression in the field. These claims can also be applied to education— across level and stage—leading psychology and education to share a unifying factor that is a system shaped by hegemonic influence. Bronfenbrenner (1994) developed an ecological model of human development in which five levels exist (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, marcosystem, and chronosystem). Bronfenbrenner stated two propositions:

> Human development takes place through processes of progressively more
>
> complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological

human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate

environment and the form, power, content, and direction of the proximal

processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the

characteristics of the developing person; of the environment[;…] and the nature of

the developmental outcomes under consideration. (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 38)

Bronfenbrenner noted that these propositions are interdependent and thus creating an

experience for the individual where each of the levels and the people positioned at each

level interreact but may not fully impact each other.

This model was centered on the developmental experiences of children. The

effects of proximal processes were found to be more impactful than factors in the

environmental context. However, I would not only argue that this could apply to adults

but also that the environmental context (while more distal) shapes experiences that are

more proximal. For example, the microsystem (i.e., "a pattern of activities, social roles,

and interpersonal relations experienced" by the individual) (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39)

could be impacted by the mesosystem where the components listed in the microsystem

interact impacting each other. While the exosystem (i.e., interactions between settings in

the mesosystem that indirectly influence the immediate setting of the individual) excludes

the individual directly, this level can still impact the level prior as seen with the systemic

impact of institutionalized racism on Black Americans. Lastly, comprised of a synthesis

of the aforementioned systemic levels, the macrosystem is "characteristic of a given

culture […] with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, [and]

customs […] that are embedded in each of these broader systems" (Bronfenbrenner,

1994, p. 40). When accounting for the interaction of CRT, trauma theory, and one's

experience of these systems over time (i.e., the chronosystem), it is impossible to neglect

the longitudinal impact as well as the opportunity for more distal levels to shape the

proximal levels when situating the Black educator as the individual. Taking this stance is,

therefore, acknowledging CRT's perspective on oppression being systemic while

affirming the presence of historic, intergenerational trauma that resulted from

institutionalized racism. With a closer look at the macrosystemic level, this next section

will explore culture.

Organizational Culture and Hegemonic Norms

Schein (2017) defined general organizational culture through an exploration of an

organization's structure. In addition to exploring the organic and evolutionary nature of

organizational culture, Schein also identified the impact of said culture on new and

veteran members as an indoctrination of sorts. Schein believed that organizational

identity not only shapes learning as group members come to understand purpose, vision,

and mission but it also shapes values, beliefs, feelings, and daily activities (further

supporting the proposed interconnection of Bronfenbrenner's systemic levels). This text

also highlights factors that contribute to the establishment of behavioral norms.

Additionally, Schein argued that the beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of a collective group

provide the structural DNA of the group's culture.

With a more in-depth look at organizational culture's components, Schein

identified artifacts (i.e., visible, feelable structures and processes, and difficult to decipher

observed behavior), espoused beliefs and values (i.e., ideals, goals, and aspirations,

ideologies, and rationalizations), and basic underlying assumptions (i.e., unconscious,

taken-for-granted beliefs and values) as three levels therein. Schein also listed categories

from which one can observe aspects of the organization. These categories include observed behavioral regularities when people interact, climate, formal rituals and celebrations, espoused values, formal philosophy, group norms, rules of the game, identity and image of self, embedded skills, habits of thinking, mental models, linguistic paradigms, shared meanings, and "root metaphors" or integrating symbols (Schein, 2017, pp. 3–5).

Moreover, Schein provided a theoretical framework of organizational culture that can serve as the foundation for understanding the development of racism in education at large. Reflecting on the categories of organizational culture and the components of education (i.e., classroom culture and structure, reciting the pledge of allegiance, prioritized subjects/curriculum like math and science, the lack of colloquial language used in school, and dress code including the way one wears their hair), there is a direct through line that outlines the ways the educational system was not created for persons of non-Anglo heritage. For example, prior to desegregation, Black students previously attended school in environments that not only understood but also catered to their Black cultural identity through valuing African heritage and cultural norms. After desegregation, Black students suffered as school culture was foreign—grounded in white cultural norms. This context is paramount as it provides a frame for the system that has shaped Black educator experiences in the United States discussed later in this chapter. Building off CRT, trauma theory, and organizational/systemic theory respectively, these next two sections will provide a more in-depth review of the ways educational systems shaped a culture formed out of hegemonic beliefs, feelings, and actions leaving marginalized groups disenfranchised.

Shaping the Institution: Organizational Culture and Systemic Oppression in

Education

Exploring racism and United States history within the context of education, this

section situates education reform, colonization through education, and the desegregation

of schools. This brief history is important as it frames context for systemic levels of

educational oppression and the factors that influenced white supremacy within the

broader culture of the institution of education over time. While the section on education

reform presents educational paradigms that impact the chronosystem, the other topics

provide color and context for the exo- and mesosystemic levels.

History of Education Reform and the Connecting Through Line of Oppression

Beginning with an overview of the development of broader educational systems

and structures, Kretchmar (2013) provided a comprehensive summary of the phases of

education reform in the United States by emphasizing that curriculum development,

diversity and equity, and the role of government are themes that have characterized

specific periods of reform threading throughout each phase. Kretchmar identified four

movements. The first was the Common School Movement (early mid-19th century),

characterized by unifying the school experience nationally as regions, states, and colonies

all functioned differently when it came to educating children. The second was the

Progressive Education Era (1880-1930). Given impetus by the Civil War and

Reconstruction, this period had two opposing views; one perspective focused more on

core subjects while the other on vocational skillset (Kretchmar, 2013). The core subject

perspective developed into a more holistic school of thought led by John Dewey that

looked at educating and supporting the whole child, while Edward L. Thorndike had a

more scientific and administrative approach. The latter carried greater strength and movement (Kretchmar, 2013).

It is important to note here that these first few educational movements did not involve Black students or educators, nor were they designed with Black/African culture in mind. During the early mid-19th century, Black Americans were enslaved, viewed as subhuman, and without rights. Despite the shift from enslavement to emancipation, Black people were still considered property during Reconstruction, continued to suffer through indentured servitude, and were concerned mostly with survival. While some were "skilled workers such as midwives, seamstresses, some female, and some male house servants, […] carpenters, blacksmiths, and drivers," (Dusinberre, 2011, p. 142) many lacked the power and agency to escape death by the hands of their masters let alone learn to read and/or write. Ultimately, "post-Reconstruction politics and 'separate but equal' educational policies" (Bertocchi & Dimico, 2014, p. 207) continued to negatively impact the education gap between Black and white Americans.

Despite this disenfranchisement of Black Americans, there was a third transition, as the Progressive Era then led to a reform period called The Equity Reform Movement of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s (Kretchmar, 2013). Equity in schools was a major focus during the civil rights era as desegregation of schools and busing children in urban neighborhoods to more affluent communities to attend suburban schools marked great controversy and chaos. Shortly thereafter, Kretchmar identified that the focus on academic excellence and outcomes was pushed to the foreground and a fourth period was born—The Standards-Based Reform Movement. This movement was also characterized by two opposing views: (a) that family and community empowerment was the key to

success and (b) that a standardized curriculum with centralized authority and

accountability were required for effective educational practice (Kretchmar, 2013). It is at

this stage one could question whose centralized authority was guiding this practice and

by which standard was curriculum being developed? Although Black students were then

legally able to attend school and Black educators were employed, the impact that

standardizing curriculum (guided and shaped by white cultural norms) had on Black

academic and professional growth was abysmal. Thus, one could propose that white

supremacist ideals, culture, and norms were at the forefront of the movements presented.

   Throughout the past few centuries, education reformers have argued for new and

radical approaches to education. Meanwhile, capitalism was rampant as "schools have

been shaped to assimilate immigrants, prepare students for the workforce, redistribute

wealth, and help the United States compete in a global economy" (Kretchmar, 2013, p.

1). None of which, I would argue, seem to focus directly on what is best for the student or

the employees of said schools from an equitable and socially just perspective. "Given the

breadth of our education crisis, we have to start asking not whether a particular reform

program is too radical, but rather whether it is radical enough" (Bolick, 2017, p. 19). If

we were to re-design the margins within education reform, the United States government

would more likely reallocate funding for public schools in underserved communities.

These communities, highly populated with historically marginalized people, would then

receive equitable resource allocation for the public (i.e., the people) which would serve

the public good, is the public good, and ultimately provide "a path to opportunity and

success, a guarantor of the promises of being a free people, and a great social equalizer"

(Ramey, 2013, p. 1260).

Given the historical impact of racism in this country, the ways in which white supremacist culture shaped the history of education reform, and its structural and cultural components, Schein's (2017) organizational framework shapes and highlights a cultural context for understanding Black employees' experiences in education while a critical stance on Bronfenbrenner's model (1994) accounts for the systemic. Within this context, Schein's framework also serves as a cognitive-behavioral, organizational framework of sorts where schema about rights to education, how education should be structured, and who is perceived as intellectually apt to learn, teach, and lead are shaped by a hegemonic moral compass. Continuing with this topic, the next section provides a more specific focus on the Equity Reform Movement and the ways in which racial traumatization and dominant white ideology have impacted education through colonization and desegregation.

Colonization, Desegregation, and Their Impact on Education

Having set a brief historical context for the development of education through reform and the establishment of progressive paradigms, this next section will focus on culture and the direct impact movements and their ensuing policy change had on education and Black educator experiences. Thus, colonization and the violent removal of African culture from Black Americans will be discussed as well as school desegregation and its impact. This focus will further situate CRT as well as trauma and organizational/systems theories within this context.

Colonization and Deculturalization

Looking specifically at the dynamic impact of colonization on education, Spring (2016) presented discourse on the ways in which education in the United States colonized

and "deculturalized" racial minorities that were brought here against their will as well as those who immigrated here hoping for new opportunity. Spring also noted that this deculturalization forcibly shaped the experiences marginalized racial groups encountered wherein the cultures that defined their ethnic identities were shattered in an effort to forcefully impose dominant white ideology on these groups. This process was more than merely a shift but a traumatic elimination of the cultural practices they knew and loved. Often, when racial minorities, Black persons in particular, expressed racial cultural pride, they were chastised, made fun of, or worse beaten or killed. Having presented the ways in which United States history, policy, and practice impacted education and those within the institution, Spring named a broadening of the educational gap between white and Black Americans that positioned Black students as well as educators toward achievement against a multitude of odds.

Cubberley (1919) presented an extensive discourse on the European origins of education. This, I would currently argue, is foundational and continues to be mainstream. Presenting three approaches to organizational school culture, Horn (2002) identified: (a) a bureaucratic approach with a focus on established hierarchy, control, authoritarian systems and order; (b) a progressive approach that centered the student experience and was more democratic; and (c) an essentialist approach that espoused a structure led by the teacher with greater discipline. While there are public school systems in which a progressive approach to culture remains, most tend to adopt bureaucratic hierarchy with discipline at its core in the name of being student centered. Horn also discussed the ways CRT and liberation theory from Paulo Freire challenged the very foundation on which education was built—creating space for curriculum that urges students as well as

educators to deepen critical consciousness by analyzing values and philosophy that shape

curriculum and other educational content.

Desegregation of Schools and Its Impact on Education

Horn (2002) also wrote at great length on the influence of the 1950s, 1960s, and

1970s. Identifying how the beginning of the journey toward educational equity began in

1954 with the infamous case involving *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, Horn

provided discourse on the Supreme Court ruling that segregated schooling was

unconstitutional and discriminatory thus challenging the 14th Amendment. Ultimately,

the need to challenge this amendment was brought forth because law makers and keepers

argued that the impact of segregated schooling was solely feelings based. Groves (1951)

and Bergner (2009) wrote about Thurgood Marshall who sought to leverage the research

findings of Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark who showed the damaging psychological (i.e.,

cognitive and emotional) impact of segregation on young school children infamously

known as the doll test—ultimately winning the case. Bell (1980) also provided discourse

on this same Supreme Court case and argued against the notion that the decision was

solely in favor of Black Americans' right to associate with white Americans but rather

the inverse. From this came an uprising of educational advocacy, legislation, and federal

policy change giving impetus to the development of the Civil Right Act of 1964 and the

Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s changing the state of the institution of

education. Ultimately, there were a series of titles and policy acts identified as

compensatory education that led to federal financial support of educational districts that

were and are underserved and remain under-resourced.

The Pitfalls of Integration

Despite movement forward, Bell (1975) held correspondence with the Black Parents Equal Education Opportunity Committee in the Delta Region who were actively waiting and advocating for the changes these benefits claimed to afford but did not deliver. Horn (2002) described that this led to critical analysis of federal funding. Some argued that funding would not make a difference as they believed the disenfranchised (e.g., Black students) lacked academic success resulting from low cognitive intelligence. However, later arguments contested that academic outcomes of marginalized and disenfranchised populations were in fact a result of low socio-economic status.

Additional scholars took a closer look at the impact or lack thereof of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* and other known cases. For example, Donnor (2012) provided a critical analysis of *Parents v. Seattle School District No.1* and concluded that educational policies put in place to support the educational advancement of marginalized students were ultimately undone by white citizens. Chin (2012) argued that in addition to *Parents v. Seattle School District No.1*, R*egents of the University of California v. Bakke and Grutter v. Bollinger* all worked to undo the work of the civil right movement as well as its impact on education. Lastly, Bell (2007A, 2007B) also wrote discourse on additional challenges with federal court rulings of the integration of public schools as well as on critical hope in the face of seemingly insurmountable adversity.

Black Educator Perspectives on the Desegregation of Schools

Horsford (2010) conducted a qualitative study that explored the experiences of superintendents who attended segregated schools as students and led desegregated schools as adults through semi structured interviews. Horsford found that participants had

mixed feelings about the future of desegregated education given the United States' socio-political climate and argued that cultural and racial literacy are paramount to the success of today's school demographics. In short, the participants found value in the education they received from a predominantly Black school and identified challenges since desegregation. Morris (2001) interviewed 21 Black American educators in St. Louis on the desegregation of education and found that the educators felt as though the supposedly strategic and comprehensive federal plan to desegregate ultimately served the interest of white Americans. Therefore, Morris argued that Black American educators should be at the proverbial table when policy and practice are being developed to ensure they benefit marginalized populations. Years earlier, Bell (1983) also argued that the perspective of the Black teacher needed to be brought into the fold if they are to truly achieve what *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* set out to achieve.

In summary, this broader section discussed how racism has worked against the development of equitable education for Black children as well as employment for Black educators throughout educational colonization, education reform, segregation, and the desegregation of schools. This section also highlighted the ways in which people worked to disrupt bias that shaped racist institutional systems and structures while also revealing that established norms stemmed from a culture and a structure shaped by a country (e.g., the United States) that was built on white supremacist values. Stolen from their homeland, Africans were brought to America as enslaved people with no promise of citizenship in sight. Therefore, if the United States functioned as the organization, its culture (i.e., its purpose, vision, mission, values, beliefs, feelings and daily activities) were all shaped by white dominant ideology. This ideology, viewing African people as

subhuman, was engrained and served as the very fabric (i.e., the DNA) from which the United States as well as its educational systems were constructed. From Woodson's (2006) "The Miseducation of the Negro" to Alexander's (2010) *The New Jim Crow,* there are countless examples of the ways racist ideology permeated and continues to thread throughout Black economic, religious, familial, political and educational realms. As this literature review moves toward a stance of amplifying and exploring Black educator voices more directly, this next section will review Black educators' perspectives on CRT in education, experiences in schools, and vision for a new, more equitable infrastructure.

Black Perspectives on CRT in Education

With a closer look at the school environment and its components, this section will explore Black educators' perspectives on culturally responsive pedagogy and its influence on curriculum and student development. Content will then highlight how CRT centered pedagogy and influenced Black student experiences. Given the history of Black Americans in education, content on Black educators as change agents using their activism toward shifts in school culture and practice will conclude this section.

CRT, Pedagogy, and Culture

In this next section, I will introduce current perspectives on CRT and its impact on the white supremacist infrastructure and culture of education with a specific focus on school culture, pedagogy, and curriculum. Before transitioning to a review of related literature, it is important to acknowledge the founder of critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire. Building on the concept of emancipatory consciousness from Habermas (Broniak, 1988; Heller, 1982; Susen, 2009), Freire (2017) conceptualized a critical pedagogy whereby oppressed groups move through two stages by stating:

In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis

commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality

of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the

oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent

liberation. (p. 54)

Freire (2017) went on to describe through enacting this process how a culture of

domination is confronted—first through historically marginalized groups' changed

perception, beliefs, values, ethics, and overall consciousness of the world of oppression.

Second, domination is then confronted through expulsion of dominant ideology created

by the oppressors "which like specters haunt the new structure emerging from the

revolutionary transformation" (p. 55). It is this revolutionary transformation that leads

oppressed groups to embody both liberation and well-being.

Building on the foundation of CT and CRT, a multitude of scholars have

contributed to discourse on this epistemological framework. For example, Jennings and

Lynn (2005) provided expansive work on CT dating back to its Frankfurt origins and

trace its development through to CRT. They applied this historical discourse to

opportunities for current modification that they believed could reconceptualize pedagogy

in schools. Jennings and Lynn made a strong argument for a shift toward critical

pedagogy, noting the importance of understanding racial and historical power structures

and dynamics inherent in school systems. They also suggested that self-reflection and

reflexivity while practicing and implementing liberatory forms of teaching and learning

are essential for said pedagogy.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) also presented a pivotal argument for situating and re-imagining CRT in education. They argued that for all United States citizens to achieve equity in education, they needed to be able to shift alignment away from civil human rights and a multicultural framework (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Driven by a capitalist, hegemonic society, Ladson-Billings and Tate argued that alignment with civil human rights in the United States is narrow and limited at best. Through the objectification and dehumanization of enslaved Africans brought to the United States and surrounding lands, a strong agricultural economy was made from plantation farms (i.e., sugar, cotton, and indigo). Ladson-Billings and Tate posited that it was this initial capital that drove the accumulation of assets and more specifically the land ownership and property taxes that eventually funded schools. Therefore, the denial and lack of acknowledgement of the civil property rights of Black Americans gave impetus to the very foundation that perpetuated educational inequality for Black educators and children to date.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) also argued that multiculturalism is a neo-liberal paradigm "that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail" (p. 62). While Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model created a framework for the ways in which systemic levels of society impact each other from the highest macrosystem to the smallest individual, CRT in education recognizes these levels and pushes it a step further by acknowledging the institutional racism present at each level. This then positions critical race theorists to advocate for detrimentally marginalized persons by seeking to change the capitalist infrastructure that shaped an oppressive educational system.

With a more specific look at CRT's impact on pedagogy, Lynn (1999) explored the potential impact critical pedagogy could have on education through interviewing current and former Black American teachers. He found that the multidimensional development and advancement of education has the potential to dismantle the foundation of a country built by enslaved people while also unifying educators and students alike. This, he believed, was in the best interest of teachers as well as students. Lintner (2004) supported this argument through a descriptive point of view that explored CRT and pedagogy for History classes. He argued that implicit bias plays a strong role in education, and if we want to disrupt the perpetuation of racial stereotyping, we must present an alternate narrative. Lintner proposed history classes as a strong way to get at the root of changing this narrative in education. Additional examples include Heilig et al. (2012) who analyzed marginalized representation in textbooks and Vaught and Castagno (2008) who argued that the racial attitudes expressed by teachers are illustrative of broader structural racism that both informs and is reinforced by attitudes and their manifestation in practice.

Regarding CRT and broader culture, Bush and Bush (2013) argued that Black American boys and men need a theory that accounts for their unique socio-political, historical, and critical framework coined the African-American male theory (AAMT). They argued that to achieve this philosophical shift, a specialized ecological model like AAMT that is separate and different from CRT needs to be established. Although Bush and Bush called for another model, I would argue that AAMT could be considered part of the next generation of CRT similar to intersectionality.

Additionally, Ostertag and Armaline (2011) dispelled notions of post-racial society in the era of President Barack Obama through critical analysis of the justice system while using CRT as a means for dismantling injustice. In a review on DuBoisian radicalized philosophy, Shuford (2001) wrote a complex analysis on an idea that surpassed pedagogy purporting that whiteness places one forever indebted to those marginalized, and thus atonement practices could serve to help heal historical wrongs. Although this model forwent transforming systems, it still provided an approach for undoing injustice and healing marginalized groups.

With all of the aforementioned studies, there is one apparent through line: (a) there is an acknowledgement of institutional, racial injustice in the United States; (b) this injustice has caused inequitable disparities that have impacted the educational system; and (c) there must be engagement in systemic transformation of these systems to create opportunities for education that benefit students as well as educators. Before a deeper review of the experiences of Black educators commences, context on the experiences of Blacks students and the importance of CRT as a means toward restorative justice and celebration of cultural identity will follow.

Black Student Experiences in Education

This section explores the impact of culturally responsive education on Black student experiences and the need for a push toward CRT in education. Using CRT to highlight qualitative, short answer questionnaires, Kohli and Solórzano (2012) explored students K-12 experiences with microaggressions and internalized racism regarding teachers mispronouncing or changing their names entirely. In recognizing Eurocentric bias in the classroom, Kohli surmised that participants reported experiences of

microaggression when their names were called in school as well as experiences of

internalized racial microaggressions that impacted their self-concept. Brown and Brown

(2010) examined the ways social studies textbooks misrepresent violence against Black

Americans in United States history and the impact this has on working memory and

conceptualization of the victim and the aggressor. Brown and Brown argued that this

limited students' ability to have a vast understanding of the cultural empires that existed

in Africa prior to colonization or the revolutions during enslavement that counteract the

learned helplessness narrative of the enslaved.

Brown et al. (2010) implemented three phenomenological case studies that

explored three different areas of a school (i.e., parent teachers associations, literacy

programs, and read-a-loud programs). They found that when the student, teacher, or

parent's voice of marginalized populations is misrepresented or not heard there is a

perpetuation of injustice for all parties involved. In addition to the perpetuation of

injustice through mispronounced names or misrepresentation of a violent history,

recognition of a trauma uninformed culture that breeds said hegemonic, cultural norms

requires recognition. If these environments were more trauma informed and "healing

centered" (Ginwright, 2018), they would not only understand the impact of racial

discrimination but also strive to create environments in which Black students' culture and

history were told and respected.

Revisiting pedagogy with emphasis on the student experience, Knaus (2009)

argued that integrating CRT in a high school writing class could help "center the

development of voice and expression and de-centers the high-stakes pressures that limit

student engagement" (p. 133). To implement this approach with fidelity, Knaus called for

a complete reconstruction of the United States educational system where critical race pedagogy should be applied to marginalized Black students, white students of poor SES, and non-white students who attend predominantly white schools. Moreover, Duncan (2002) explored in an ethnographic study how effective practices in Black, male adolescent education can provide space in education for young, Black male voices to be heard. This also creates space for experiences of empathy and true critical transformation of education in support of Black, male adolescents. Thus, I would argue that centering the development of voice and expression could serve as a trauma informed practice that heals and empowers students in the classroom through further developed self-confidence and value given to the whole student (i.e., mind, body, and spirit).

Daniels (2011) argued for reformation using Latino CT and Tribal CT in addition to CRT. Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) used critical race feminism couched in intersectionality to highlight the complexity of Black, female student identities and the need for Black, female educators to be positioned to impact policy, pedagogy, and the classroom. Bell (1995) stated "remedies that fail to attack all policies of racial subordination almost guarantee that the basic evil of segregated schools will survive and flourish, even in those systems where racially balanced schools can be achieved" (p. 140). Now, one might ask, if the very fabric of the educational system was built on white supremacist cultural norms and ideology, who will stand up to make such radical changes for Black students? This next section will review ways in which Black educators have stood up for said change.

Black Educators as Change Agents

This section presents studies that show how Black educators have pushed to change the organizational structure and culture of schools—making room for their racial cultural identity. For example, Roberts (2010), through phenomenological research, found that Black American teachers adopt a combination of critical race and care theories. This approach centers empathy and focuses on students' affective disposition integrated with shared perspectives the counter racist narratives that foster "stereotype threat" (Godsil et al., 2014) when fostering relationships with marginalized students. Roberts espoused that care is encased in a broader racial-cultural, socio-political awareness of change and is needed for advancement when accounting for the need to shift toward culturally responsive pedagogy and counteract potential traumatic experiences in schools.

Representing trends in educational research using critical race methodologies, Lynn (2002) found that most male teachers see their role as mentors, change agents, and/or father figures upholding the tenets of CRT in pedagogy and in the classroom. These tenets helped to dispel the notion that Black teachers are: (a) invisible or inconsequential, (b) vilified and incompetent, and (c) culturally informed and guided by critical practice or de-culturalized because of United States educational attainment and therefore inaccessible by students. Additionally, Bryan et al. (2016) found that historically Black colleges and universities could serve as strong intermediaries to increase numbers of Black male teachers with gifted student populations (i.e., advanced placement classrooms). They identified partnership development and working closely with K-12 administrators to increase access, fiscal incentives, integration of equity and

diversity issues in curriculum, and ongoing professional development as effective approaches.

Lastly, Milner (2012) identified through a phenomenological case study that negative perceptions of Black teachers are not fully based on sound perception and judgement. Milner (2012) stated that negative perceptions include: being "too strict and [having] too much structure in the classroom learning environment, 'yelling' at students and 'damaging' their self-esteem, not providing for enough creativity in the classroom, and becoming too personal with their students and cross professional-personal lines" (Milner, 2012, p. 28). Using a counter-narrative, Milner applied CRT to help reframe misinterpretations of the aforementioned behavior. Therefore, Black educators' critical stance on education and its impact on teacher and school leader influence implied that educators who challenge white dominant ideology in education with a culturally responsive structure and culture provide healthier, more productive, and trauma informed environments for Black students. In summary, notwithstanding traditional, educational standards and guidelines but in addition, taking a holistic approach to access, equity, opportunities, and success seemed to be the formula for many Black teachers and school leaders.

Since these cultural and normative obstacles are situated within the very foundation of the institution of education, school systems and culture are likely to continue to be hegemonically shaped. If hegemonic norms shape culture, the likelihood of inter-relational dynamics being impacted is high. Since systems have yet to fully change, Black educators' sustainability may therefore be compromised by ineffective systems, leadership therein, and a reinforcement of perpetual injustice and re-

traumatization. Until the very foundation of said institution is re-designed to be more inclusive creating space for a holistic, multi-cultural pedagogy and educational praxis, Black educators' attempts to change the system will be compromised.

Through this point in the literature review, CRT as well as trauma theory and organizational/systems theories were presented and shaped the telling of the history of Black enslavement, education reform, segregation of schools counteracted by the impact of school desegregation, and the civil rights movement all providing context for the Black educator experience. Within this critical stance lies evidence of a strong thread throughout scholarly discourse on most impactful practice for Black educators and students in school pedagogy, curriculum, and culture. Connecting back to the research question: How are Black professional and administrative employees' work experiences impacted by direct supervisors in public schools, I am left wondering what the direct impact of this broader socio-political, relational, and institutional ideology has been on Black educators specifically? Therefore, this next section will explore literature that reviews school experiences of Black professional and administrative employees.

Work Experiences of Black Educators

This section provides a broad scope of experiences of Black employees in education as there are general gaps in research on this population especially in public schools. Although there seems to be a dearth of information on this genre of research, general articles written by scholars that cover the Black educator experience more broadly will help ground content in this section. For example, Patton and Jordan (2017) used a phenomenological case study to explore the experience of a Black, female school principal's attempt to administer professional development that supported the

development of white, female critical consciousness. There were many challenges the principal faced given the ways dominant ideology infiltrated education at the school and created bouts with disgruntled white staff. This case study provided an in depth look at the ways in which racism, inequity, and injustice have shaped culture and norms on catering to the needs of white educators—namely white women.

Through interviewing 12 Black teachers via qualitative research, Bridwell (2012) identified monolithic structures within the educational system that served as barriers and sources of burnout for Black educators. Despite these learnings, Bridwell ultimately found that teachers who applied a critical race perspective when identifying the qualities of a good teacher had increased sustainability and experiences of thriving at work. Aligning with CRT as well as trauma and organizational/systems theories, this study is a powerful example of the ways in which educational structures and culture designed with one's cultural identity in mind display respect, appreciation, and value contributing to a sustainable work environment.

Although this next narrative may seem biased coming from a particular journal focused on the education of Black Americans, Horsford (2009) presented a counter narrative that spoke to the benefits of segregated education for Black students upholding critical race pedagogy as opposed to changing a white educational system to be more inclusive. Horsford found this counter narrative positively influenced ethnic-cultural development as well as academic access and success for Black students and educators instead of fighting to change the desegregated system in which they learned and taught. Patton and Jordan (2017), Bridwell (2012), and Horsford raised an interesting point that corresponds with arguments made in earlier sections of the literature review. This point

demonstrated that barriers created by white supremacist ideology impact Black educator

experiences and thwart attempts to make school culture, pedagogy, and curriculum more

holistic and culturally responsive. However, when changes are made that seek to

acknowledge and empower the cultural identity of Black persons from a holistic

perspective, the environments are more conducive to the Black educator experience.

Revisiting the impact of desegregation on the experiences of Black educators,

D'Amico (2016) provided an interesting historical analysis of teaching as a profession

through education reform of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s that explored the experiences of

educators more specifically. This era was an incredibly tumultuous time for educators

with the very fabric of their professional industry undergoing change. With desegregation

came a repositioning of teaching locations and responsibilities. Teachers who were

considered liberal or moderate were pushed farther left or farther right while being held

accountable by racial state pejoratives as well as by Black families, communities, and

educators who wanted more for their children. D'Amico (2016) referenced a

representative from the African American Teacher's Association who argued that in

order to survive this upheaval one had to assimilate fully and completely; one had to

think and act white--which I would imagine might cause frustration, stress, or minimally

a sense of professional and personal dissonance. This is reminiscent of the

deculturalization of students previously discussed by Spring (2016).

Furthermore, Oakley et al. (2009) implemented a quantitative study that used

multivariate analysis to identify the impact of desegregation on educator job retention and

sustainability. Oakley et al. found that there was a disproportionate number of teachers

displaced in the South as compared to other areas of the United States like the mid-west

where job placement increased or other regions that remained neutral compared to the increase in Black student growth. Related to this experience, it would be interesting to know more about the conditions in schools for Black teachers that were and were not forced to desegregate, if Black teachers attempted to get jobs at these schools, and (if not) what the impact on unemployment rates, career changes, and educator well-being were?

Lastly, Truscott et al. (2014) held a perspective that saw educators' ability to "help children, advocate for children of color, and provide positive representations of people of color as opportunities. [However, they also] perceive[d] racial bias, including racial microaggressions, as a primary challenge in their careers" (p. 36). Walker (2013) provided a thematic overview of the influence Black educators' advocacy had on acquiring equitable education for Black students before *Brown v. Board,* as "full participants in the struggle for justice for Black children throughout the years of segregation" (p. 75). Walker found that with the dismantlement of segregation came the dismemberment of Black professional organizations that were fueling this fight not only with their voice but also with data that informed pushes for policy change. Walker wondered if the intended impact of *Brown v. Board* will indeed happen if one of the most influential forces that gave impetus to its movement no longer remains. Walker also noted that the dismantling of discriminatory educational practices for students led to 31,000 Black educators being laid off.

All of the studies in this section represent opportunities and challenges within the educational system for Black educators. Through navigating challenges with white, women colleagues and en masse burnout, scholars posited that the implementation of CRT would lead toward greater sustainability. Some even challenged the desegregation

of schools describing the benefits of segregation for Black students and educators alike as

well as additional pitfalls that led to a severe decrease in job retention in the South and a

disbandment of organizations that fanned the flame giving impetus to civil rights in

education. With a recognition that Black educators have an identified approach to

education that can benefit not only students of color but all students, these critical and

holistic approaches seemed to embody an organic, genuine, and authentic way of

knowing and meaning making in education. This meaning making would thus allow

marginalized educators to have healthier, more equitable work experiences—shifting

from invisibility to presence, from subordination to value. Regarding challenges to

implementation, shifts toward a more holistic approach had a spectrum of impact on the

Black educator despite institutional policy changes resulting from hegemonic norms and

culture that have yet to align with an equitable, critically conscious approach to

education. This intersection of systemic barriers as well as innovative, sub-cultural

knowledge and praxis give rise to the next and final section that will explore Black

employees' job satisfaction and retention.

Job Satisfaction of Black Educators

Thus far, the historical trajectory shaping education and more specifically the

institution of education for Black educators was provided. Grounding the historical and

theoretical context of the Black educator experience in a broader cultural frame situated

their narrative respectively. Now, the scope of review will focus on studies that explore

Black educator job satisfaction supporting Black professional and administrative

employee experiences and the impact of direct supervisors in public schools more

directly. The first few articles ground job satisfaction in education on more general terms and a transition to the job satisfaction of Black educators will follow.

Beginning with Jeon and Wells (2018), job satisfaction was revealed as a general indicator of sustainability across educator demographics. The scale used (e.g., the Early Childhood Job Attitude Survey or ECAS) was recognized as a limitation as it was unable to further indicate factor(s) contributing to levels of job satisfaction. However, Hossain et al. (2012) studied a different group of early childhood educators and found participant responses to low job satisfaction "included low wages, plan to return to college to train for a higher paying job, lack of long-term benefits, and lack of social prestige" (p. 7). Okçu and Çetin (2017) found that educator job satisfaction decreased with increasing levels of stress or exposure to stress by other employees—increasing burnout in primary and secondary education. Although these first three articles did not explore job satisfaction and sustainability of Black educators, they did provide helpful discourse on the topic in general. Despite minimal research on Black employee job satisfaction and holistic sustainability in K-12 public education, four articles that addressed this matter were found.

Given the nominal amount of literature on the experiences of Black faculty in higher education, which may have higher amounts of contextual variance if placed alongside experiences in K-12 public schools, an article by Wright and Newsom (2010) is included here. This study reviewed literature and presented a framework for Black educator job satisfaction in higher education that may be applicable to Black educators in K-12 schools as similar factors were found represented in the section reviewing healthy, Black educator experiences. Wright and Newsom (2010) found that quantitative studies

are not doing this research justice and at this stage in infancy a qualitative study was

needed to further understand its phenomenology. Therefore, Wright and Newsom

presented Herzberg's hygiene theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Aligning it

with job satisfaction, Wright and Newsom argued that researchers need to look at what

faculty members are satisfied by instead of with (i.e., shifting the focus from what is

acted upon the faculty member that they are passively accepting to a focus that puts the

faculty member's interest at the core of decision making to identify what genuinely

makes them satisfied). Nevertheless, Write and Newson found that contrary to their white

counterparts at predominantly white institutions who found themselves satisfied by

flexibility and freedom with course and program development, Black faculty at

predominantly Black institutions found themselves satisfied by interaction with students.

This finding is relatively consistent with aspects of CRT and pedagogy previously

mentioned as Black educators were often found to value holistic approaches to education

that centered relationships that developed the whole student (i.e., mind, body, and spirit).

Continuing in that vein, Farinde-Wu and Fitchett (2016) found that Black, female

educators experience job satisfaction when they are in urban (non-charter) schools,

receive administrative support, experience positive student behavior, and are committed

to teaching. Fairchild et al. (2012) and Renzulli et al. (2011) found that the alignment of

race and gender with paralleled alignment to the organizational make-up of the school

(i.e., public versus charter) significantly impacted job satisfaction. In short, a synthesis of

these studies indicates that the needs of Black educators are different than their white

counterparts. If education is to truly be integrated and reformed, changing policy toward

integration is not enough and approaches that support a more radically inclusive

philosophy should be addressed. Ultimately, these four studies explored factors that contribute to Black educators being satisfied or pleased with their jobs. They highlighted opportunities for ways educational systems, administrators, and staff can work in environments that are culturally responsive and account for the intersectional complexity of their employees in a holistic way. With a lens on retention, this next section will first focus on factors that contribute to general retention of the educator and shift to factors that aim to decrease Black educator attrition.

General Trends in Retention of Educators

As most researchers seem to focus on retention of general populations of employees across all sectors, literature that focuses specifically on the retention of employees in general populations will be presented first as there are gaps in scholarly work that centers the Black educator experience. In a study conducted by Mental Health America on emotional and physical well-being in the workplace, results from the Workplace Health Survey showed that 71% of survey completers were actively looking for new jobs while on the job (Hellebuyck et al., 2017). They also found that 81% of respondents identified that workplace stress affects relationships with family and friends. Close to 50% responded positively to sometimes missing work at least 1 day a month due to stress, while nearly 10% responded often, and nearly 5% responded always (Hellebuyck et al., 2017). Lastly, they found that 63% of participants always, often, or sometimes, engage in drinking, crying regularly, or other unhealthy behaviors because of workplace stress, while 63% responded always, often, or sometimes to isolating themselves at work due to unhelpful or hostile work environments (Hellebuyck et al., 2017).

With a closer look at educator retention, Swars et al. (2009) conducted a mixed methods study using multiple data sources. They found that alignment of teachers' beliefs and praxis with the school's organizational norms along with teachers' relational needs not being met by administrators were contributing factors to retention. Although teachers' racial demographic information was not included to protect anonymity, Swars et al. (2009) found that teachers identified feeling fear and disempowerment when needing to address administrators regarding teacher concerns as well as a lack in equitable treatment among staff by administrators. With a focus on low-income schools and a particular teacher training program (i.e., Teach For America), Donaldson (2012) collected data through surveys and conducted quantitative analyses to discover that older entrants to education tended to have higher retention rates with special note of Black, male educators who also tended to live in the areas in which they taught. There was also a high correlation of older entrants that yielded a steep trajectory toward specialist or administrative roles.

Hughe (2012) found that the most cited reason for leaving positions in education was a lack of advancement opportunities. In general, Hughe's research provided recommendations for reduced workloads, higher salaries, and increased parent-student-teacher cooperation. Additional findings were that grade level and degree of training did not significantly impact retention whereas school socio-economic status did—which we learned from Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) has a direct correlation to United States' history of capitalism and chattel slavery. Shaw and Newton (2014) focused on the impact of leadership style on teacher job satisfaction and found that principals who adopted servant leadership (i.e., principals who implement love, humility, altruism, vision, trust,

empowerment of others, and service) produced lower levels of attrition. One could also

assess servant leadership as a way of implementing trauma-sensitive practice through

leadership in schools. Shaw and Newton found that servant leadership could have

implications for decreased fiscal waste as the cost of replacing employees is high in an

already costly sector of federal spending. Lastly, Abdallah (2009) found that increased

collegiality was positively correlated with increased retention rates—wanting colleagues

to be sensitive to their emotional needs and respond with empathy, sympathy, and

occasional wise counsel.

Ultimately, there are through lines in retention trends that speak to holistic and

culturally responsive organizational and dynamic factors that impact teachers'

experiences. While (un)healthy work experiences are a unifying trend across industries

and sectors affecting the holistic sustainability of employees across demographic groups,

there is a clear representation of similar trends within the educational sector. Although

there is less literature that specifically focuses on Black professional and administrative

employees in public schools, a review of scholarly work that focuses on the retention of

Black educators will follow.

Retention of Black Educators

Brown (2014) found in a phenomenological study that Black, female

superintendents believed they must hold themselves to a higher standard of excellence to

dispel racial stereotypes of Black women. Despite their credentials, Black female

superintendents reported that they must work harder than their peers and benefit more by

having a strong, white, male mentor or advocate. Brown found that race was a recurring

factor in social politics creating a need to be cognizant of its omnipresence—amplifying

the impact of injustice on the Black educator experience. Highlighting aspects of the

Black, female employee experience that are intersectionally unique, superintendents

(despite being beyond mid-level employment) endured an inequitable reality even at that

level of leadership.

Campoli (2017) found that teachers who had supportive leadership and a strong

culture of collegiality were more likely to stay—accounting for overall job satisfaction

and non-work-related factors that may contribute to attrition. This highlights that a

culturally responsive approach to supervision and leadership is preferred as well as that

which informs relational aspects of employee culture. Achinstein et al. (2010) found that

teachers of color do in fact have lower retention rates than white teachers. They also

found that financial, human, social, and cultural capital—specifically pertaining to

agency and ability to implement critical race pedagogy—are influenced by humanistic

teaching practices. Similar to Hughe (2012), Achinstein et al. found that schools in urban

areas with higher numbers of students from low-income, marginalized racial groups tend

to have higher retention of Black American teachers. The findings here indicate that

cultural norms which tend to be more aligned with that of the Black community (i.e.,

humanistic and relational approaches) as well as factors that contribute to increasing

agency have greater significance if they are grounded in a pedagogy that values, respects,

and appreciates their African heritage and Black cultural identity.

Farinde et al. (2016), grounding their study in Black feminist theory and

qualitative methodology, found while Black teachers are entering the field at higher rates

than white teachers, they are not staying. Through phenomenological interviews of 12

Black, female teachers, Farinde et al. (2016) also found that administrative support,

salary increases over time, and professional advancement impacted longevity. Regarding administrative support, teachers noted in their interviews that a climate of intimidation and a bureaucratic, hierarchical organizational model (which tends to be informed by hegemonic cultural norms) also impacted their retention. One participant described her school as having a "detrimental, tense, and oppressive work environment that devalued her and her colleagues" (Farinde et al., 2016, p. 120), and she left that school to work for another school where she felt valued as a professional. Opposing Donaldson's (2012) findings, Farinde et al. also found that the Black, female teachers interviewed described a glass ceiling and a lack of progressive opportunities in education. Although all human beings desire to be valued as people, Black professional and administrative employees may potentially be impacted by this lack at greater levels given their tendency toward humanistic, critical race pedagogy and communal ethnic-cultural values grounded in connecting with and teaching to the whole person (hooks, 2003). Both Achinstein et al. (2010) and Farinde et al. found that salary, workload, and school conditions were found throughout the literature to impact retention rates of Black teachers.

Retention of Non-traditional Educator Roles

As seen through the above review of educator experience, there is a large focus on teachers and some on leaders. However, my research question focused more broadly on the experiences of different types of Black professional and administrative employees including paraprofessionals, special education specialists, nurses, and school counselors. Although minimal, a few articles were found that highlighted these experiences; some focused on educators while others focused specifically on Black educators. First, regarding special education, Brown and Stanton-Chapman (2017) found through mixed

methods that paraprofessionals in special education identified: (a) confusion of

responsibilities in different contexts, (b) relational power dynamics with teachers, (c)

recognition, and (d) compensation as factors that impact retention. However, Berry et al.

(2012) identified specific areas of professional development that aid in increased special

education teacher retention (i.e., working with paraprofessionals and parents, working

with low-incident disabilities as well as emotional and behavioral disorders, improving

classroom management, improving curriculum content, and developing collaborative and

inclusive practices). It should be noted that the teachers in this study were from rural

areas and there was not an explicit focus on educators of color.

Regarding school counseling and psychology, Chandler (2011) found five areas

that would positively impact Black school psychologists to have increased job

satisfaction and retention. These categories include professionally uplifting the Black

community, presence of a communal environment, established connections between the

field of psychology and issues directly related to the Black community, and increased

exposure of psychology as a field as well as firsthand exposure to the work. Dollarhide et

al. (2014) conducted a comprehensive study using grounded theory that explored an

untapped area of research. Their focus was on the experiences of school counselors of

color using grounded theory with fidelity. Dollarhide et al. found that "when diverse

individuals' needs are met by a hostile school environment, students and staff suffer.

Such negative school cultures perpetuate marginalization, oppression, and silencing of

racially and ethnically diverse students and staff" (p. 53). They argued that workplace

stress impacts and increases burnout and emotional dissonance often leading to employee

resignation. While positive experiences directly related to the counselor role were

identified (i.e., serving as a role model, authentic rapport, and opportunities for leadership

and advocacy), they also found that school counselors of color had passion for working

with disenfranchised students often fueling their perseverance (Dollarhide et al., 2014).

Most negative experiences that impacted retention of school counselors of color

were connected to race (i.e., racial bias, disrespect from parents/other

staff/administrators/students, macroaggressions, microaggressions, and

microinvalidation; Dollarhide et al., 2014). All of these experiences took a high

emotional toll on participants resulting in being silenced as well as feeling anxious and

defeated at work. When school environments were more diverse, they were more

culturally responsive and supportive which lessened negative occurrences or at least the

impact of said occurrences as school counselors were better equipped to address their

challenges with more diversity initiatives and diversity affirming administrative actions

(Dollarhide et al., 2014). Ultimately, Dollarhide et al. concluded that environmental

context throughout the spectrum of diversity affirming structural and cultural systemic

components shaped a spectrum of healthy and unhealthy school counselor work

experiences.

Reflecting on the entirety of this section, a spotlight on the experiences of Black

educator work experiences was centered. Beginning with a general focus on the ways

oppression, power, and privilege shape school culture and systemic levels, there was a

narrowed focus on job satisfaction. While some themes were universal, others were

specific to Black educators grounded in a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive

stance. Many of the ideas shared aligned with a relational and holistic approach to

education as well as workplace equity that drove professional growth and development as

well as financial stability. Trends found in scholarly work on job retention mirrored the

aforementioned ideas, as well-being was either fostered or diminished based on one's

level of disenfranchisement. "Similar to the deleterious performance effects that negative

racial events can have on students […], [Black educators] could be subject

to the same erosion of achievement, measured by leadership and advocacy efforts"

(Dollarhide et al., 2014, p. 59) of the Black educator. Therefore, the commitment to

oppose and dismantle white supremacy culture plaguing Unites States' school systems

must continue.

Chapter Summary

The studies in this chapter explored the experiences of Black educators as well as

the historical and inter-generational impact of colonization, oppression, and modern

racism. As a result, I would argue that special attention should be paid to Black educators

as research is minimal—especially within public schools across various professional and

administrative positions. Research that phenomenologically amplifies the voices of Black

professional and administrative employees can fill an important gap in current academic

content. Furthermore, this focus will help bring to light the intersectionality of racial

trauma and stress or the lack thereof in work environments that foster cultural

responsiveness and restorative justice toward educators' experiences that is sorely

needed.

After a thorough review of the literature, I have concluded that a focus

specifically on Black professional and administrative employees' experiences is needed

to fill a current research gap. By further exploring and focusing on their experiences with

direct supervisors, I will be able to target an aspect of the Black educator experience that

can enlighten the path toward a portion of tangible, realistic, and attainable

transformation of culture and systemic structure. As this topic could be broad, a focus on

a specific relationship within this context specifies greater focus toward specific action.

The threads of CRT as well as trauma and organizational/systems theories have

highlighted the complexity of Black employee experiences in public schools in the

United States that intermingles on intra-personal, inter-personal, institutional, and cultural

levels. As discussed, much of their experience stems from a history of enslaving Africans

that intertwined discrimination, prejudice, and oppression producing traumatic

experiences that caused an inter-generational impact on Black Americans' physical and

mental health, economic sustainability, and social well-being. Within the institution of

education, not only are public schools not exempt from this socio-cultural structure, but

they serve as a breeding ground for much of the aforementioned history.

   As an example of critical race pedagogy and trauma informed practice, many

scholars have reviewed the work of bell hooks, a world renown Black female author,

scholar, educator, poet, and public speaker who synthesized the work of critical race,

feminist, and trauma theories by developing and implementing "progressive holistic

education and engaged pedagogy [which] emphasizes the well-being and process of self-

actualization" (Specia & Osman, 2015, p. 195) for educators and students alike (Acevedo

et al., 2015; Bragelman, 2015; Strong-Leek, 2008). Through exploring how Black

professional and administrative employees' work experiences are impacted by direct

supervisors, I hope to not only fill a gap of research on a particular population in a

particular employment sector, but I also hope to amplify their embodied experiences.

This, I would argue, is my commitment to deconstructing an objectified reality through a

narrowed and purposeful focus on a specific professional relationship of Black educators

that has the power to impact:

> The protracted nature of our struggle[…]. [As I] commit [myself] to the work of
>
> transforming [the institution of education] so that it will be a place where cultural
>
> diversity informs every aspect of our learning, [I recognize that I] must embrace
>
> struggle and sacrifice. [I will remember that I] cannot be easily discouraged. [I]
>
> cannot despair when there is conflict [, because] our solidarity must be affirmed
>
> by shared belief in a spirit of intellectual openness that celebrates diversity,
>
> welcomes dissent, and rejoices in collective dedication to truth. (hooks, 1994, p.
>
> 33)

It is this determination, despite insurmountable odds, that is found in the narrative of the

African diaspora, and it is this resiliency that is also found throughout my exploration and

review of the literature. In the next chapter, I will explore the epistemology and

methodology of this dissertation.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

I'm feeling healthiest.
I'm feeling really grounded or rooted, right?
I also like to be in flow.
I say no a lot.

–I Poem: Ciara

Thus far, Chapters 1 and 2 provided background, purpose, and focus of the study as well as an extensive review of literature that situated the epistemology and research methodology of this current chapter. Chapter 1 identified a research problem, gaps within that sector of research, and a self-reflexive exploration of the researcher. Chapter 2 provided a theoretical framework and empirical literature that framed context for the racial and cultural dynamics that plague the institution of education, and hence, influence if not shape the experiences of its employees and more specifically Black educators. It was important to highlight, explore, and synthesize these components as they will bring great complexity, depth, and clarity to the research question.

Epistemological Stance

The general topic of this dissertation aimed to highlight the experiences and amplify the voices of Black educators. The research question explored how Black professional and administrative employees' work experiences are impacted by direct supervisors in public schools. In this chapter, my epistemological stance is further developed as it frames the research methodology, methods, and pilot experience. In the following section, epistemology will be defined and critical qualitative methodology will be discussed—a design approach that engages a conglomerate of radical and socially just epistemological approaches leveraged through research allowing for creativity and innovation—thus shaping my methodological praxis.

Epistemology Defined

In defining epistemology, Carspecken (1996), who used Flew's definition, stated, "Epistemology is: 'The branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. […] The nature and derivation of knowledge, scope of knowledge, and the reliability of claims to knowledge" (p. 9). When reflecting on factors that have shaped my own knowledge, recognizing the importance of self-reflexivity in research and writings from Behar (1996) and Fine (2018) reinforced my researcher identity. Both scholars leveraged methods of writing and approaches to exploring data that use artistic means stretched beyond the confines of non-critical, scientific work. Humanizing the content and the participants involved in research, these writings provided beautiful examples of the challenges, complexity, and bravery that come with self-exploration and knowing in qualitative research methods. This was incredibly affirming as boundless opportunity for implementing creativity in qualitative research and writing resonated with my authentic self as a practitioner, leader, and scholar remaining curious about others' experiences while looking for a solution in the presence of dysfunction.

Critical Epistemology

Regarding perspectives on meaning making and understanding, Josselson (2004) discussed the philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutics by distinguishing between two different types. The first is hermeneutics of suspicion that approach understanding through "the demystification of meaning" (Josselson, 2004, p. 3) characterized by distrust and skepticism in the information received and/or the giver of information. The second is hermeneutics of faith that determine the "restoration of a meaning" (Josselson, 2004, p.

3) carries a message to which the interpreter is willing to listen, absorb, and respect its full form and function in culture, reality, and revelation.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) provided discourse on critical hermeneutics building off hermeneutics of faith where culture, revelation, and respect are pillars of meaning making. This discussion on critical epistemology within a hermeneutic context, they argued, further shapes critical methodology where the purpose of hermeneutical analysis is to "develop a form of cultural criticism revealing power dynamics within social and cultural texts […] build[ing] bridges between reader and text, text and its producer, historical context and present, and one particular social circumstance and another" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 295). They go on to describe that this revelation entails a reciprocal relationship between that which is abstract and concrete—societal and individual—through which consciousness is "historically situated, ever changing, ever evolving in relationship to the cultural and ideological climate" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 296). Complex and nuanced, critical hermeneutics as a philosophy and approach to methodology acknowledges hegemony and dominant ideology that forcibly impact systemic levels and the interconnections therein. Ultimately, this stance creates equity between knowledge, being, identity, power, and structure.

Reflecting on liberation psychology's impact on critical epistemology and methodology, Martín-Baró (1994) identified that in order to truly impact and change the historical trajectory of marginalized persons, we must redesign our praxis (i.e., the integration of theory and practice often holding one's political alignment). This, Martín-Baró argued, will allow for the recreation of "our theoretical and practical tools […] from

the standpoint of the lives of our own people: from their sufferings, their aspirations, and their struggles" (p. 25). Martín-Baró also posited that for one to function with this stance, new ways of seeking knowledge must be developed that will position one to speak truth to power toward liberation. It is this redesigning of praxis from the standpoint of the lives of marginalized persons and a hermeneutics of faith grounded in a critical perspective that drove the focus of my methodology and select population.

Phenomenological Philosophy

Considering phenomenology, a philosophical approach shaping methodological design, Byrne (2001) discussed the dichotomy of two schools of thought within phenomenology as a philosophy that explored the genuine and authentic lived experiences of research participants. The first perspective belonged to Edmond Husserl, who believed that one could bracket their subjective perspective in research (i.e., exploring it, recognizing it exists, and compartmentalizing it during the research experience) to work objectively (Byrne, 2001). The second perspective, more aligned with this dissertation's research methodology, was developed by Martin Heidegger who believed it is impossible to isolate one's subjective perspective and favored the idea that researchers should explore it, identify it, and account for it during the research process (Byrne, 2001). Initially accomplished in Chapter 1 through self-reflexive discourse, this resistance toward bracketing positioned me, the researcher, to engage in an empirical process with high levels of self-awareness.

Thus, Heidegger (1971), one of two founding fathers of phenomenology, developed a philosophy-of-being from a philosophy-of-language. Heidegger believed that language was a conduit through which one could understand the essence of the human

experience. Coining the term *Dasein*, Heidegger (2009) described this simply as being-in-the-world, a way of relating to other beings through care and context; therefore, claiming "the fruit of authentic existence is the creative, revealing, renewing language forged for the poetic expression of discourse". Furthermore, Quay (2016) wrote an incredible article on Heidegger's approach to phenomenology, with nearly 40 references, and 26 of them from Heidegger himself. In the spirit of phenomenology, Quay created an experiential reading encounter where he shaped the experience of understanding phenomenology through ways of knowing. Quay challenged researchers to shift from a calculated way of processing one's context or that of others toward a mindful way of being and sharing in that context together. This shift represented a holistic and sensory dialogue that researchers could experience through engaging the self fully—beyond reading or perceiving (Quay, 2016). In short, phenomenology—as a qualitative approach—endeavors to explore the specific experience of a person or group of people with the goal of further understanding the organic nature of their lived experience (Creswell et al., 2007).

With a more specific look at shaping critical methodology through phenomenology, Carspecken (1996) wrote that critical qualitative methodology acknowledges that people are naturally intersubjective and accounted for this in a proactive way by accessing the researcher's motivation to drive, inform, and support inquiry toward activism and social justice. Carspecken acknowledged the phenomenological nature of knowing developed by exploring others' experiences—making the work less about subjective perspective and more about "ontological categories" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 20) or different domains of knowing. These domains of

knowing serve as theories grounded in the participant experience from which a

phenomenological truth is developed. In short, Carspecken (1996) concluded that truth

claims are distorted by unequal power and that

> Critical methodology is based on critical epistemology, not on value orientations.
>
> […] critical epistemology has rejected perception models of truth and all
>
> sophisticated modifications of them. Instead, we work our theory up from holistic,
>
> paradifferential human experience and its relationship to the structures of
>
> communication. (p. 22)

The epistemological stance of this dissertation was grounded in a critical,

phenomenological philosophy that centers the liberation of marginalized groups and

amplifies unheard voices that they may speak truth to power. The notion that story

holders should be the tellers of their experiences and that this approach to research is one

of the few ways power can be equitably distributed toward justice is dynamic and aligned

with my research practice. This next section will further examine the methodological

approach of this study.

Methodology

Given my desire and commitment to approach research through a critical meta-

theoretical and trauma informed perspective, I chose critical qualitative methodology to

ground embodied, critical methods further discussed in data generation and analysis. As

aforementioned, Carspecken (1996) wrote about the development of critical qualitative

methodology explaining that traditional research methods negate the connection between

power and truth. Carspecken further explained that the philosophical underpinnings of a

critical epistemology "give us principles for conducting valid inquiries into any area of

human experience" (p. 8). Ultimately, Carspecken sought to expose the inner structure and impact of oppression through a rigorous praxis that is accessible to a variety of research methods. Although this methodology accounts for the subjective researcher, it highlights that it is the alignment between the researcher's epistemology (i.e., ways of knowing), justice, and liberation to that of critical methodology that drives the phenomenological approach to truth seeking. Therefore, this approach is less about the researcher's subjective perspective informing the research but rather a belief that truth lies within that which is valued and studied holding critical perspective and creating space for this experience.

Critical qualitative methodology was best fit for my design methods because of the nature of the studied phenomenon. Given Carspecken's (1996) understanding of phenomenology and critical practice, the phenomenological nature of the Black educator experience is thus multidimensional—accounting for the historical impact and influence of racism, oppressive institutional systems and culture, the intersectionality of a marginalized identity, and values and beliefs that inform behaviors impacting workplace relationships discussed in Chapter 2. With a desire to account for the essence of the lived experience, including phenomenologically aligned interviews as a means of gathering stories (i.e., data) from participants with breadth and depth allowed for most impactful practice. Ultimately, critical qualitative methodology allowed for varied design methods while remaining grounded in a broader philosophical stance shaped by a critically conscious perspective positioned toward the liberation of marginalized persons.

Sampling Strategy

Regarding sampling strategy, purposeful sampling was combined with snowball sampling whereby educators were intentionally recruited who self-identified with the Black racial group and who had no less than 3 years of professional experience. Whereas random sampling would not ensure that all of my participants would meet the selection criterion, a purposeful sampling strategy was best suited for this particular study given the social phenomenon of choice and guaranteed efforts toward all Black, educator participants (Patton, 2015). Regarding snowball methods of recruitment, "an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases" (Patton, 2015, p. 298), I also intentionally reached out to Black educators to help identify additional willing participants as well as asked participants from my study for additional leads.

Participant Recruitment

For recruitment, direct outreach was leveraged to secure three initial public school educators in the Boston metro area in order to secure 6–8 participants which resulted in a total of nine. As part of the outreach, a flyer was distributed to select Black educators along with an introductory email that communicated the objectives of the study (See Appendix B). Some of this initial outreach resulted in expression of participant interest while others led to introductions to additional Black educators. Once confirmation of interest was received, I scheduled individual participant calls. During these calls the purpose of the study, the interview, and the instructions for images participants were asked to bring representing their healthy, thriving selves as well as their unhealthy, challenged selves at work were discussed. A brief online survey was completed before the interview that captured their demographic information along with an initial thought-

provoking question around Black identity (See Appendix C). Lastly, the interview was

scheduled during the call.

Between the call and the interview, the informed consent form was sent for

participants to review prior to meeting to keep them engaged between meetings and

provide further content and context for memory. An invite with the location and time of

the interview was sent, and an informed consent form was administered at the beginning

of each interview (See Appendix D) where confidentiality, completion of researcher IRB

training and certification in preparation for executing this study, and any additional

participant questions were discussed. All participants kept their own copy of the informed

consent form. Lastly, at the beginning of each interview, each participant was given *Real

Happiness at Work: Meditations for Accomplishment, Achievement, and Peace* by Sharon

Salzberg (2013) as a token of appreciation for their time.

Recruitment Setting

There were three cities represented in the state of Massachusetts and thus three

school districts in which my participants worked. Each city is highly, culturally diverse

and somewhat segregated with areas that have more racial, cultural integration.

Ironically, despite such great diversity, all three of these cities are becoming more

gentrified—a sociological phenomenon where marginalized populations are forced to

move from their communities as the cost of living dramatically rises while predominantly

white, affluent groups move into neighborhoods previously occupied by racial minorities.

Participant schools had a student population of majority Black and Latinx students with

additional racial and ethnic categories represented (i.e., Asian, Middle Eastern, and

white). The smallest population of students being white. Many of the students came from a lower socio-economic status and therefore qualified for free and reduced school meals.

Additionally, the schools serviced a multitude of student needs. While there were certainly high achieving students present, there were students who struggled with learning and/or behavioral disabilities and needed accommodations as well as mental health support. Generally speaking, teachers' racial demographics did not represent students' racial demographics as there tended to be more white educators across the board. Schools ranged in type from public to pilot, charter, and vocational schools as well as developmental age group (i.e., both primary and secondary schools were represented).

Participant and Selection Criteria

As aforementioned, there was a total of 9 participants (i.e., 7 female and 2 male). All participants self identified gender identity and aligned with a Black racial demographic category. Their racial designation was further defined by participants' ethnic cultural identity—all of which fell within the African diaspora (ex., Nigerian-American, Jamaican-American, Bajan-American, or African-American with unknown ethnic origin as some members of enslaved African descendance in the United States are unable to trace their ethnic roots). Additionally, participants were invited to self-identify their gender designation. Harris (2014), exploring the impact of self-identified gender expression on career decision making for Black, queer identified persons, stated that "when heterosexist binary gender dichotomization expectancy aligns to or transgresses from socially prescribed gender roles, social reaction to the gender expression in acceptance or rejection occurs" (p. 1400). Given Cass's homosexual identity model and the vulnerable nature and often times marginalizing experience of moving from identity

confusion to identity synthesis (Harris, 2014), the decision to align with a self-identified

gender designation was informed by the recognition that gender expression is not only

fluid but also highly subjective, individual, and often times unsafe. Therefore, to push

against heteronormative practices, I wanted to allow participants to own their gendered

status.

Regarding professional experience, each participant needed to have at least 3

years of career experience and hold no higher than middle level management. Given

principals or executive directors of schools tend to report to a trustee/advisory board, this

perspective would not inform the research question allowing for an exploration of

employee experiences with direct supervisors. A minimum of 3 years of career

experience was decided as it was important for participants to have a considerable

amount of time on which they could reflect—helping to inform and strengthen what they

shared during the interview. Thus, all except for one participant had five or more years of

work experience in education. Regarding the one participant who accumulated three

years, she named that while she had three years in education she acquired much more as a

professional in her industry prior to her career transition. Regarding level of educator

training, there was no specific requirement of certification or degree attainment; whatever

was required for their current position was acceptable.

Black, educator participant roles were vast including teachers, counselors,

coordinators, nurses, special education teachers, and mid-level administrators.

Accounting for the differences in these roles, there could be variance in their experience.

However, due to limited research across roles in Black public school employee

experiences, there would be value in exploring and amplifying voices across disciplines

that traditionally have not been heard. Given the critical, phenomenological nature of the

interviews, I hoped to gain breadth and depth of understanding should participant roles be

varied. Lastly, once these criteria were met, participants were screened in the event they

did not wish to be audio or video recorded as this was central to data generation. Table 1

provides information gathered on participant demographics.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participants	Age	Self-identified gender identity	Ethnic identity	Role at time of interview	Years of professional work experience
Alicia	33	Cis female	Caribbean (Trinidadian, St. Maarten) American	Math teacher	5
Brianna	34	Cis female	African American	Student support team	7
Ciara	51	Cis female	African American	Humanities teacher	20
Deja	33	Cis female	African American by way of Nigeria and Ghana	Associate dean	8
Esther	48	Cis female	African American	Teacher	3.25
Faith	42	Cis female	Jamaican	Learning specialist	23
Isaiah	45	Cis male	Possibly some Jamaican, other unknown	Dean of students	21
Harriet	29	Cis female	Cape Verdean	2nd grade teacher	8
George	36	Cis male	Haitian	Lead art teacher/ Fine Arts department chair	7

Note. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the confidentiality of each participant

throughout this chapter.

Interview Setting

Regarding interview location and date, accommodating the participant as much as

possible was important. This included day of the week and time of day. I also decided to

hold interviews at a location closest to their home or school. Initially, interviewing

participants at their schools was considered; however, it may have been difficult for them

to secure uninterrupted time during the school day. It may have also been taxing to ask

them to come to work before the start of a long day. While the location selected for the

pilot study was warm and inviting as well as comfortable yet professional per feedback

from the pilot participant, that location was no longer available. Therefore, one of the

interviews was held in a reserved library room, another in a school office while the

school was on vacation per the participant's request, and the remaining interviews in a

rented co-working space. The co-working space had a large conference room table,

multiple chairs, large windows overlooking the city, and a bathroom nearby. It was

centrally located near most of the participants' homes, families, or places of employment.

Per the request of the pilot participant, water was also provided. This was a helpful touch

given interview length ranged from 1−2 hours and on average at 1.5 hours total.

Data Generation

Capturing the essence of participants' lived experiences was achieved through

data generation methods used that provided greater depth of content with a specific focus

on entering the participants' world in order to understand their environment via focus on

their relationships with direct supervisors (Patton, 2015). Thus, phenomenological

interviews as well as recorded nonverbal body language during said interviews were the

selected methods. Requiring rigorous data sampling and analysis methods (i.e., using

more than one data source, analysis method, or theory in a study), there was an intensity

and depth of investigation unique to phenomenology further developed by critical

epistemology and later embodied analysis (Patton, 2015). The following section will

begin with an exploration of data generated through interviews.

Phenomenological Narrative

During interviews, narrative that provided information on the impact working

relationships with supervisors have on the experiences of Black employees in public

schools was explored. Prior to the interview, participants were asked to select and bring a

visual representation of them as their best selves at work (i.e., when they are thriving and

healthiest) and when they are not their best selves at work (i.e., their unhealthiest and

most challenged) to the interview. These images served as creative aides that facilitated

conversation, helped me and the participant ease into the interview in a relational yet

boundaried way, and helped ground participants' experiences of re-telling their stories

with useful metaphors that shaped the fluidity of their narrative along a spectrum of well-

being.

The visual images could have been as abstract or concrete as participants liked. It

was easiest for them to send digital images via email that were then printed for reference

and conversation at the beginning of and throughout the interview as a gauge of their

status along a well-being spectrum. I anticipated some of the images representing

participants' healthier selves at work to be more vibrant in color, calming, or connected

to activities, people, or things that made them happy. Whereas pictures that represented

participants' least healthy selves at work may have been less vibrant, more cluttered, less

calming, or balanced on the page. Given the purpose of the visual aid, these images were

not explicitly included with other analyzed data; however, reflections on their use and

impact will be presented in Chapter 4.

The interviews were semi-structured with four sections of the interview protocol (See Appendix E). They began with a question asking participants to share an explanation of their images. The ultimate goal of the interviews was to give participants a chance to share and explore their stories genuinely and authentically. Through this approach, interviewees were able to explore qualities and dynamics of supervision as well as of their work environments in which they have or have not felt their best selves through a different lens. The data generated from these interviews was audio recoded and transcribed through Rev.com a transcribing service.

Embodied Communication

Data generated from nonverbal communication was video recorded during interviews as well as observational note taking. This recording medium also helped back up audio recordings previously noted. hooks (1994) explored the notion of embodied experiences from biographical as well as pedagogical approaches to education. hooks developed an ethnic cultural lens on this embodied experience with the belief that it could and should be extended to the human experience. It was this embodied experience of exploring and analyzing participants verbal and nonverbal communication that I believed would tell a more comprehensive and multi-dimension story. Given the ethnic cultural identity of participants grounded in African diasporic context, it was important to honor the historical, cultural norms of African/Black people being both verbally and physically expressive (Greene & Stewart, 2011). Therefore, video recording allowed for greater depth in exploration of participant experiences, and the choice to use a visual recording to analyze nonverbal communication was highly intentional.

Lastly, the decision to observe and analyze nonverbal communication was informed by trauma theory. As mentioned in Chapter 2, trauma theory named that experiences of trauma are holistically embodied (i.e., in one's mind, body, and spirit). Van der Kolk (2015) wrote:

> To people who are reliving a trauma, nothing makes sense; they are trapped in a life-or-death situation, a state of paralyzing fear or blind rage. Mind and body are constantly aroused, as if they are in imminent danger. They startle in response to the slightest noises and are frustrated by small irritations. Their sleep is chronically disturbed, and food often loses its sensual pleasures. This in turn can trigger desperate attempts to shut those feelings down by freezing and dissociation. (p. 232)

As a result of enduring historic, inter-generational trauma as well as present, racialized traumatic experiences, Black people and thus Black, educator participants may struggle to effectively use language to fully describe their experience but rather tell the story in both verbal and nonverbal ways.

For example, Meador and Murray (2014) found a correlation between open (i.e., welcoming and inviting) and closed (i.e., aggressive and dismissive) nonverbal communication associated with racially biased identification of white persons on that of racial minorities. This study helped provide a comprehensive perspective on the harmful impact of participants' racialized experiences. Their findings were also impactful for the purposes of this study as both verbal and nonverbal communication of Black educators may also be misconstrued by supervisors due to implicit racial bias potentially adding to the supervision dynamic. In addition to audio/video recording interviews, observational

notes aided in data collection. Although primary means of capturing nonverbal

communication was through visual recording, observational notes were used to capture

prominent movements and expressions that resonated throughout the interviews.

Ultimately, observing verbal and nonverbal communication from participants to gather

different forms of data that provided more breadth and depth to their responses enabled

participants' comprehensive and contextualized truth to be captured.

Data Analysis

Embodied critical analysis (ECA), a method I developed and coined, included

four phases of data analysis that explored Black educators' lived experiences as described

by: the participant, their perception or representation of self, and their physical or visceral

felt self. Phases of ECA include coding transcribed phenomenological interviews as well

as nonverbal communication, generating I Poems through a feminist methodological lens,

and engaging in power analysis. Ultimately integrating embodied, thematic, and

reconstructive approaches, I decided on this data analysis method, as there does not

currently exist an approach that would have allowed me to analyze participants'

experiences in a holistic, multi-dimensional, and embodied way. The following section

will explain the theoretical underpinnings of ECA's methods.

ECA's Theoretical Foundation

Building on Carl Rogers' (1979) notion that "there is a greater freedom to be the

person that [they] inwardly [are]" (p. 99) through creating a healthy, environment that

validates and acknowledges the whole person, ECA was inspired by an embodied

approach to data generation and analysis. As reviewed in Chapter 1, three components

shaped my identity as a practitioner, leader, and scholar. One of those components is the

arts. Having a background in dance and movement studies among other performing, visual, and literary arts, sparked a desire to move beyond cognition and behavior with value placed on the embodied experiences of participants. Accounting for a metaphysical, embodied experience through a lens of power, privilege, and oppression further aligned ECA with a critical stance. Ultimately, there was a recognition that movement can often speak what words cannot, and it was important to create space for the fullness of one's communication and the ways in which participants have held and continue to hold their stories.

Conceptualized during methodological development, ECA was further enhanced during data analysis where participants' beliefs, feelings, and actions were explored through a priori coding and further analyzed through related thematic categories. Given the epistemology and methodology of this study were grounded in a critical paradigm, a critical perspective grounded the content here as well. Hupp et al.'s (2008) overview of the development of cognitive-behavioral theory was lean yet highly comprehensive. As thoughts, feelings, and actions are traditionally part of cognitive-behavioral theory (Hupp et al., 2008), a priori coding of these three code categories (i.e., beliefs/values, feelings, and actions) was selected to align with and further develop the embodied aspect of ECA. Additionally, there was an intention to label the third component actions instead of behaviors as it is more aligned with a critical stance. Thus, use of these a priori code categories provided a foundation of embodied data on which to further explore the embodied nature of participant experiences through the four phases of ECA mentioned in Chapter 3.

Lastly, regarding value placed on the participants and their narratives, elements of person-centered theory developed by Carl Rogers were also present. Transparency and authenticity (i.e., "genuineness, realness, or congruence"), unconditional positive regard (i.e., viewing the participant "in a total rather than a conditional way"), and empathic understanding (i.e., sensing "accurately the feelings and personal meanings that are being experienced by the [participant] and communicat[ing] this understanding to the [participant]" serve as the three pillars of Rogers' Theory (Rogers, 1979, p. 99). Ultimately, "the crux of the theory is the assumption that human beings have an inherent tendency toward growth, development, and optimal functioning" (Patterson & Joseph, 2007, p. 118) and it is this tendency toward growth and actualization that can be found in participant experiences. Positing knowledge and information can be garnered through multiple methods of data collection and analysis (as long as a critical perspective is maintained), this analysis method is thus fully aligned with critical qualitative methodology and its phases will be explored with greater depth in the following subsections. Figure 2 provides an outline of the ECA's phases and steps.

Figure 2

Embodied Critical Analysis Phases and Steps
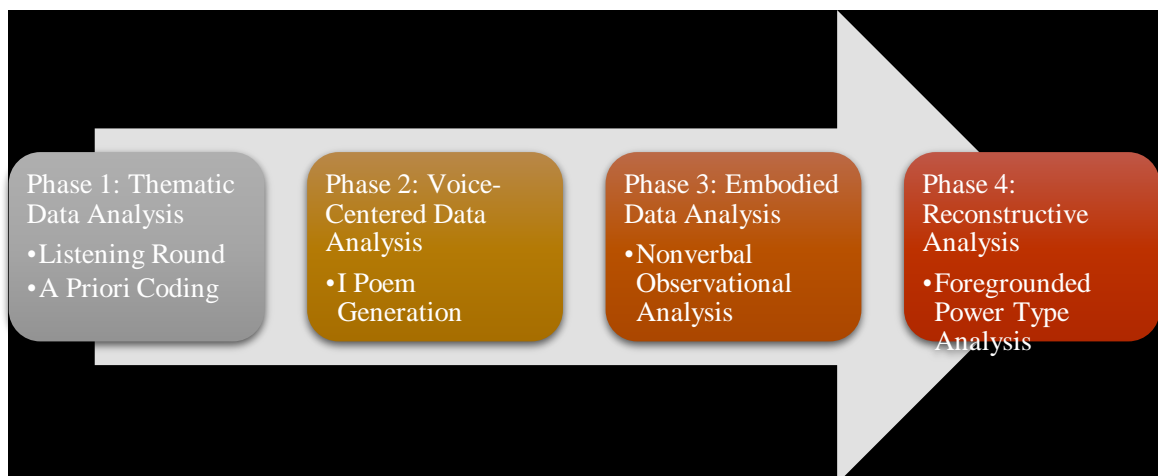
Phase 1: Thematic Data Analysis

The first phase of ECA included: (a) a listening round to ensure transcript accuracy while also selecting participant quotes that captured the essence of their narrative in powerful ways, and (b) a priori coding of the entire transcript across belief, feeling, and action categories. As analysis continued, additional coding groups (discussed further in the findings chapters) emerged. Regarding specified coding methods, interviews were transcribed and coded through a multi-tiered process that began with sifting through transcriptions to highlight significant language that captured the essence of the phenomenon of study (Creswell et al., 2007). Low-level coding in this stage was inspired by affective coding methods (i.e., emotional and values coding) found in Saldaña (2021) that were informed by a priori methodological context where beliefs, feelings, and actions were identified and synthesized further into subcategories. This coding method was chosen as it provided an embodied foundation on which to build and develop ECA; therefore, centering participants' beliefs, feelings, and actions as universal subjective states of all human beings offering thick, rich descriptions of transcribed content (Patton, 2015).

When coding participant feelings a feelings wheel was used to identify primary, secondary, and tertiary emotions expressed. The concept behind the feelings wheel is that primary emotions are foundational to all human experience—that which we are born with across race, gender, and nationality (Willcox, 1982). Therefore, using this resource provided a universal framework to ground participant feelings (See Figure 3). MAXQDA, a software program designed for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis, was used as it allowed for collection, organization, and analyzation of data in a

comprehensive and streamlined fashion. Ultimately, this phase of data analysis in ECA

leveraged a critical, phenomenological, and multi-tiered approach that enabled coding of

transcripts and led to identification of themes, levels of meaning, and higher order

categories (Creswell et al., 2007).

Figure 3

The Feelings Wheel
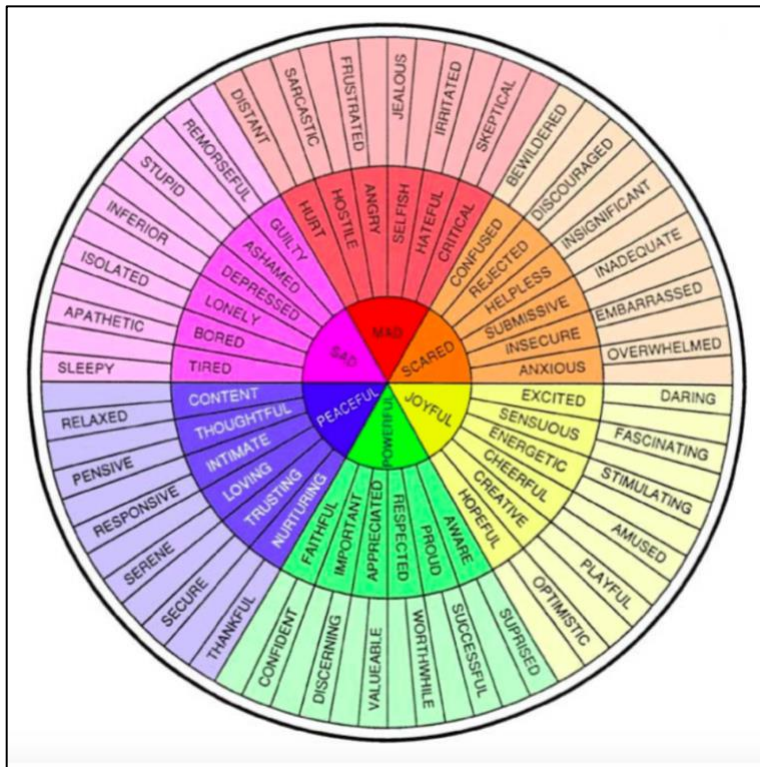
Note. Adapted from Willcox (1982).

Phase 2: Voice-Centered Data Analysis

This second phase of ECA included creating coherent narratives called I Poems as

the main focus. To truly highlight marginalized voices of Black, educator participants,

this phase involved a third step of analyzing self-perception that leveraged I poems from

feminist methods. Describing the four phases of the listening guide applied in feminist

methodology, Koelsch (2015) wrote:

> [First,] the researcher reads (or listens to) the text at least four separate times, to
>
> ascertain at least four "voices." The first voice is that of the plot, the narrative of
>
> the story. The second voice is the "I voice," which locates the participants' sense
>
> of agency and self throughout the text. The third and fourth voices change
>
> depending on the subject matter. These are often contrapuntal voices, and the
>
> second and third readings highlight the tensions and contradictions between these
>
> voices. All of these voices are tied together in a final step in order to create a
>
> coherent narrative. (p. 98)

Additionally, Gilligan et al. (2003) went into greater depth regarding the nuance and

detail of each step as it is highly inter-subjective.

While less interested in grounding the participants' experiences and contrapuntal

(or conflicting) voices in the plot of their story, foregrounding the second step by

exploring and synthesizing transcription themes through creative synthesis was

paramount given the purpose of this study was to amplify Black educator voice. Through

a creative approach to data analysis, I Poems allowed further enhancement of the essence

of the participants' lived experience using poetic inquiry in a visceral way that solely

presenting themes may not have. This also provided an opportunity to extract the essence

of the interview using participants direct language—amplifying their voice, sense of self,

and authentic truth. Therefore, I statements found in transcripts were highlighted via the

ways participants situated themselves within their narratives. To protect confidentiality,

there was an omission of information that may have counteracted that effort. Regarding

the perspective of the listener represented in feminist methods, the impact of participants' stories on my thoughts and feelings was accounted for through self-reflexivity and memoing; therefore, analyzing reflective written passages as the listener—a specific component of feminist methods—was excluded.

Phase 3: Embodied Data Analysis

The third phase of ECA included a fourth step where nonverbal observational analysis was applied through observational notes that were coded into broader groups that not only captured the actual movements of the participants during the interview but also the context and the nuance of the movement. Following the legacy of scholars like Johnson, McNeill, and McLaren referenced by Carspecken (1996), in this study, I aimed to: (a) explore the embodied character of meaning through "sensations as core schema from which concepts and other meaning structures are built" (Carspecken, 1996p. 125), and (b) explore "gestures and postures that accompany linguistic portions of an act" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 125) through the body serving as the foundation for meaning making as well as a crucial factor in understanding the cultural schemes and power dynamics of social groups. Bucek (2004) beautifully noted:

> What we can experience and how we make sense of what we experience depends on the kinds of bodies we have and the ways we interact with the various environments we inhabit. It is through our embodied interactions that we inhabit a world, and it is through our bodies that we are able to understand and act within this world with varying degrees of success. (p. 62)

Brown (1998), a dance educator and choreographer, "recognized the importance of movement as a common unifying form of communication" (p. 33). In much of her artistic

work, which led her to study embodied movement, communication through the body, and thus replication of said movement, Brown believed that coding or notating movement was a symbolic way to capture choreography (i.e., narrative told through artistic and embodied means).

While there are more systematic forms of notation and coding, like motif notation, traditionally used in the field of dance as a means through which one can use symbols that allow one to translate movement into written form through structural analysis, coding said nonverbal communication through observational notes provided representation of the participants' embodied, physical experience during the retelling of their narrative with greater accuracy and context. By pairing the coded transcription with the coded nonverbal communication, data analysis proved more multi-dimensional. Allowing elements found in their preferred supervision and work environments to be heard, this provided an opportunity to amplify their voice through exploring the whole participant's experience (i.e., mind, body, and emotions) via research—resulting in a critical, physiological application of lessons learned and possible demystification of the impact of a dysfunctional system in which Black educators may find it difficult to advance and thrive (Fox et al., 2009; Patton, 2015). In short, I analyzed nonverbal communication displayed throughout the interviews through watching participant video recordings by coding each movement or expression and memoing the nuanced context that situated the movement or expression to further capture the embodied, phenomenological meaning of participant narratives.

Phase 4: Reconstructive Power Analysis

Carspecken (1996) wrote in great depth and philosophical acumen of a reconstructive analysis that engages the researcher in the phenomenological meaning making of a participant's experience through pragmatic horizon analysis. This analysis engages one in exploring the intersection of subjective and normative-evaluative claims held by the person's foregrounded and backgrounded context. Additionally, Carspecken determined that power types shape relationships individuals have with themselves, each other, and the world around them. Grounded in a critical perspective, Carspecken defined *normative power* as someone of lesser power submitting to someone of greater power due to cultural influence or tradition, *coercive power* as someone of lesser power acting to avoid sanctions given by someone with greater power, *interactively established contracts* as someone of lesser power acting in order to receive favors or rewards from someone with greater power, and *charm* as someone with lesser power acting out of loyalty to someone with greater power because of said person's personality. Lastly, Carspecken also wrote of *cultural power*. When enacted fully, "cultural power [often] penetrates to the very identity of people" (Carspecken, 1996) rooted in the institutional and systemic structure that often aligns with dominant culture, shaping the very fabric of communities, organizations, or smaller dyads as discussed in Chapter 2.

Therefore, the fourth phase of ECA included the fifth and final step that explored foregrounded power types (i.e., normative, coercive, interactively established contracts, charm, and cultural). Ultimately, this level of analysis allowed for further exploration of the aforementioned a priori code groups (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and actions) as well as additional groups developed throughout coding analysis like beliefs on school culture.

Providing a foundation to engage in reconstructive analysis, thematic analysis in phase

one allowed for reconstructive analysis in phase four through an exploration of power

types. Thus, the impact of said power on Black, educator experiences captured the nuance

and intersubjective nature of their individual narratives.

Validity

The approach to ensuring validity in one's study varies greatly in qualitative and

quantitative research methods. Morrow (2005) wrote that there are specific aspects of

validity that correspond to different qualitative paradigms. Exploring a critical-

ideological paradigm, Morrow argued that different constructions of one's subjective

experience should be solicited, honored, explored, developed, action inciting, deeply

understood, collaboratively generated, and positioned to obtain social and political

change. Regarding self-reflexivity, issues of inter-subjective positionality (i.e., being both

an outsider and an insider to the participant group) were accounted for through reflexive

practice captured in Chapter 1. Additionally, awareness gained from said self-reflexive

content throughout implementation of the interview processes was leveraged through the

continued use of memos (i.e., journaling) to capture my perspectives, feelings, and

behaviors (Morrow, 2005). Echoing Heidegger's (1971) philosophy on phenomenology

and resistance to bracketing, memoing also enabled self-facilitating boundaries that

accounted for researcher inter-subjective experience.

With greater emphasis on a critical conceptual framing of validity, Carspecken

(1996) drew on Habermas' theory to develop a conceptual understanding where

objective, subjective, and normative-evaluative realms are analyzed defining three

validity types. Although the core aspect of validity in this study was related to content in

the subjective realm, there were objective components. Carspecken wrote that validity criteria for knowledge claims in the objective realm are more factual with information that is accessible to multiple researchers and/or observers. Furthermore, Carspecken identified that arguments exist between identified reality and appearance that explore the notion that what is observable in a study can be interpreted with variance; however, the object itself may remain the same. Therefore, objective validity was represented using multiple recording devices (i.e., audio and visual recording tools) and cross referencing said devices in order to affirm transcript accuracy. Transcripts were further validified through use of an external transcription service against which the verification of dialogue was met.

Providing an opportunity to present valid data without the need for operationalizing content, the subjective realm defines subjective validity. Recognizing that the only person who truly knows the cognitive and felt sense is the person directly experiencing it, Carspecken (1996) wrote that it is possible for the researcher to come to know the participant's truth through a genuine and authentic inter-subjective representation shared by the interviewee. Carspecken wrote of in-person interviewing as an opportunity to further explore depth of self-disclosure by asking open ended, follow-up questions bringing about further participant exploration as well as attunement to cultural blindness of the interviewer allowing for recognition of cultural norms. Informing what is shared as well as what shapes shared content, the subjective subconscious through which interpersonal engagement can be further explored via relational approaches to qualitative interviewing reinforces said recognition of cultural norms (Josselson, 2013).

Therefore, I incorporated subjective validity through open-ended questions, reframing, and reflection of participant responses during interviews that provided layers of depth in exploration that were intimate, thorough, comprehensive, and genuine. Participants then confirmed the accuracy of my intersubjective-perspective and analysis through further exploration, affirmation, and/or clarification of additional response. Rapport was built with participants prior to and during the interview further facilitating and supporting authenticity of truth telling. Lastly, the images referenced earlier in the methods section also served as an additional form of subjective validity as the visual representation of the participant's spectrum of well-being served as a resource against which the participant and I could gauge their level of well-being throughout the retelling of their narrative experience.

Regarding normative-evaluative validity, Carspecken (1996) wrote about the unspoken expectations of interrelating in normative culture. While meanings serve as the interpretation of the normative action witnessed by another person, norms can serve as "core structures of position-taking" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 81). Carspecken defined the normative-evaluative realm as:

> An ontological category presupposed by all meaningful action. It consists of truth claims about what behavior is proper, appropriate, and conventional. Normative-evaluative claims can always be articulated as "should claims"; people should act in such and such a way at such and such times. Normative-evaluative claims thus concern the nature of our world rather than "the" world or "my" world. (p. 83)

Relating the concept of normative-evaluative validity to this study, three approaches were employed. The first was implemented as part of the interview protocol

(See Appendix E). As the core focus of the interviews centered on unpacking participant experiences with supervisors, toward the end of each interview, participants were asked to define normative school culture and its impact on said experiences. They spoke about how their behavior was perceived within said culture, if they would redefine their school's culture based on their own ethnic, sub-cultural norms and evaluative realms, and how (in the interim) their school's culture and behavior therein was shaped by dominant, white ideology. The second approach to establishing normative-evaluative validity involved peer debriefing with colleagues and faculty that enabled further analytical exploration and challenge of said claims. The third approach involved the use of member checking through the sharing of participant I Poems with participants to ensure they were aligned with the telling of their experiences as well as the expression of their voice. Ultimately, this exploration enabled access toward understanding participants' positionality within their normative framework positioning the researcher to uphold critical epistemology with fidelity.

Considering additional validity types, Massey and Barreras (2013) wrote about impact validity wherein they believed research can impact social and political change and/or have a transformative impact on advocacy and activism. To build upon this perspective, Prilleltensky (2003) expanded this concept to include psycho-political validity containing two components (i.e., epistemic and transformative) that challenge researchers to incorporate liberation in their empirical process. As defined by Prilleltensky:

> Epistemic validity depends on the incorporation of knowledge on oppression into
> all research and action […] accounting for power dynamics operating at

psychological and political levels in efforts to understand phenomena of interest.

[…While] transformative validity demands changes toward liberation at personal,

interpersonal, and structural domains. (pp. 199–200)

Ultimately, the epistemology and methodology of this dissertation aimed to align with

both forms of epistemic and transformative validity. Toward the end of each interview,

participants were asked if they had additional perspectives to share, if there were

questions they wished were asked, and if they were holding reflections or actionable next

steps they wanted to pursue as a result of this interview experience. All participants had

incredibly powerful responses to those questions as well as to the restorative and

validating impact this interview experience had on them as Black educators.

Grounded in a transformative, interpersonal encounter allowing for the

application of embodied ways of exploring the human experience, objective, subjective,

and normative-evaluative validity realms were sought. It is through this interpersonal

exchange that I believed psychopolitical validity (i.e., further systemic and institutional

change) could be achieved. Negating binary, hegemonic cultural norms, one could then

leverage socio-political and historical context toward systemic and institutional

revolution where opportunity for organizational interventions that account for

administrative and relational dynamics. These dynamics, that shape and are shaped by

culture and organizational norms, could then foster an existence at the intersection of

professional experiences that include organizational structure and culture.

Ethical Considerations

Regarding ethical considerations, three factors are reviewed in this section (i.e.,

participant rapport and safety, participant confidentiality, and epistemic violence).

Regarding rapport and safety, preparation for participants to feel triggered by the retelling of their stories should they have been severely, negatively impacted by their experiences was established during interviews through leveraging trauma-sensitive approaches in the overall structure of the interview and asking questions that kept content relatively contained. Resources for further therapeutic support should participants need them were also available. Regarding coercion, this unethical practice was avoided by presenting participants with a book given as a token of appreciation for their time before the interview started.

Regarding confidentiality, participant information was held on a password protected computer and/or in a locked file cabinet separate from other identifying information throughout data generation and analysis. Additionally, identifying participant information remained confidential in all findings chapters as represented by pseudonyms and adjusted quotations, which was explained in the informed consent form (See Appendix D). Although foreseeable ethical concerns related to the research design were not anticipated, participants could have been concerned with not wanting to be recorded; this factor was accounted for in the exclusion criteria. Given the lack of Black professionals in public schools, there was the likelihood that participants could have been identified if enough information was given sans their names. Therefore, withholding specific information about their places of employment (i.e., their respective schools) was enacted. Given the direct focus on multicultural, diversity, and social justice perspectives relevant to the research design, these foci were integrated in the study's conceptualization, design, and execution.

Lastly, Teo (2010), who introduced the term epistemological violence, established this concept that stemmed from an ill-informed interpretation of data leading to ill-informed knowledge that can then develop socially unjust policies. Teo argued that ill-informed knowledge and unjust policies tend to be generated for and impact marginalized groups the most. Reflecting on critical epistemology, avoiding said violence against participants was intentional. Thus, interpreting participant interviews with multiple forms of data, a phenomenological approach to data collection, and multiple forms of data analysis afforded the opportunity to delve deeper into and center participants' truth over that of the researcher.

Pilot Experience

In order to explore potential challenges and benefits to the interview experience as well as data generation methods, a pilot experience was conducted for which one Black, cis gender female educator working in the Boston metro area was interviewed. She was a special education teacher with a 20-year tenure. When conducting the pilot, facets of CRT and trauma theory were present. When focusing on healthier work experiences, the participant embodied free-flowing hand gestures, smiled, and raised her chest. When the supervisor dynamic was less healthy, she described the interaction as verbally abusive and traumatic leading toward her becoming complacent and feeling dis-empowered. She also discussed the complexity of school systems and structures and their impact on school culture and supervisor relationships. The words race, culture, gender, structure, voice, value, democratic, bureaucratic, trust, and respect were mentioned multiple times which led to the assumption that elements of these themes may also be found when conducting the study.

Data Generation

The images selected by the participant seemed to be grounding and provided a

visual representation of her embodied experience that she was able to revisit throughout

the interview. In the image of her thriving self, she was powerful, knowledgeable, vocal,

strong, and trusted by others. Words like autonomy, respect, voice, transparence, positive,

trusted, appreciate, strong, grounded, open, taking risks, flexible, motivated, cultural

alignment, and creative were used to describe her healthier work experiences. The image

representing her worst self at work showed her inside a dark, rainy tunnel with makeup

running down her face, hair plastered to her head, and feelings of defeat. Descriptive

words like dark place, intimidation, smoke and mirrors, verbal abuse, isolating, insecure,

stifling, undervalued, restricted, threatened, defensive, complacent, stress, miserable,

bureaucracy, and broken explained unhealthy supervisor experiences. Additionally, her

body language seemed to be congruent with her verbal narrative in that she smiled, used

her hands freely when talking, and rested back on the couched or on the arm of the couch

when speaking about healthy experiences. Consequently, she used her hands less, stuck

them between her legs at times, hunched her shoulders closer to her ears, leaned forward,

made shapes with her hands that were sharp and inflexible, and in general seemed more

drained from an exploration of less healthy encounters.

Methodological Impact

At the end of this pilot experience, I received feedback from the participant. It

was incredibly helpful as some of the changes helped shape and achieve stronger validity.

Two major factors related to the set of questions that explored the educator's experience

as well as some of the language used were adjusted. In the original set of questions,

words like positive and negative shaped interview questions. However, there seemed to be an organic shift toward healthy and unhealthy. This accounted for the notion that no individual experience is binary (e.g., positive or negative). However, recognizing experiences stretch across a continuum of healthy and unhealthy encounters that entail both positive and negative components like a Venn diagram of sorts was more appropriate. Thus, this language was changed.

Taking a boarder lens, the structure of the questions also shifted. Although the interview was semi-structured, it was a bit too directive and compartmentalized with separate sections on healthy and unhealthy work experiences. Moving forward, an open-ended question was asked at the beginning to engage participants in the telling of their narrative allowing them to share a story about a work experience with a supervisor that was impactful for them. Further follow-up questions were then asked to explore with greater detail the healthy and unhealthy components as well as additional factors accounted for in the interview protocol like identity, school structure and culture, and power and privilege (See Appendix E).

Ultimately, this participant had moments of welcomed insight where she identified the interview allowed her to explore experiences with supervisors in ways she had not previously. She expressed appreciation for this opportunity and felt that it was helpful or rather healing in some capacity—an opportunity to seek her truth and liberate her voice. It was also affirming as current research generally focuses on school leaders and/or students lacking space to amplify the voices of educators and more specifically Black educators in public schools. Lastly, the insight provided by the participant in this pilot experience also aligned with the epistemological intention to speak truth to power

by exploring, empowering, and amplifying the voices of Black educators—creating space for them to tell their stories in the ways they saw fit.

Chapter Summary

Ultimately, through exploring the experiences of Black educators and the impact of direct supervisors on these participants in public schools, I hoped to bring a holistic, critically conscious perspective through implementation of a critical and phenomenological epistemology. Ultimately, the aim of the interview experience was to afford Black, educator participants empowerment to achieve more sustainable work lives where healthy supervising, staff development, and systemic change would lead toward greater well-being. Recognizing suffering systems leads to suffering employees, Black educators must no longer merely survive but thrive. It must be acknowledged that organizational success is more than numbers, funding, and rapid growth; it is also about changing lives and creating sustainable systems driven by healthy, well-balanced, and skilled employees. It is this humanistic perspective that also guided strategies supporting objective, subjective, and normative-evaluative validity as well as ethical considerations. Thus, the next four chapters will review findings that ground these ideas of embodied experiences through a synthesis of data analyzed via ECA.

Chapter 4: Findings—Situating Embodied Critical Analysis

> I have this cultural competency thing down.
> I also have my academic stuff down.
> I'm not going to half-ass anything.
> I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that this doesn't happen to you.
> –I Poem: Faith

Chapter 3 provided an overview of critical qualitative methodology and the innovative approach I created that shaped an artistic construction of methods comprising ECA. Through the creation of ECA, an opportunity to explore the multidimensional experiences of participants on intrapersonal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels was given impetus. These dimensions of the human experience include beliefs and values, feelings, and actions as well as culture that will ground a presentation of foregrounded power types. Comprised of cognitive-behavioral and person-centered theoretical elements grounded in a critical, embodied stance, ECA shaped the following findings chapters (i.e., Chapters 4-7). For the code book including a full list of code categories see Appendix F. Figure 4 represents topics and themes from each code category found in each findings chapter. The remainder of this chapter will provide a general overview of participants introducing each person to the reader.

Figure 4

Overview of Findings
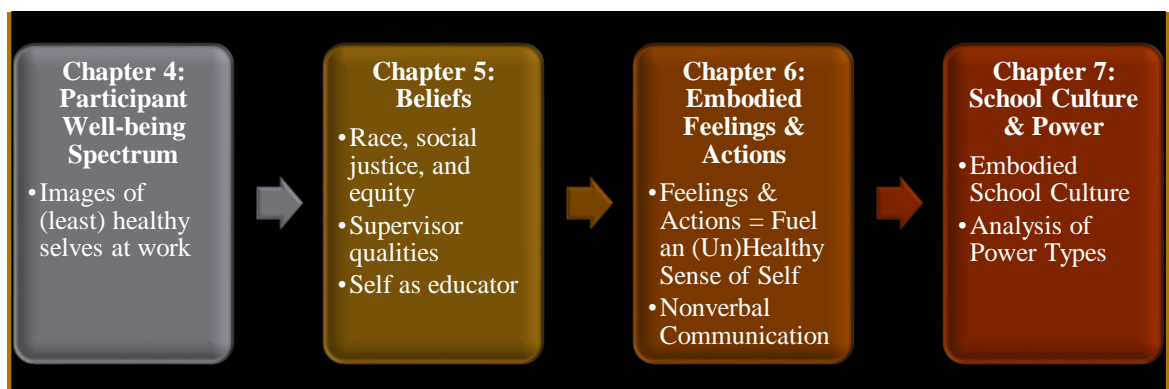
Participant Introductions

This chapter provides an introduction of each participant in the study. Each section begins with a general overview of their perspectives on being Black educators in public schools within the context of their supervisor relationships. Following each general reflection, there are images selected by each participant that represent their healthiest and least healthy selves at work. As aforementioned in Chapter 3, these images were requested of and selected by participants in preparation for the interview. To begin the conversations, participants were asked to share how these images represented their spectrum of well-being at work. These images served as conversation starters as well as foundational meaning making that also served as points of reflection and grounding throughout the interview. For example, when a participant identified where they stood within a particular scenario, they would often identify where they felt they were in relation to the well-being images selected. The following participant sections are listed in order of their interview; Alicia is the first participant introduced.

Alicia: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

Guiding her practice as an educator, there was an integrity of character Alicia seemed to hold dear. She believed keeping her word, being professional, being humble, and having a positive work ethic were all important. During her interview, Alicia stated,

> If I'm doing something and you're like, "You know? I wasn't really feeling that." Where's that coming from? I want to learn so that I can maneuver better next time. […] You know? As human beings, I feel like we're always in this circuit of progression and improvement and learning and trying to do better […] at least some of us are.

Additionally, Alicia valued authentic relationships at work (especially with her supervisors); however, she also believed boundaries were necessary and getting too personal with her supervisors (i.e., sharing to much of one's personal life) was not aligned with her standard of professionalism. Alicia firmly believed follow-through was a core tenant of her moral compass. When explaining this tenant, she shared,

> When I tell myself I'm going to do something...I'm one of those people... I'm very, I don't like to break my promises. So, if I say I'm going to do something […] First of all I'm not going to say it if I don't think I can do it, and secondly, I'm going to do everything that I can to make sure I can get it done.

Alicia's passion for follow-through was a fraction of her passion for her career of choice. She believed she was incredibly fortunate to experience such fulfillment of purpose—as a greater good seemed to align with what she believed to be necessary in order to a have fulling and sustainable career.

Regarding Alicia's well-being spectrum, she found herself mostly embodying healthy qualities at work (See Figure 5). When she was not her best self, it was usually due to external factors outside of work. Regarding her healthiest self, Alicia discussed choosing a picture full of lavender flowers as she reflected on a flower when it is in full bloom, nourished, and fully gown. The atmosphere in the image on the left appears calm as the sun shines brightly. Alicia shared her love for the color purple as well as sun rises and sunsets. She shared that when she looked at this picture it made her happy.

The image on the right represents Alicia when she is not her best self at work. She provided a complex rationale for this visual representation. At first glance, one might infer that she is unable to be her genuine self at work when she is not her healthiest.

However, Alicia explained that when she is working with her students, she puts forth her best effort to bring her best self (i.e., light, love, and positive energy). The sad emotion displayed by the apple graphic behind the picture with the smiling expression represents challenges she may be facing outside of work. Alicia named that because she values authentic relationships with her students, her students can often tell when she is managing external stressors.

Rather than hide her authentic self, she believed in the importance of her students being able to see her humanity as she is a multidimensional being whose profession is teaching and whose purpose is to educate youth and serve as a caring role model. Therefore, this picture is less about being fake but rather about showing her students that "despite life's challenges [she] can still smile or […] still get what [she] need[s] to get done. And so that's really where this picture came from" Alicia stated. In the image on the right, Alicia showed through strength, authenticity, genuineness, and complexity, that she can balance two realities and put forth her best effort to be her best self for her students. The next section will introduce Brianna.

Figure 5

Interview 1: Visual Well-being Spectrum

Brianna: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

Regarding one's understanding of self as a Black educator, Brianna reinforced the importance of having a good professional record, hard work ethic, and completing a job well. When discussing the importance of having an unblemished professional record, Brianna named the lessons she learned from her great-grandmother about the importance of completing one's job and doing it right regardless of one's physical or emotional state. Brianna named that if she were to become lax, there would not only be an impact on her, but it would also reflect poorly on her race. She stated,

> When I'm not able to show up, my race is kind of…like that mentality that my [great-] grandmother had like, just do your job and you do it right. So no one could say anything about you. […] Someone could say you're lazy, and I think that's the point she was coming from. No one can say you're lazy, no one can say...yeah, you're worthless.

When sharing this reflection, Brianna shared the belief that as a Black educator she not only represents herself, but also that the reputation of all Black educators collectively rests on her shoulders. Therefore, she has a personal responsibility toward the collective as well as herself to not give her supervisor(s) a reason to target her and/or judge her on fulfilling a negative stereotype of Black people in general. She continued saying that, unfortunately, this means she at times has sacrificed her well-being or her happiness in the process. Brianna also named that she would be less perturbed by a supervisor's negative reflection on her demeanor than her quality of work.

Brianna believed that she was destined to become an educator by a power and an inter-generational calling much bigger and farther beyond herself. Her great-grandmother

was a teacher, and Brianna believed she was destined to become one as well. At times she

tried to resist, but her job opportunities tended toward public schools. Moreover, this

calling also reinforced her commitment and drive toward a strong, integral reputation and

work ethic. In addition to strongly held beliefs about work ethic, valuing her authentic

self and a preference for work environments where self-actualization could be obtained

and expressed was reinforced.

Regarding Brianna's well-being spectrum, she explained the images that

represented her least healthy self at work first (See Figure 6). Brianna selected two

pictures that represented this being state. The image in the middle was of her great-

grandmother who migrated from the South to the Northeast in order to build a better life

for her and her family as she became an entrepreneur and business owner against nearly

insurmountable odds. The image on the far right represented a similar theme as a family

is shown with a lot of luggage. Brianna interpreted this family as migrating as well. She

named that as a Black educator, there is a lot of baggage that she has carried. Much like

the man in the back of the image, at times she feels she is carrying a large responsibility

on her own. Brianna also named that she recognized the facial expressions of each person

in the image. Regarding the young woman in the front of the image on the far right, she

acknowledged her smile and named that there are times she is happy at her job and loves

her work—usually fueled by working with her students or building community with

colleagues.

Regarding the other end of the well-being spectrum, Brianna explained how the

image on the far left represented her healthiest self at work. She began sharing a story

about how she was wearing her hair in its natural state in an afro style represented in the

image. Not only was she getting compliments from her Black, female students but she

also noticed they started wearing their hair like that as well. She made a point to return

the favor and compliment their hair too. This experience highlighted for her the impact

representation can have on young minds and served as a reminder that she serves as a role

model for her Black, female students. Brianna named that she feels her most authentic in

her natural state, and this ultimately fuels her well-being. The next section will introduce

Ciara.

Figure 6

Interview 2: Visual Well-being Spectrum

Ciara: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

  Holding strong beliefs about agency and the need for authentic, self-actualization,

Ciara discussed the importance of being fulfilled at work versus finding fulfillment

outside of work. She shared,

  If I could, I'd put myself in a position where I'm always going to love my job and

  love what I do. I feel like it's helping me be me. I don't [want to] feel like, "Oh,

  I'm going to be in my job and then when I leave my job, I'll do my real life. […]

  It's like…it's my right.

There was also a sense of self-determination that grounded her ability to achieve difficult challenges and not be deterred by feelings of overwhelm as Ciara believed and stated "very few things are impossible. If anything, they just take longer maybe." Ciara firmly believed her privilege as a veteran educator shaped much of her impact and influence as well as her ability to set effective boundaries as needed, as she shared "I have a certain amount of privilege as a veteran teacher at this point to be like, 'No.' […] No, I don't check my email on Sunday. I don't check my email over the summer."

Ciara held a desire for deep systemic and cultural change toward a more critically conscious pedagogy as well as a belief that superficial change leads to decreased buy-in from Black educators. When reflecting on this dynamic, Ciara noted the impact supervisor commitment to equitable cultural and systemic change can have on her intrinsic motivation. For example, she would go out of her way taking on additional tasks when she knew her supervisor was taking specific action to address inequity among staff. Ciara also noted that going the extra mile seemed to bring favor toward her—which she felt said more about the supervisor's implicit bias and a proclivity to celebrate that which they found familiar, safe, and/or the norm. Ciara also noted that when the supervisor displayed negative qualities, counteracting these behaviors with integrity proved necessary. While Ciara found it important to receive respect from her supervisor, she also named that she believed in maintaining one's moral compass and exercising agency through advocacy—regardless of the repercussion.

Regarding Ciara's well-being spectrum (See Figure 7), Ciara discussed the image that represented her healthiest self at work first as seen in the image on the left. Ciara discussed feeling grounded and rooted in her ideology, purpose, and work. She shared

that she loves trees and nature in general and felt this represented her authentic self. Ciara

shared an appreciation for flow and likened this to the dynamic nature of teaching and

being in tune with one's colleagues and one's students. This perspective also influenced

the selection of an image of a tree next to water carrying a flow-like, adaptable quality.

Ciara named that "the green to me is vibrant and growing. Education for me, […] it's

about growth."

When Ciara is not her healthiest at work, she represented this well-being state

with the image on the right. She referenced a static feeling where life is lacking and dry.

She felt that when she gets to this point, it serves as a warning sign that she needs to

make a shift toward wellness and self-care. Ciara shared that these moments can be

cyclical and unpredictable carrying with them time sensitive requests. As Ciara shared

her well-being states and their impact on her at work, she carried a palpable, visceral

embodiment. The next section will introduce Deja.

Figure 7

Interview 3: Visual Well-being Spectrum

Deja: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

Believing she was doing well as a teacher when she felt that she could see her best

self-reflected in her students, Deja shared that when she is teaching well, her students not

only learn but also develop confidence and competence with increased value in their

cultural identities. When these qualities are evident in her students, she believes she is

leaving a legacy with the next generation to know more, be better, and do better. Deja

believed she was destined for education as her family values legacy and tradition;

therefore, teaching was not a responsibility she took lightly. In aligning her purpose with

a critically conscious lens, she named that she "very easily connected with the students

because they are me." This racial and cultural connection to her students not only enabled

her to build rapport but also serve as a model of someone who can move beyond mere

empathy as an educator and share a within group experience.

Additionally, Deja also believed growth and development were important not just

in skill set but also in position of power, impact, and influence. She believed

professionalism was paramount. When Deja chose to leave one of her schools, she did so

with class and integrity and named that she worked even harder to leave a good, lasting

impression despite believing the treatment she received was void of said characteristics.

With this professionalism came a belief that there was no room for error. Deja named that

"[Black educators] always have to be exceptional in anything that we do because as soon

as we show any weakness at all, make any mistakes at all, we are villainized [by] them

[White supervisors]. Right? In a way it's scary."

Regarding Deja's well-being spectrum (See Figure 8), Deja discussed the image

that represented her healthiest self at work seen in the image on the left. When Deja

reflecting on her best self at work, she felt she could see a reflection of herself in her

students. She explained that this reflection was grounded in her students' effort and their

embodied commitment to doing well. The image on the left fully aligns with this

perspective as it is of a woman seeing her reflection in the water. She is regal, and Deja described the embodied experience of this image as queen-like. She shared that there is also a serene quality to this image that makes her think of peace. Deja named that "she's just calm, cool and collected and knows who she is. I love the lines in her body and the ripple effects. […] That was the one for me." In this image, there is beauty, grace, sensuality, nurturance, and peace as the woman in the image adoringly admires her own reflection in the water. Thus, the image on the left was grounded in nature with an ethereal quality that represented nurturance and well-being.

When Deja reflected on an image that represented her unhealthy self at work, she shared the image on the right which carried an opposing symbolism. Deja talked about the confidence she has as an educator and the juxtaposition of the lack of BIPOC representation in school administration. While there was representation in the classroom, she felt that the microaggressions she received from White colleagues created an imbalance in experience. She felt that she had to hold up a proverbial mask and could only be her authentic self around other BIPOC staff, students, and families. Deja shared that she felt guilty having to bear this burden as she could only fully take off her proverbial mask when she was home. Deja agreed that there was a juxtaposition between the two images as both women are looking downward, but one feels heavy and burdened while the other embodied strength and authenticity. Building on the artificial nature of the image on the right, Deja also named that although both women are "looking down, I definitely feel in this second one, I feel like she could be looking at herself, but she doesn't want to. […] But [in the image on the left] it looks she's looking down to see herself." The next section will introduce Esther.

Figure 8

Interview 4: Visual Well-being Spectrum

Esther: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

When reflecting on her entry into the field of education, Esther believed the proverbial door was divinely opened and the opportunity blessed by God as she was excited to work with youth. She valued professionalism and approached situations rationally. She is an active listener with an ability to find common ground with her supervisor when there is conflict. She also held respect as a core value in and outside of work. She shared,

> I respect her even, whatever mood she's in, that she is the headmaster. That she is my supervisor, so I respect that, but I'm glad that she will listen to what I have to say. Even in this headmaster position, she will listen to what I have to say. And there's still a level of respect there between us both.

While respect grounds her relationships, Esther also believes in a strong work ethic. Should anything compromise her reputation and/or the quality of her work, Esther will quickly and effectively set boundaries—unafraid to be directive and her authentic self throughout the experience. Given the risk this could pose, she is also been intentional

about keeping her career options open. Should she need to make a career shift, Esther believes having a career safety net is always important to maintain one's power and agency—keeping "myself licensed and prepared, you know what I'm saying? Just in case," Esther stated.

Reflecting on Esther's spectrum of well-being (See Figure 9), the image on the left represented her healthiest self at work and the image on the right represented her least healthy self. She explained that when she embodies well-being, she feels free, calm, and happy. She feels as though she has everything in order and is self-affirming. However, when she feels more stress, it is usually when she is required to complete additional work or additional commitments at the end of the day like professional development. Esther believed she could use that time to further develop curriculum, programs, and/or collaborate with colleagues. She explained that she chose the woman with the help sign in the image on the right because she believes administration does not listen to educators' needs and this is not only a cry for help but also an advocacy cry.

Esther named that as Black teachers, the burden to develop better practices is heavier as most of their student population is Black and Brown, and there is less room for error given the disenfranchisement they will encounter later in life and likely currently do. Upon further exploration, there was also insight pertaining to the image on the left representing natural elements (i.e., the beach and natural hair) as well as free movement and less restrictive clothing. While the image on the right had a woman with processed hair (i.e., hair in a style that opposes how it naturally grows) as well as more restrictive clothing, body language, and technology (i.e., the computer); the juxtaposition is palpable. The next section will introduce Faith.

Figure 9

Interview 5: Visual Well-being Spectrum
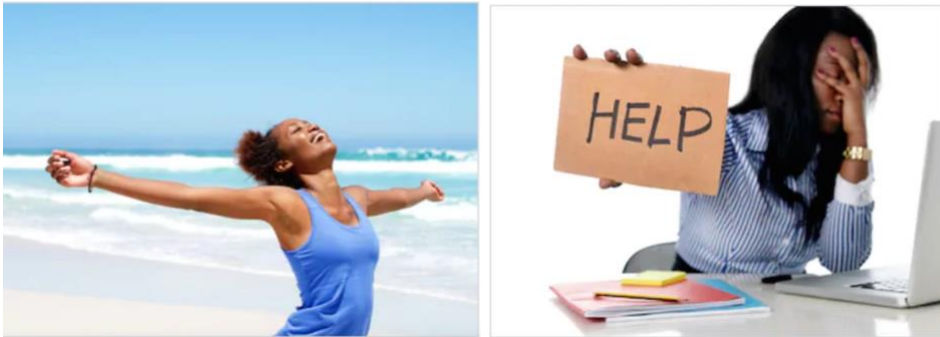
Faith: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

Grounded in her cultural identity, Faith's commitment was also driven by a strong work ethic. With greater impact and influence, she believed that she would be able to create change that moved beyond inclusion toward liberation of those that have been traditionally marginalized. She named that as a Jamaican woman, she learned persistence and steadfastness from other women in her family. Quitting was not an option as she believed that "[her] fight [would] make it a little easier for someone else coming behind [her]," Faith shared. While she embodied self-confidence, she also balanced this characteristic with humility and a desire to continue to grow and develop her own skill set. Although she was grounded in her industry and the skills she developed throughout her career, she recognized that in shifting to education there was much to learn and willfully brought a novice like energy to said experiences.

Faith talked frequently about mentorship and the importance of giving back and creating opportunities for other Black educators to also learn, grow, and develop competence in their ability to teach. When describing this experience, Faith shared how she created space for empowering those she mentored by stating,

I started mentoring without really mentoring. It's like, Nope, we're going to sit.

We're going to study. […] You're going to pass because here's the thing ... The

system is setting you up for that. They're like, "Well, we tried. We gave them a

waiver, but they couldn't pass the MTEL." So, we know that's a barrier that's

keeping teachers of color out of the profession. […] Because I knew this, I'm like

I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that this doesn't happen to you.

In this instance, Faith shared a trend she noticed with Black educators and decreased

retention where they would often be let go for not passing the Massachusetts Test for

Educator Licensure. This was her way of shifting the inequitable tide within the bounds

of her school. With greater agency and position of power as the lead teacher at her

school, Faith was also able to highlight bright spots in other Black educators' work from

which their strengths could be showcased and learned. Faith's driving force was to

increase Black educators' ability to withstand the microaggressions she and other Black

colleagues experienced in the field.

Reflecting on Faith's well-being spectrum, she represented her healthiest and least

healthy self at work in Figure 10. Faith shared that when she is aligned with her

coworkers and advocating for the same cause or goal, she feels her best is seen in the

image on the left. Faith further explained that this common goal is defined by student

outcomes as she has "no choice but to make sure that [she's] putting out powerful people

into the world," Faith stated. Faith went on to say that this is more than just a job for her

but rather her passion and driving force. She named that as a mother of Black boys, she

requires more than average results for her boys as she does for her Black and Brown

students in preparation for the harsh reality society will yield.

Faith acknowledged there was power in being united under the same goal. She

named that when she is her best self, she engages in a purposeful thought process. In

these instances, she feels most powerful as she tends to be more driven and experiences

reciprocal accountability with colleagues and supervisors alike. She also shared that the

phone in the image on the left represents a strong societal symbol of power and

communication—believing that "if we're all sharing that power, then we'll get to the end

together and we'll have the same end in mind." When Faith is not her best self, she feels

unheard and that her perspective and voice are being ignored by coworkers,

administrators, or even students as seen in the image on the right. She values mutual

understanding and believes that people can disagree with her but that actively listening

and receiving what she is saying is important—producing contentment. When this is not

present, Faith feels unsettled and finds herself overthinking in a manner counter-

productive to the thought process previously mentioned. The next section will introduce

Isaiah.

Figure 10

Interview 6: Visual Well-being Spectrum

Isaiah: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

Growth, development, and continued learning are core values of Isaiah. He

embodies a strong work ethic that he believed he developed from a long-term athletic

career that carried him through college as well as intergenerational life lessons that were

passed down to him through his mother. During the interview Isaiah shared,

> It's always been like, you just put your best foot forward and keep working. Put
>
> your head down and you do what you got to do. You work, don't be complaining
>
> about stuff, because people complain all they want, it doesn't mean you're going
>
> to get something. So rather than complaining, […] no matter what happens, you
>
> just got to get it done […] one way or another.

Drive, grit, and perseverance are what carried Isaiah through his career as an educator.

He described how he lacked effective coaching from supervisors for much of his

experience and had to take it upon himself to learn more and develop his craft. He stated,

> So that's where I had to compensate. I had to do a lot of my own preparation, a lot
>
> of my own studying. And I don't even mean in class. I mean at home in the living
>
> room type stuff, going into a bookstore, grabbing books, going in the library, just
>
> gleaning information from wherever.

He expounded upon this and named that he believed he was behind not only because of

insufficient supervision, but he also did not believe his academic career prepared him

well to figure out his career goals and the skills he would need to achieve them. Despite

the challenges he endured along the way, Isaiah eventually succeeded. Isaiah named that

"It was important because it actually helped me to feel like I actually reached a goal that I

had been aiming to reach all those years." While Isaiah named what he lacked in

supervision for a large portion of his experience as a teacher, he also named that he did

feel valued and did not feel left alone so to speak. Isaiah spoke frequently about feeling a

sense of support in general or that his supervisors valued him as a human being. Isaiah

often seemed to share these reflections as an attempt to balance out his negative

experiences or assuage the tension he felt around naming some of his challenges.

Reflecting on Isaiah's well-being spectrum, he chose two images represented in

Figure 11 that capture his healthiest and least healthy self at work. Isaiah shared that this

image of a long jumper in the image on the left represented him as his healthiest. He was

athletic in high school and college, and he remembered feeling physically loose, strong,

free, and at peak physical performance. Isaiah felt as though nothing was able to hold him

down; he was able to soar. He named that image "Unstoppable Me."

Regarding the image on the right, Isaiah found a visual representation of struggle.

Reflecting on lacking confidence in front of his students, he realized it occurred when he

felt ill informed, unprepared, and hesitant to teach. While he put forth his best effort,

Isaiah shared he still felt he was struggling "to find information[,…] struggling to save

face[,…] struggling to do whatever [he] need[ed] to do." He named that the additional

figures in the image represent the things he felt were holding him back from being his

best in those moments (i.e., lack of resources, information, preparation, energy, and

personal life challenges). While the energy is different in both images, both still have a

determined drive and are forward facing. Isaiah named that this resonated with him as his

desire to grow, develop, and improve fuels his resistance when being told what he is

unable to achieve by others. Ultimately, Isaiah wants the agency and autonomy to decide

what he chooses to and not to take on. The next section will introduce Harriet.

Figure 11

Interview 7: Visual Well-being Spectrum

Harriet: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

When it came to general beliefs of self, Harriet wanted to be a teacher since 2nd grade due to the positive and transformative experiences she had with her own teachers. Much like other participants, she believed she was destined to teach as there seemed to be a divine and/or ancestral power that shaped and influenced her professional trajectory. As her perspective on education shifted from that of a student to that of an educator, Harriet realized the truth was much more multidimensional. She stated,

> I've always just thought that every educator in the world had this ... like, you had to love kids to do it, and you had to want to help, and just be this amazing person, because I've always had so many amazing educators in my life. But then I became an educator, and was like, "Oh no. Things are not that glorious." And I don't think I wanted that reality. […] And then when you got it, it was like, "Oh, wait." […] There are actually people here who are hurting our children. […] And even if they don't realize it. […] Like, they're actually fucking shit up. Excuse my language.

When reflecting on who is causing harm to Black and Brown students as well as colleagues, Harriet not only identified white colleagues who lacked commitment to an equitable, socially just praxis but also school administrators and leaders at the district level who are even more removed from what is happening on the ground level in schools. In turn, she also talked about the resilience of Black and Brown people regarding their ability to take what has been harmed and broken and make it beautiful.

Regarding Harriet's well-being spectrum, she chose the images in Figure 12 to represent her healthiest and least healthy self at work, respectively. When describing the significance of the image on the right, Harriet began by acknowledging broader educational systems that ineffectively support schools and thus teachers and students. Despite the harm caused by said brokenness, Harriet named that she still finds beauty in that which is broken just like "broken crayons still color." She also shared that the heart in the middle of the image on the right represented resilience and hope amidst "the pain of the systems that are trying to suppress us." While this image represents the impact of said systems that cause her to be her least healthy self, there also seems to be a strength and resilience that remain unquenched. As a result, Harriet also named that the glass in this image reminds her of how she views her purpose as a teacher (i.e., to provide a figurative mirror or window through which her students can dream and imagine their futures as well as see themselves reflected in someone who cares and is invested in their education).

The image on the left is a picture of a gift her students gave her for her birthday. She lovingly reflected on the words included on the image like civil rights, free, and peace and felt it was beautiful that this is what they see reflected in her. For Harriet, this

represented a transfer of liberation and the profound experience education can afford

children to have developed such grounded insight and perspective as well as perception.

She shared, "So on [her] best days, children are not only knowing [her], but finding out

something about themselves" enabling themselves to engage in a sophisticated

reciprocity of giving and receiving. The next section will introduce George, the final

participant.

Figure 12

Interview 8: Visual Well-being Spectrum
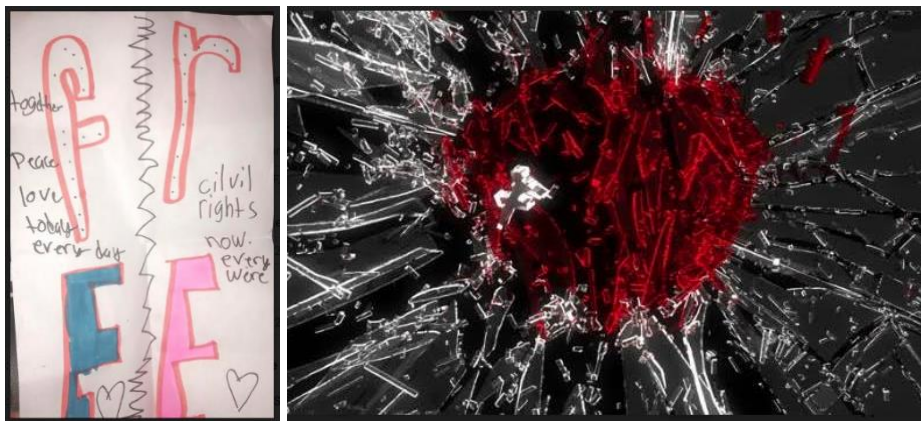
George: General Introduction and Well-being Spectrum

During this interview, George explained the nuance that shaped his growth and

development as a Black, male educator. George attributed much of his success to a self-

guided, independent practice. Although George did not explicitly call himself a veteran,

he frequently named his tenure as the reason for a high level of comfortability with his

supervisor as well as insight gained regarding racial factors at work. In short, he seemed

to reap the benefits of his veteran status having some level of clout, impact, and

influence. When reflecting on being seen and valued by his supervisor, he shared,

> Yeah, I don't feel some type of way about it just because I've been around for a
> while and I know that it's…there are times where I'm going to get it and get the
> attention and that's how it is with everything in every different department. […]
> it's seasonal, everybody has their time to shine. […]. [My meetings with] my
> coaches are great because I'm just…we've been doing it for a while.

George also shared the impact veteran experience has had on his self-expression as a
Black, male educator. Despite George wondering "like is it weird that that feels like it's a
normal part to have to flip the script all the time when you're around different people?" in
reference to the need to code switch, George concluded that he feels more comfortable
being himself around Black colleagues. With time, George developed a skill that enabled
him to set boundaries as well as identify safe ways to explore his authentic self at work.

Like other participants, George believed in having a strong work ethic. He named
that even when supervisors have been poor his commitment to the work or to doing
quality work is what drove him. When responding to how his commitment or motivation
may be impacted by a less than stellar supervisor or administrator, George replied,

> I will [do the work] anyway just because it's my job, but if it's like going the extra
> mile? There's certain people at my job that if they asked me to, I would go the
> extra mile for them or if they were like, "I'm going to start my own school, you
> should come." I would probably consider that.

In this example, George not only named that he would work harder but he also named
that he may even consider following that leader should they leave. George knew what it
was like to be undervalued and not self-actualizing at work. To find a leader—a

supervisor that not only sees his potential but also is able to foster that within him

mattered greatly as it also helped foster a stronger and healthier belief in himself.

Reflecting on George's spectrum of well-being, he chose images in Figure 13 to

represent his healthiest and least healthy self at work. To George, the character in the

image on the left held a calm, relaxed, confident, and strong demeanor. George named he

feels this way when he is his healthiest as he feels in control and balanced. When George

is not his healthiest, he feels like the character in the image on the right—enraged. He

often feels this way when he is overworked and lacks sufficient work/life balance.

George also named feeling frustrated when he was in positions where he felt

underutilized. He concluded that he appreciates being challenged and grew to appreciate

the responsibility that came with increased challenges due to accrued years in education.

This next section will provide a chapter summary and close with participant definitions of

what being Black means to them.

Figure 13

Interview 9: Visual Well-being Spectrum
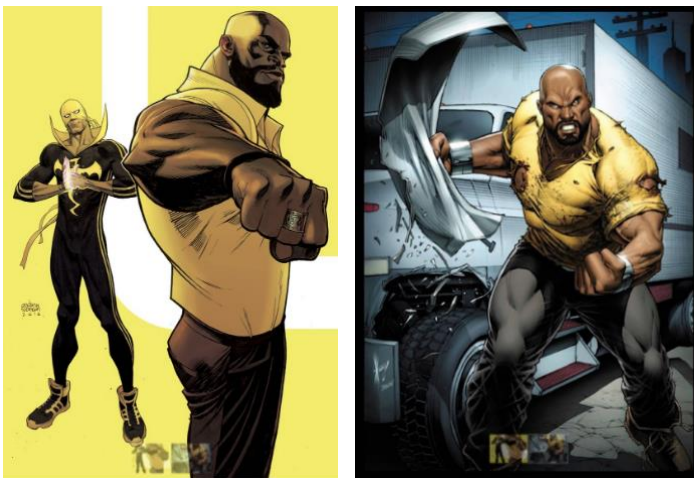
Chapter Summary

This chapter presented participants and their general perspectives on self as well as their experiences as Black educators. These narratives began exploring the impact their experiences with supervisors have had on their well-being with emerging themes of purpose, destiny, representation, rigor, commitment, and self-determination beginning to surface. For most participants, beliefs in a strong work ethic were critical and professionalism was integral. There was also an interesting relationship between growth, development, and learning being of the utmost importance that seemed to parallel a continued appreciation for achieving self-actualization and an ability to be one's authentic self. Lastly, there was a through line of veteran educators having clout or privilege. While some educators' veteran status was defined by years in the classroom and others included years in their chosen industry prior to a mid-career shift toward education, there was resonant confidence and competence in their professional identity development that seemed to carry them through challenges toward triumph.

Throughout their interviews, participants were able to use these images to either frame or ground themselves in their experiences along the well-being continuum. This grounding served as an opportunity to both reflect on and identify where their well-being stood in relation to the impact of the supervisor experiences they were describing. In preparation for their interview, participants were asked "What being Black means to them?" and "How they identify with this racial group/designation?" Thus, a synthesis of participant responses to these questions leveraging creative license in the order with which they are presented is shared below:

- Being Black means different things to me in different contexts. It shifts from being a political designation, to a social one, to a cultural one. […] In some contexts, Black is the designation I say first, but in most circumstances, I primarily identify as African American. (Ciara)

- Being Black means that you have a responsibility. Even if you didn't want it you have to do something to support other minorities. My Haitian culture and upbringing has guided a lot of my definition of what being Black means to me. I identify with being Black in many ways. My biggest connection is through urban arts and culture. Also music, family and close friends. (George)

- I have positive identification with this racial group. Being Black means that I am a strong person mentally and physically, it is ingrained in me to achieve and keep on fighting. It means that I have experiences no other racial groups can identify with. It means that I have to hold my head high in honoring all the people who have carried the burden so I can accomplish my dreams. (Faith)

- In all honestly, I do not like using the term "Black" to describe myself and I don't agree that I have to differentiate myself as being African American, when all other Americans from European decent can claim just being American. However, in this country I realize that I am seen as "Black" and so I describe my "Blackness" as educated, independent, and envied. […] Being "Black" also means that I need to go against the grain of how that is perceived on a daily basis. This means that no matter where I go, I want to leave a positive impact by representing my "Black" people in a positive light, regardless if people will accept that or not. (Alicia)

- Being Black means that my skin has Melanin. I do identify as a Black woman. (Harriet)

- African American for me signifies of African descent. (Isaiah)

- Being Black means I have many Black women on my shoulders who may or may not have had the space or opportunity to speak up for themselves or for children who did not have the means of self-advocacy that would propel the standards of society in a positive trajectory for Black people as a whole. (Deja)

- Being Black means having to fight daily for self-appreciation, cultural-appreciation, dignity, and respect in a world system set up to keep the demographic in bondage. It also means being beautiful, intelligent, and creative. Of course, the characteristics are not recognized as I hinted to earlier. (Esther)

- Not sure how to answer… (Briana)

This next chapter will continue with a presentation and exploration of findings. The focus will center the beliefs component of ECA and present themes from all nine participants pertaining to beliefs about race, social justice, equity, supervisors, and self as educator.

Chapter 5: Findings—Analysis of Black Educator Beliefs

I have a platform. I have a voice. I want to be that exemplar

–I Poem: Faith

In Chapter 4, ECA provided context for the overall structure of findings chapters. Chapter 5 will focus specifically on participant beliefs. While traditional cognitive-behavioral theory focuses on the cognitive dysfunction of a person (Hupp et al., 2008), ECA takes a strengths-based approach to understanding one's cognitions, however healthy or unhealthy they may be. To express full value for the person's lived experience, ECA acknowledges the discrimination and oppression encountered by marginalized persons that likely caused or contributed to the generation of their beliefs.

According to Carspecken (1996), the subjective domain asserts that understanding another's experience is shaped by an intersubjective perspective formed by one's individual worldview, the other's worldview, and their collective worldview. Therefore, there is a notion of privileged access to one's subjective experience. Through the relationship developed between the participant and the interviewer, the ability to create greater insight on that which may be consciously unknown to the participant through further exploration increases. The themes analyzed in this chapter all relate to participants' subjective perspectives as well as specific beliefs held regarding the topics mentioned. Themes reviewed in this chapter include race, social justice, and equity; healthy and unhealthy qualities of supervisors; and beliefs of self as educator. These themes are situated within the context of the supervisor relationship and its impact on Black, educator participant well-being (See Figure 14). Therefore, the next section will begin with participant beliefs about race, social justice, and equity.

Figure 14

Outline of Chapter 5
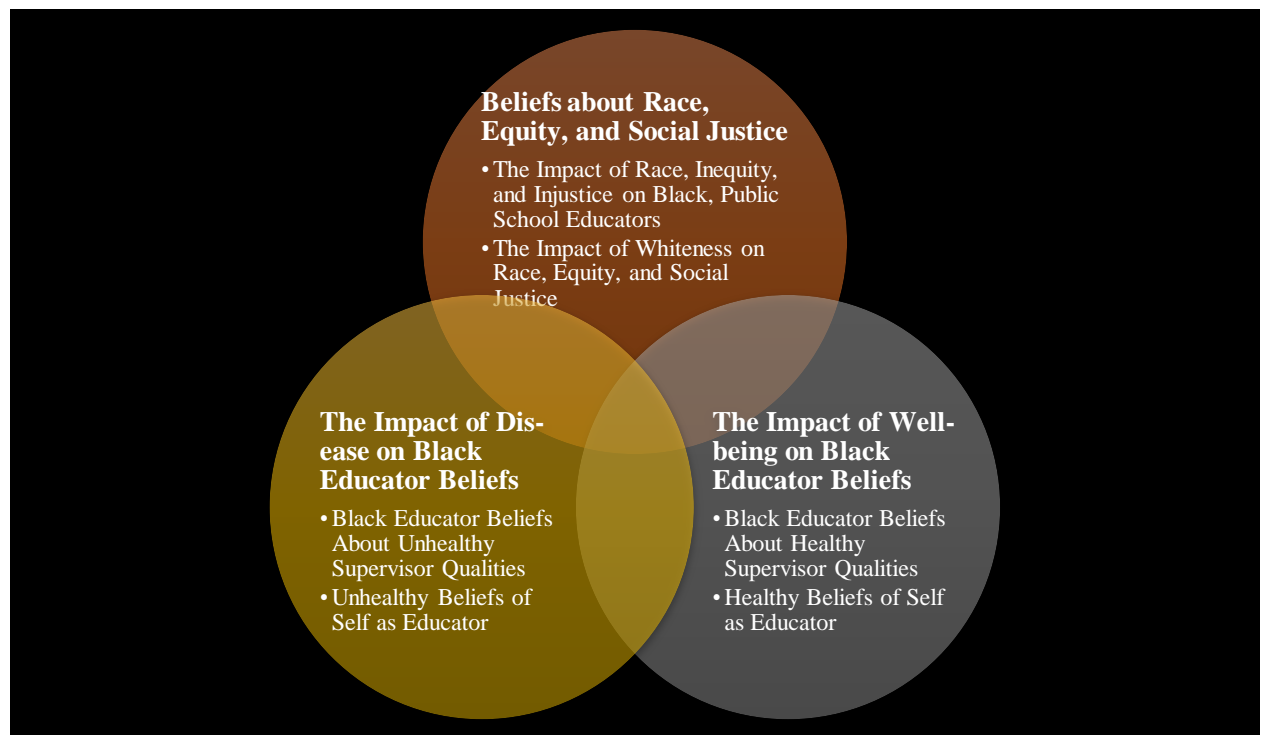
Beliefs About Race, Equity, and Social Justice

In this section, I will explore race, equity, and social justice from two different

perspectives. The first perspective centers Black educators and the impact inequity and

injustice have on the Black educator experience. Subtopics aligned with the first

perspective include: (a) how being a Black educator brings greater challenge to work

experiences, (b) how race impacts dynamics in supervision, and (c) how racism and

culture impact job diversity and satisfaction. The second perspective centers whiteness

and its impact on both white supervisors and colleagues. Subtopics aligning with this

second perspective include: (a) the impact of whiteness on white educators and their

collective responsibility, and (b) the impact of centering whiteness on education and the

Black educator**.** The decision to begin this chapter with beliefs about race, equity, and

social justice was intentional as they seemed to shape much of the context for the beliefs expressed throughout the interview. This next section will begin with the first perspective.

The Impact of Race, Inequity, and Injustice on Black Educators

This section will center the Black educator by focusing on the beliefs participants shared about race, inequity, and social injustice and their impact on Black educators. There are three major themes included in this section: (a) that Black educators' realities in public schools are magnified and thus more difficult than those of their white colleagues, (b) that race serves as a complicating factor impacting supervisor dynamics, and (c) that racism impacts hiring diversity and thus the overall quality of their job experience. This next section will begin with the first theme.

Being a Black Educator Brings Greater Challenge

While exploring participant narratives about their experiences as Black educators in public schools, many shared the increased difficulty they faced due to their race and gender compared to their white counterparts. For example, Brianna explicitly named that code switching was necessary in certain environments for survival. She believed this was learned in order to be more acceptable and in line with hegemonic norms. If one does not code switch, Brianna noted they may be perceived as "not being professional because she's Black, […] being 'ghetto', [or] being lazy." She also named that colorism remains a strong factor where darker complected Black educators have more difficulty and greater challenge.

When exploring beliefs on managing racism in and outside of work, Brianna also named an unwarranted responsibility that ultimately seems to impact Black educator retention. She shared,

I think people of color have the desire to want to stay but they can't. That with everything else we have to deal with outside of work, you don't want to deal with it at work. You don't want to. […] because it's like you never left the situation [racism] and then you become an unhealthy, an unhappy person. And so you just kind of pick your battles and then unfortunately, teachers leave.

When discussing some of the situations outside of work, Briana named a common experience of navigating shopping in retail stores. She described an intense inner dialogue regarding what she was wearing and how she may be perceived or if she should bring bags with prior purchases to her car first in order to avoid being accused of stealing before continued shopping. As she named, this regular occurrence is exhausting and to have to repeat experiences with similar impact at work can often be unbearable.

In summary, the examples provided in this section explore some of the encounters that shaped Black educator beliefs regarding inequitable, racialized challenge. Thus, navigating life as a Black, public school educator proved more complicated as participants found themselves absorbing the impact of white supremacy culture in their school experiences, supervisor relationships, and life in general. The following section will provide more specific focus on supervisor dynamics.

The Impact of Race on Supervisor Dynamics

While interviewing participants, all of them were asked at different points if race was a factor in their supervisor dynamics. All participants responded affirming this

question—that yes race was always a factor. While the impact of race with one's

supervisor may be subjective, there was some form of impact that all participants named.

When reflecting on experiences with supervisors directly, Faith believed that her

experiences with white supervisors was most difficult. She shared,

> I've been in a bunch of different schools in different roles, and I've always had
>
> supervisors not of color the first few years. I think those were the worst
>
> experiences for me, because even though I may have a certain skillset, it wasn't
>
> viewed as something that should be celebrated or something that should be
>
> rewarded in the sense that, [I can be] given […] additional responsibility that can
>
> show the use of these skillsets.

Faith later went on to describe how she felt this impacted her classroom as well. Faith

named that she often received "all the kids that have the most negative behaviors. […]

Because [she] can handle it. […] That's what most teachers hear, teachers of color." This

served as an example of inequitable practice against Black educators.

In addition, George shared that he also experienced the impact of having white

supervisors. He shared that he did not believe white supervisors are "able to empathize

with [the Black experience] […and] wouldn't be able to understand unless" they endured

a professional experience where they were the minority. He later shared ambiguity about

this challenge and his need to set boundaries with white supervisors where holding a

different cultural context may cause him to evaluate student behaviors differently. For

example, certain actions George viewed as permissible his white supervisors viewed as

needing control and containment. While these examples illuminate supervisor dynamics

between different racial groups, the following section will explore said dynamics within a different context.

Within Group Dynamics Bear Added Weight

Another experience that seemed unique to Black educators was this belief that within group discord and/or joy (i.e., an encounter between a Black supervisor and Black supervisee) had greater impact than similar moments shared between Black educators and white supervisors. For example, Faith shared her experience as a new teacher. In this instance, she had an older, Black, woman coach and was hurt by her coach's neglect. Faith shared that her coach believed she was competent and so she was distant in her approach. However, Faith named that she could have used more support in learning how to navigate the public school system as well as racial dynamics and systemic structures within her school. She felt abandoned by this woman to whom she looked up, and she named that it hurt even more because she was Black.

Brianna also shared an unfortunate experience with a supervisor who was also the school principal. She shared,

> I felt that...even though she was Black, she wasn't really that much for Black people and I think that's more hurtful than dealing with a white person who's not supportive of Black people because this is somebody who looks like you.

In this example, there was also an element of a split in cultural identity that socio-economic class seemed to further complicate. Brianna further noted "that was the most disappointing [aspect of] seeing a Black woman in power, in a city that doesn't reflect Black people in power. It was really hard." Thus, race seemed to further complicate supervisor dynamics whether they were between or within group. Building on Brianna's

observation that her city consisting of mostly Black and Brown people does not reflect
such racial demographics in positions of power, the following section will explore race
and job diversity.

Racism's Impact on Job Diversity in Education

While reflecting on participant perspectives on hiring, they seemed to conflict
with that of their white supervisors' and thus the broader school culture. Many
participants believed that while the pool of applicants for positions in schools has left
much to be desired regarding diversity, it is quite possible and in fact necessary to hire
more Black educators. Being more intentional with recruitment would afford students the
benefit of having teachers and counselors that represent who they are as well as create
more opportunities for Black staff to be in leadership. Thus, more Black educators would
have an opportunity to have supervisors that represent and identify more authentically
with their background. However, participants believed institutionalized racism was to
blame for the current lack in diversity—resulting in Black staff not being promoted as
they should and/or school systems not being set up for general Black educator growth and
development. For example, Deja shared how she observed this happening with her
school's associate program.

> There was just some employees who would come in and you could just see they
> were on a track and most of the time they were white people. But you guys are
> saying this is the pipeline for teachers of color being in lead teaching positions but
> it's not happening. Not at the rate it should be.

Deja also named discomfort she experienced having to navigate microaggressions from
white leadership at her school. She shared that her schooled lack people "who looked like

me in leadership and places of power. The only time that I saw us was in the classroom and even there, there were tons and tons and tons of countless microaggressions from people who were white."

Because of the lack of proportional, diversified employment, microaggressions committed by white supervisors experienced by Black educators were significant. Faith noted instances where this showed up in feedback given by supervisors. "It was a lot of 'Oh, I really like the way you did that, but I don't know if I like the tone.' You know? It's like a lot of that underlying...that microaggression stuff that just pops out." In this example, Faith implied that feedback about tone was a racialized comment meaning that her tone used, as a Black, woman educator, was inappropriate. Faith went on to describe that this level of scrutiny does not exist with white colleagues based on direct interaction observed (i.e., where a white colleague may have been more lax with students and not held accountable or to the same standard).

Moreover, participants also believed such racial dysfunction required speaking truth to power (i.e., advocating for oneself) and this need for truth speaking has been a direct result of a history of racial injustice that shaped the Black educator experience creating a politicized work context. Ciara noted working in her school system "which […] has a racist history against people of color, and particularly African American people, that whole context means that your work is already going to be politicized in a certain way. Right? It's inevitable." When centralizing the Black educator experience within race, inequity, and social injustice, racist experiences ultimately impacted Black educator longevity as they seemed to shape a negative school culture decreasing holistic sustainability. While it is important to centralize the Black educator within this context, I

also found it important to explore participant beliefs centralizing whiteness within the

same context. This topic will be reviewed in the following section.

The Impact of Whiteness on Race, Equity, and Social Justice

This section represents the second of the two aforementioned principles on this

broader topic in which there are two major themes. The first theme focuses on the impact

white supremacy culture has on white educators and steps white educators need to take

toward racial equity and justice. The second theme relates more directly to the impact

centering whiteness has on education. It is important to note that centering the Black

educator experience prior to centering whiteness was intentional as it aligns with a

critical stance on centering historically marginalized persons who have been traditionally

othered. Moreover, the following section will review the first theme.

The Impact of Whiteness on White Educators and Their Responsibility

When reflecting on Black educator beliefs regarding white educators',

supervisors', and/or administrators' need to challenge their racism, Faith and Deja shared

reflections. Deja shared a scenario where she experienced white educators express

commitment, care, and joy for working with Black and Brown students at the elementary

level but those sentiments seemed to turn to fear, avoidance, and judgement as those

same students got older.

> I've heard a first-grade teacher say that before. She no longer works there, but
>
> she's like "the same kids I taught in first grade. They grow up in middle school,
>
> and they're just like these giant guys and it's like..." They're the same children, but
>
> there's something there that's missing where they're not children to them
>
> anymore. They're like monsters or like bigger than life. […] Yeah angry black

men. Something's changed because they've moved up in the world, and it's like, nope, that was the plan. […] And if you feel that way about a seven-year-old who's now all of a sudden 11, what do you think about me as a grown woman? You can't move your whiteness to the side when it comes to me, of course it's going to come out in other ways if you're not actually unpacking it.

Deja's reflection about the same elementary students who become adults and maybe even colleagues was palpable and poignant. Given the racism she has navigated at her school, she firmly believed that they needed to examine what informs their fears. Reflecting on a memo during coding analysis, the cognitive dissonance of whiteness was gravely impactful. I wrote,

When she named that piece about these Black and Brown children that you [white educators] "love so much" will become me and her. And that they need to ensure that they are preparing them to handle situations that she and I have had to go through as a result of their white leadership…that really hit me. Would you still love them if you knew you might fear them one day? If you knew you might undermine their success? If you knew they might resent you and discredit or discount your lack of effort? How can you dismantle or compromise a person's success at one stage in life but then break your back to try and prove the possible when they're younger? These things go hand in hand. You can't love me when I'm young and hate me when I'm grown. That just means you hated me all along but expressed love when it was beneficial.

The power in both of these passages was palpable—serving as complex examples of the impact historic, intergenerational power, privilege and thus trauma have had on both Black and white educators alike.

Consequently, while impacting change in hegemonic culture among staff, the process can produce casualty. For example, Faith shared that when her school began to align on an anti-racist praxis "the white teachers were the ones who felt they had all the power. Then when the shakeup came in, and they were like, 'Wait a minute,' they started leaving." Ultimately, this belief in white educator, supervisor, and leader responsibility to challenge their racism is not without risk; however, the benefit outweighs the cost. The following section will further explore results from neglecting to challenge the status quo.

The Impact of Centering Whiteness on Education

Although there remains an impact on Black educators when whiteness is centered, there also remains a greater impact on the institution of education and the system at large as participants believed teacher demographics do not represent current student demographics within their districts. For example, Esther named that her school district "is supposed to have at least 60-something percent people of color teaching, because of our kids[…]. It's the majority of the school system, and we don't." The impact of this discrepancy is alarming. Participants also discussed their beliefs on having a majority white hiring pool which makes it more difficult to diversify staff despite the need. While this belief was held for educators in general, some participants also noted that with further specialization (i.e., the arts, foreign language, or special education) the numbers became even more stark.

Ultimately, one might argue that the institution of education as it stands was set up to favor and better position white educators. In one acute reflection, Esther believed that the historical narrative of enslaving Africans and elevating the European positioned white people to view themselves as superior. Pertaining to advising on what is best for Black and Brown children, Esther explained that "white folk think they're better than everybody […] look how history, look how the world tells them they are better […] So, […] yeah, I think race always plays a part." In this example, Esther explained how she believed white supremacy culture shaped power, perceptions of self-worth, and cultural identity.

Ciara shared a scenario in which her department chose between a white male and a Black male applicant. While the white, male applicant had a stronger profile on paper, the Black, male applicant would have been a better fit for the school, the department, and thus the students. Ciara shared had she not pushed back, she would have conceded to her argument "about white privilege having a role in who we're hiring here. […] Then I am actually supporting the status quo, and I will not do this. So, we will just have to continue." Ciara chose to push for a continued hiring process despite that which her colleagues may have wanted or had the energy.

Throughout the remainder of these findings, one may observe privileging white ways of being has a negative impact on education. Ultimately, if white supervisors want to seek true change, navigating racism and white supremacy culture through its multi-dimensional is necessary; and therefore, requires more than a superficial commitment to diversity. Supporting whiteness as the status quo remains unacceptable, and positioning whiteness above Blackness means negative career outcomes for Black educators. To

achieve true equity and social justice for the Black educator, white supervisors (who are often school administrators) need to cede power in order to disrupt the infrastructure of the institution enough to create change. Now that participant beliefs regarding race, equity, and social justice have been discussed within the context of their impact on Black educator experiences as well as the impact of whiteness on said factors, participant beliefs regarding supervisors will follow.

The Impact of Dis-ease on Black Educator Beliefs

This section represents a synthesis of beliefs expressed by participants throughout their interviews. While a priori coding was used to pre-determine this component of the code categories, the specific code groups that fell under this category remained unknown and discovered through an iterative process of data analysis. Through this process of analysis, code groups like the one first reviewed (i.e., race, equity, and social justice) evolved. This section narrows its focus slightly to explore beliefs shared about supervisors as well as beliefs shared on themselves as Black educators. Furthermore, this section will focus on themes relating to said topics within an unhealthy context.

Black Educator Beliefs About Unhealthy Supervisor Qualities

While some participants valued professional boundaries held by supervisors, most believed supervisors could have a major impact on the authentic expression of oneself; should use their authority toward good deeds and outcomes; and hoped supervisors recognized that their actions do have the power to have lasting impact. Participants named a recognition of power not ending with their supervisors but rather larger power structures that influence their supervisor's agency. Ultimately, there were three broader themes that arose grounding Black educator beliefs on unhealthy supervisor qualities: (a)

a lack of integrity, (b) dis-ease and feigning, and (c) white supremacy culture. While there is a plethora of sub-codes in each of these themed categories, some will be summarized in narrative form while others will be explored more deeply.

Lack of Integrity in Supervisor Qualities

Reflecting on participant beliefs about unhealthy supervisor qualities, Black, educator participants spoke equitably about the quality of supervision and the quality of the person providing said supervision. There was high value placed on one's moral compass that seemed to guide and impact well-being or the lack thereof. Exploring the subthemes that arose from lacking integrity, topics included inauthentic leadership and manipulation and control. The following section will begin with supervisor accountability.

Inauthentic Leadership. Additionally, there was a belief expressed that inauthentic leadership led to an inability to trust one's interactions with supervisors regardless of their race. In these narratives, there were instances where supervisors embodied labile personalities or displayed inauthentic support, asked leading questions they knew answers to, gave praise followed by insult that diminished any previous affirmation, lacked transparency about commitments made toward work development only to not follow through, and made attempts to connect with Black educators in ways that were culturally inauthentic to the supervisee. When this trust was lacking, some participants tended toward silence. For example, Harriet spoke about supervisors having conditional support where they would only support her leadership if she were leading in the ways they wanted her to or leveraging her role with larger entities for their benefit. Reflecting on unhealthy qualities that lacked integrity, George shared the impact this had

on his well-being when he named "I think inauthenticity and disinterested go hand in hand sometimes. […] I feel like when you get that inauthentic, disinterested […] supervision it...I don't know. I would say it makes you feel not validated, I guess." In this example, George highlighted the ways in which supervisor investment communicates value and self-perception.

Additionally, there were instances that were more covert where participants named feeling as though supervisors aimed to sabotage their success. While this may not have been the supervisor's intention, nonetheless this was the impact of their actions. Examples given included beginning one's job without sufficient support or guidance and believing one's supervisor set out to sabotage one's outcomes. In the first example, there was a sentiment expressed that one was to "fall on your face and then you'll be able to pick up the pieces afterwards." While this may have provided a teachable moment, the approach could have carried greater integrity by having been conducted in a more holistic and respectful way. In the second example, Esther noted,

> She will do things like that, like it's cutthroat. […] To the point where one of our colleagues said, "At least another administrator, if you don't agree, at least they won't come after you. You don't have to worry about them trying to sabotage you." I was like, "Woo!"

The shocked and appalled response given by Esther in her exchange with her colleague was a clear indicator that this lack of integrity in supervisor qualities was not only surprising but also unacceptable.

Manipulation and Control. Furthermore, supervisors who embody manipulative and controlling qualities were also identified as unhealthy, unwanted, and thus aligned with a lack of integrity. One participant shared how controlling approaches to supervision were counterproductive as they often negatively impacted their well-being as well as their ability to be their best and most authentic self at work. Specific examples include being paid and coerced to engage in conversation during conflict, crying or showing extreme emotion to influence their supervisor dynamic, projecting their guilt or fault on to the supervisee, superficially objectifying Black educator success to the school's benefit not leading to Black educator career growth, or being guided by political gain and thus shaping a culture and practice of manipulation. Further exploring manipulation for political gain Ciara noted, "what I mean by that is oftentimes pretending like you're genuinely listening or like there's a possibility of this thing, but already knowing the outcome and actually manipulating people into believing that they created the problem." When discussing ways in which supervisors have used "their power to control you in a sense, being manipulative, trying to get you to say things and just not having your best at heart," Briana provided a poignant explanation.

> The [supervisors] that I don't admire is when they used their control, […] just experiencing, actually being at different schools with five different administrators […] They use their power to manipulate you, to get you to stay and do the things they wanted and that's how they controlled my behavior, by knowing that they would use the power to discredit me or possibly lose my job

Further supporting examples of manipulative and controlling behavior, there was a belief that Black educators' strength, work ethic, and integrity were being taken advantage of

(i.e., while they may be used for marketing materials they are also expected to meet rigorous and at times unfair expectations with no room or opportunity for promotion). The examples presented from this section on supervisors lacking integrity not only show that Black educators can identify unhealthy supervisor qualities regardless of their implicit or explicit nature, but also that they can recognize the impact these qualities can have on their well-being. Table 2 includes qualities participants identified when asked to explicitly name unhealthy supervisor qualities. Thus, the lack of collaboration and value in these instances seemed to outweigh other factors. Having explored subcodes in this section that support the theme of lacking integrity in supervisor qualities, the following section will explore dis-ease and feigning.

Table 2

Unhealthy Supervisor Qualities: Lack of Integrity

Category	Unhealthy qualities
Acting on Black educators	Using their power to control or manipulate, discrediting supervisees, micromanaging, attacking behavior, and ignoring and disregarding coaching meetings with supervisees
Acting on self (i.e., the supervisor)	Being dishonest and untrustworthy, guided by political gain, being inauthentic, and being inconsistent

Dis-ease and Feigning in Supervisor Qualities

Regarding dis-ease and feigning as a second subtheme, this description was chosen as it represents symptoms present in participants when their supervisors lacked qualities that supported and fostered well-being, authentic self, and sufficient support and guidance. Some supervisors were noted as ambitious and too demanding, resulting in boundaries crossed that impacted Black educator sustainability. The following will explore example of this subtheme.

Devaluing Well-being. Ciara shared that when supervisors showed up in extreme ways that compromised her well-being, self-actualization and expression of her authentic self were thwarted. She stated,

> Not considering wellness […] as a priority means [that supervisors are] going to make certain kinds of demands on me or ask for certain things not taking into account that that could affect your health [...]. Or even just saying like, "Oh, that's just part of the nature of the work to be sick all the time," […] And some leaders/supervisors feel it's the nature of... It's like, no, no, no. […] It's not. It shouldn't have to be that way.

In this quote, Ciara not only spoke about the detriment of not valuing wellness but also the impact it has on Black educator health, ability, and sustainability. She vehemently disagreed with the ways in which this perspective supports the status quo and argued for change. While this is one example, many participants named that supervisors who lacked an ability to value and prioritize wellness embodied an unhealthy supervisor quality that at times gave impetus to dis-ease in supervisors as well as Black educators producing inauthenticity and feigning in the Black educator's embodied experience.

Poor Policy and Practice. In many of the interviews, the participants' supervisor was the school principal or another high-level school administrator. Given this context, there were participants who named that poor administration in general can have a negative impact on Black educator well-being. Prior to a shift in leadership, George named that there were "just old, long rules and things and like paradigms that we had that aren't really necessary." While Harriet named that she loved working with her students,

she clarified that it was the administration and thus her supervisors that impacted the

quality of her experience despite the joy in the classroom.

    Negative Attitudes. On a more interpersonal level, participants believed that

supervisors with negative attitudes created negative experiences for supervisees. Esther

shared that her supervisor "will attack you. […] Yeah. She will come for you. Not like,

with her words, but in her actions." Additionally, Brianna shared that when her

supervisor "didn't like you, it was like off with your head." She went on to share an

experience with a supervisor who lacked stability and created a hectic environment and

experience for her, the Black educator.

> I felt she was mentally unstable. That's what I felt because one minute, she'd be
>
> really excited to see you talking, laughing, kiki and all that. A day or two later
>
> she'd be like a raging...I don't want to say bitch. A raging bitch. You never knew
>
> what person you're going to get that day. […] That was a very hectic environment
>
> because I was unsure of, well, who's here today? The nice one or the mean one
>
> because I need to know.

While the supervisor in this example embodied labile personality traits, there were others

that were more consistently unhealthy or negative. These instances proved challenging

for all Black, educator participants involved.

    Ineffective Coaching. Regarding the belief that limited, ineffective coaching is

an unhealthy supervisor quality that produced dis-ease in Black educators and feigning in

supervisors, Isaiah shared that he lacked content specific coaching for much of his

professional career as an educator. In retrospect, he did not "remember getting a whole

lot of training. […] there really wasn't a whole lot of professional development happening

in [his] school." As a result, Isaiah became highly discouraged and firmly believed that

he would have saved time, stress, and energy had he received more effective supervision

earlier.

George also named that for a portion of his experience he felt as though he was

able to remain unnoticed because people seemed to be prioritizing his retention over his

growth. He named that this often produced an inauthentic experience where he felt the

supervisor was just fulfilling an obligation as opposed to being truly invested. While his

supervisor experiences were not binary, he did name "one point where our supervision

was bad because it was stressful, and it was a lot of rigorous high expectations in terms of

what we need to do. I didn't always like that […]." Ultimately, this impacted George's

intrinsic motivation and trust, making for an unfruitful experience. While this belief (i.e.,

unhealthy supervisor qualities leading to dis-ease in Black educators) may appear

rudimentary to name as a coded belief, it is important to refocus the emphasis of this code

and theme within the broader context of the research topic. Therefore, navigating an

embodied experience of such violent, negative attitudes in conjunction with the weight

and responsibility of one's job as well as one's intersectional identity within one's

workplace is of worthy note.

While reflecting on dis-ease and feigning, there was a range of unhealthy beliefs

participants named that contributed to and resulted in challenge. Having the responsibility

of managing these embodied life factors, many participants were led to navigate

decreased well-being and to struggle with holistic sustainability. This section will

therefore conclude with a summary of unhealthy qualities that aligned with and produced

dis-ease in Black educator participants and feigning in supervisors found in Table 3.

Identifying the impact of hegemony on supervisors' qualities, this next section will explore the third and final theme.

Table 3

Unhealthy Supervisor Qualities: Dis-ease and Feigning

Category	Unhealthy qualities
Relational qualities	Lacking value in wellness and a holistic approach to one's work; expecting supervisees to compromise work/life balance; being ingenuine, unhelpful and non-substantive; lacking empathy, support, and understanding; and carrying an overall negative energy.
Management qualities	Sustaining an inequitable distribution of unrealistic expectations for Black educators while enabling white educator behavior; lacking content knowledge in the supervisee's subject area; being unsupportive of supervisee professional development; being disinterested in the supervisee's work; lacking credential for one's role; and not prioritizing or validating the supervisee.

White Supremacy Culture in Supervisor Qualities

This section will conclude the review of subthemes that pertain to unhealthy supervisor qualities identified by Black educator participants. While white supremacy culture can influence all races, it was important to explore this theme and name that most supervisors identified were white women. Therefore, there were tangible examples given that supported this third theme on an interpersonal level. For example, George was adamant that supervisors' race and gender have impacted his ability to express himself as a Black male educator authentically with maintained well-being. While some of the stress and misalignment George experienced was caused by differences in work or personality type, he named that his supervisors, were "type A. […] very organized and very rigid, [had] high expectations, [and were] self-directed." While these traits are individual and personal, there is also a normative element aligned with white supremacy culture that implied George's approach was less acceptable if it did not align with the qualities he

listed. Micromanagement also seemed to be present resulting in a lack of trust in his

supervisor. While he was able to see the benefit of being organized, the lack of flexibility

and inclusion of his approach to working was not supported, and he struggled.

Micromanagement. Regarding experiences of micromanagement and lack of

trust, Deja provided a few examples. Describing reflections shared with her supervisor,

Deja got the sense that her supervisor did not believe what she was telling her. Based on

her supervisor's actions, Deja named that her supervisor preceded to verify that what she

shared was in fact true with other teachers. Deja believed her supervisor (i.e., a white

woman) did not trust Black educators to accomplish their responsibilities successfully. In

her example, Deja then connected lacking trust with micromanagement by sharing,

> They didn't trust us, and they wanted to micromanage everything that we were
>
> doing. […] We literally [had] planning sessions for units and our assistant
>
> principal would be there as we planned them. […] We would send it to her, and
>
> she would have tons of things that she wanted us to fix and change. But it's like,
>
> "Why were you there in the first place? Why are you just coming up with
>
> suggestions now?"

In this instance, Deja implied that the only conceivable purpose for being present at the

teacher work session was be to make sure staff were getting work done. Deja named

more than once that academic success was often defined by whiteness. Therefore, the

standards against which she was being judged were not only ineffective but also

inauthentic and disingenuous leading to a lack of trust in her supervisor.

White Guilt. In addition to micromanagement and mistrust impacting Black

educators in relationship with their supervisors, expressions of white guilt were also

identified as an unhealthy supervisor quality that negatively impacted Black educator

well-being. This nuanced presentation from their supervisors created another dynamic

Black, educator participants often had to navigate. When discussing scenarios where

one's supervisor attempted to de-center whiteness and thus herself, Ciara shared,

"Sometimes I think it's from a position of true understanding, and sometimes I think it's

from a position of white guilt. […] When it's from white guilt, I don't admire her." In

revisiting Deja's story, she described an emotionally, manipulative interpersonal dynamic

that negatively impacted her experience:

> So they bring on the tears, which I felt was just like manipulation. I gave you a
>
> plan for two weeks and because of your lack of emotional composure, you're
>
> telling me that I'm not going to be able to come back. Shame on you.

In this example, Deja was resigning and provided a plan accounting for remaining tasks

and having closure conversations with her students and families. Her supervisor's

response was first emotional leading with tears and second required immediate

termination. Here, white guilt seemed to generate a manipulative and controlling impact.

   While comprehensive examples of the ways in which white supremacy culture

can impact Black educator experiences with their supervisors were presented, ultimately

participants believed many of the challenges were due to supervisors defining success by

white standards and ultimately "not get[ting] it" as shared by Esther. While reflecting on

the subtheme of white supremacy culture in supervisor qualities, there was a group of

unhealthy qualities participants shared that aligned with this theme category (See Table

4).

Table 4

Unhealthy Supervisor Qualities: White Supremacy Culture

Categories	Unhealthy qualities
Relational qualities	Presenting with white fragility and tears; being soft, passive, or "hand holding"; being absent and lacking presence in the school; and being disconnected from staff and student culture
Management qualities	Being too demanding; being hyper focused on data; holding limited perspective and/or lacking value in supervisee's work; not accounting for different learning styles; and being authoritative, self-directed, rigid, and an extreme Type A personality

Section Summary

Having reviewed unhealthy supervisor qualities through three distinct themes (i.e., lack of integrity, dis-ease and feigning, and white supremacy culture), this section will conclude with a summary of impact Black, educator participants shared they experience resulting from said unhealthy qualities shaping supervisor dynamics. These descriptions include three categories (i.e., harm, self-protection, and resilience) found in Table 5. Having reviewed unhealthy qualities Black, educator participants identified in supervisors; this next section will shift focus as intrapersonal beliefs are shared.

Table 5

Impact of Unhealthy Supervisor Qualities on Black Educator Participants

Categories	Impact of unhealthy qualities on participants
Harm	Feeling unimportant, deprioritized, and disappointed; feeling emotions shift toward anger; questioning job satisfaction and sustainability; lacking connection; feeling as though one's passions are smothered; being on pins and needles/tiptoeing through the supervisor dynamic; feeling tired, stressed and exhausted; fearing being talked about; feeling frustrated and challenged; believing time and energy have been wasted; sacrificing sleep and time with family; unable to show authentic self; and weight gain
Self-protection	Shutting down, being inauthentic and transactional; being reluctant to ask for help and less transparent; not becoming outwardly emotional; creating more distance with school leaders; refraining from transparency and vulnerability; building community with trusted colleagues; no longer volunteering; no longer coming to work early or staying late; becoming less actionable; and not allowing negative evaluation of their work ethic
Resilience	Not letting the supervisor dynamic impact one's work and remaining present for students; being more frank; holding stronger to one's integrity and holistic nature; increasing boundary and limit setting; feeling proud about one's stance; remaining respectful; assessing situations to navigate them strategically; being more vocal in defending one's self; feeling propelled, hungry, and self-determined to learn more; being curious, reflective, and engaging in growth mindset; questioning their purpose and place in their current role; and feeling less bound if chose to leave job

Unhealthy Beliefs of Self as Educator

With further exploration of the impact negative supervisor qualities can have on

Black, public school educators, this section will explore participant beliefs regarding

unhealthy experiences, their impact on self, and their influence on sustainability within

this context. Participant beliefs of self will be foregrounded and the context within which

the experience is happening backgrounded. There was a combination of experiences that

over time and through analysis that seemed to align with beliefs that gave impetus to a

negative impact on sustainability. As an encore to the participant introductions in Chapter

4, this section will further explore individual participant perspectives on that which impacted their sustainability via supervisor relationships.

Negative Impact on Participant Sustainability

When reflecting on the subthemes in this section, the presence of harm, self-protection, and resilience continued. While examples in this section were more like a Venn diagram with multiple overlapping circles, there remained some connections (i.e., subthemes) that were more dominant. Therefore, the need for self-protection, weathering and allostatic load (Geronimus et al., 2006), restricted self-actualization, as well as double consciousness and stereotype threat can be found as subthemes throughout. Participant examples and summaries of collective experiences will follow beginning with protecting oneself.

Need for Self-protection. Regarding the need for self-protection against racial harm, Brianna believed Black educators carry a lot of baggage both literally and figuratively. She named this weight was often felt when having to balance advocating for her needs as a Black educator as well as those of her students—often doing this alone. Resulting from institutionalized racism, Brianna believed Black people in the United States are thus targeted and suffer undue, intergenerational consequences. She shared,

> Sometimes as Black people, Black women, we feel something but we're still pushing and moving on, and that was something that slavery passed on to us, that, okay you got this bad thing, that bad thing, five bad things happen. […] You still got to keep going.

She named being self-protective when lacking trust in and not being valued by her supervisors. With one supervisor in particular, Brianna named that "she had a way of

like…you had to make sure that she likes you or she sees value in you because she…if she didn't, she would discard you." From this and similar experiences, she learned to ignore her feelings in order to persist and complete job requirements.

Harriet also carried the weight of self-protection amidst insurmountable responsibilities. Harriet named that she suffered mentally and physically which resulted from working with supervisors who embodied negative qualities. In one instance, Harriet shared a disagreement she had with her supervisor regarding a misaligned approach to supporting a student who displayed dangerously challenging behavior. Harriet named that there were roughly four steps she was asked to take before she called the office for additional support. Meanwhile, she was being physically assaulted by this student and doing her best to protect other students from his aggression. She believed a more rigorous approach was needed to match the student's level of harm and often cried—feeling frustration and despair resulting from her predicament. On one occasion, Harriet noted that she needed to go to the hospital to seek medical care as a result.

In a letter, Harriet wrote that she was going to refrain from aligning with their recommendations as she strongly believed they would only further support white supremacy culture (particularly in the development of Black boys). Harriet shared, "I have real serious issues with this being the lesson we're teaching our boys of color, that they can get away with all these things in a community where your average life expectancy is 35-years-old." Harriet later received needs improvement on her evaluation as the letter was uploaded to her file as proof that she was unwilling to be cooperative. While this is one of the more extreme examples, Harriet believed that supervisors who lacked investment in her as an educator and value of her as a human being had a negative

impact on her intrinsic motivation and well-being. Although this motivation had more to do with her commitment to the school versus the work and educating students, these situations and many others served as red flags that indicated a need to find employment elsewhere.

      Weathering and Allostatic Load. Geronimus et al. (2006) discussed the impact of institutional racism on Black and white Americans. Weathering is defined as the cumulative degeneration of multiple physiological systems. Allostatic load, therefore, is the resulting assessment of said levels of stress as physiologically ensured. Ultimately, they found race to be a greater indicator than poverty. For example, one of the most impactful elements of Faith's interview was listening to how hard she worked. Faith was often overworked, and she rarely slowed down. She was either working hard to prove her worth and meet what she believed were inequitable and unfair expectations placed on her or working hard because she was excited, impassioned, and driven by intrinsic motivation. The determining factor in the direction of this pendulum's swing was her supervisor. If the pendulum swung in the direction of being unhealthy and overworked, Faith explained,

> In the negative space, I'm going the extra mile because I feel like I have to prove myself all the time. I always have to do better. I always have to be the best because, if I don't do better than the white teachers, then I'm just ... I'm lost within the space.

When Faith felt lost within the space, it was usually due to not feeling heard. Ultimately, when she felt unvalued by her supervisor(s) and thus treated inequitably, her well-being suffered. Faith named that race always played a part in her supervisor relationships and

when it was present in a relationship with a white supervisor, the lack of regard was palpable.

George and Ciara also shared experiences of compromised fulfillment. While George believed overworking was unhealthy, there were times work superseded his basic and psychological needs (Maslow & Lewis, 1987). There were seasons where he was overworked, and in these seasons, his commitment to the work impacted his well-being in unhealthy ways (i.e., stress, burnout, and overall job retention). Some of these instances were unpredictable, daily occurrences. George named "there's been times within the years where we've been, I think, we've been deeply overworked. Not just with running classrooms, but also with duties, lunch duty, dismissal, and all these other extra things." Ciara reflected on needing to wear multiple hats and the toll this took on her sustainability. When managing multiple responsibilities beyond that which was required, Ciara shared,

> That can feel very stressful, and because there isn't always the strongest like direction given by administration […] It's too much. It's too much. It's too much. And then when you can't even…[…] when you can't have lunch and you can't even have time to go to the bathroom, stuff like that. […] Basic needs, well, it's not [being met].

Ultimately, Ciara believed that if she did not set further boundaries, she would miss more days of school and "be a lot less mentally and physically well."

Lastly, reflecting on Isaiah's well-being, much of his experience took its toll as he often put work above self-care. Isaiah worked long hours, overcommitted, and took on the responsibility of developing himself when he was not being developed. As a result, he

suffered weight loss and was sleep deprived. He named that he felt he was carrying the

world on his shoulders without much help. Isaiah shared,

> So at first I worked just harder and harder. I was staying up later and I realize it
>
> was causing me... I was trying to do so much prep and trying to, I guess, check all
>
> the boxes […] I didn't sleep a lot for the first two years. I lost weight, and my
>
> family sacrificed a lot.

Isaiah went on to say that this also impacted his performance in the classroom as he

found himself tired, forgetful, frantic, overplanning, and perseverating "because [he] just

felt like [he] had to change the world." Thankfully, Isaiah realized this approach was

unhealthy and unsustainable. Using a metaphor, he described his experience like trying to

squeeze juice out of fruit and working incredibly hard only to result in menial amounts of

juice as well as unsustainable effort. Ultimately, this impacted Isaiah's confidence; he

was teaching for 20 years and firmly believed he should have been more proficient at that

stage of his career.

Restricted Self-actualization. Regarding restricted autonomy and self-

actualization, Ciara named being overworked, stretched thin, and experiencing racial

inequity as factors. Ciara shared an experience from a previous job in a public school

where she believed her autonomy and competence were compromised in part due to

being a new teacher and needing a lot of supervision, but also due to a lack in alignment

of mission and values between her, her supervisor, and thus her school. It was in these

moments that she believed her ability to achieve self-fulfillment needs and self-

actualization were stifled. Ultimately, their approach did not resonate with her personal

philosophy around social justice and culturally responsive pedagogy. Speaking her truth

did not impact change, and ultimately Ciara decided to leave. Ciara shared, "If you look at the key experiences that have caused a shift, whether a physical shift or an emotional shift in my career in teaching, it's around race." In this example, Ciara explicitly identified the impact culturally unresponsive approaches can have on Black educator job satisfaction and retention.

George also expressed instances where his ability to self-actualize was tied to supervisor feedback, buy-in, or ability to empathize. For example, when he received less feedback or less affirming feedback, he shared "imagine if nobody validated you or gave you feedback, after a while, you'd probably just want to quit and be like, 'Nobody cares about what I do here." Believing his supervisor cared was important for George's growth and development. When that dynamic was absent, he struggled as it helped further develop his self-confidence and actualization. Carrying the responsibility for his professional development, he often wondered, "Are [supervisors] just in this because I'm the token Black guy or the token Black [elective] teacher here?" George went on to share how he navigated transparency and being his authentic self with his supervisors by stating,

> I've never shared that with my coach, I've never had the conversation about the
> racial piece behind going into these events and being like one of the few Black
> people or Brown people […]. I don't know if I would because I don't think my
> coach would understand.

Therefore, when George experienced micro- or macroaggressions, he often went to Black co-workers for support; however, he suppressed it most often.

Double Consciousness and Stereotype Threat. Acknowledging an indoctrination of sorts, Deja was led to believe there was no other school that would fulfill her as much as her current school. This, she later realized, also limited her options for growth and development creating a continued spiral of dis-ease. Reinforced through promotions or sanctions given, Deja battled messaging that white educators were favored and more acceptable. She did not believe her supervisor was in support of her professional growth. Deja shared, "she didn't think that I would be able to cut it as a lead teacher there. [She] didn't think I was the right fit. I know that that's a microaggression." Not believing she was valued by her supervisor contributed to an accumulation of experiences at work that had a negative impact on her overall sustainability. Before gaining more experience and confidence in her skillset, Deja would often question herself—challenging the stronghold of stereotype threat on her development as an educator.

Compromising her well-being for the sake of the work, Deja acknowledged that this may be due in part to her belief that professionalism and having a good reputation are important as she named that she "always put pressure on [her]self in a really, really unhealthy way." Deja could not express her authentic self and experienced double consciousness quite often (Black, 2007; Meer, 2019). Deja shared,

> I would literally have to put on this mask and speak to them [white supervisors] still in a loving way, but not with the same authenticity as when they [her Black and Brown students] were in the room. And I felt guilty about that. It's like there's no reason why I shouldn't be able to be authentically me. The way that I would when there's somebody else […] of color in the room.

Thus defending her basic, psychological, and self-fulfillment needs (Maslow & Lewis,

1987) and challenging white supremacy culture, Deja believed racial identity heavily

influenced her supervisory relationship in unhealthy ways at times fostering overworking

and navigating double consciousness (Black, 2007; Meer, 2019).

Regarding double consciousness and stereotype threat (Black, 2007; Meer, 2019;

Steele & Aronson, 1995), Isaiah seemed to internalize these phenomena ultimately

shaping an unhealthy experience. Reflecting on his journey as a Black, male student,

Isaiah believed these earlier years impacted and mirrored his experience as a Black, male

educator. Naming race as a factor in the ways the institution of education failed him,

Isaiah shared,

It might be double-headed. It's my educational experience, […] those experiences

had a lot to do with race and then now being in the professional world going,

okay, I can't be the person whose here, showing that I don't belong here because I

know I belong here, but [I also] know I have a lot of gaps based on other things.

So, it kind of quiets you. You know? […] It's a silencing, for me it was a little bit

silencing, but I was always second guessing, like maybe doubting myself. Like,

maybe there's just, maybe I just don't get it, maybe you just don't get it. […]

Sometimes I get mad with myself with that, speaking up.

In this moment, Isaiah reflected on earlier instances in his career when he may have

disagreed with something that was inequitable but neglected to speak up. He

acknowledged that he did not know any better at the time and resigned to passively wait

on the outcome. Isaiah was uncomfortable with speaking up; he believed he would have

been judged for his lack of content knowledge and therefore have his position and/or

place questioned. His silence became a survival tactic best fit for self-protection. Self-identified knowledge gaps and his identity as a Black, male educator resulted in self-doubt contributing to further insecurity. Ultimately, this section provided an in-depth overview of each participant's beliefs of self as they related to conditions that negatively impacted their sustainability. Table 6 summarizes participant themes and subthemes.

Table 6

Unhealthy Beliefs of Self as Educator: Negative Impact on Sustainability

Category	Unhealthy beliefs of self as educator
Value and holistic sustainability	Not being valued by their supervisor (who was often a school administrator if not the principal) negatively impacted sustainability, Work often needed to supersede well-being needs despite overarching values that might determine otherwise
Self-actualization and sustainability	Well-being and thus sustainability decreased significantly when participants were restricted from fully self-actualizing or being their authentic and intersectional Black selves at work (i.e., in white environments).
Allostatic load	Black educators carried heavy proverbial loads. Being an educator is a lot on its own (i.e., the rigor, the responsibilities, and the expectations). Being a Black educator brought additional burdens (i.e., code switching, assimilation, and being silenced, ignored, undervalued, and targeted).

The Impact of Well-being on Black Educator Beliefs

The previous section reviewed findings that fell under a broader thematic category of dis-ease that shaped participants' beliefs about supervisors as well as themselves. This section will present the inverse. As the human experience is far from binary but rather complex, many participants were able to identify healthy qualities that either shaped how they understood and experienced their supervisor and/or how they viewed themselves and their own experiences. Therefore, this section explores the impact

well-being can have on these themes. The first theme reviewed regards healthy albeit preferred supervisor qualities.

Black Educator Beliefs About Healthy Supervisor Qualities

When exploring subthemes of healthy qualities listed by Black, educator participants, *there* were five identified (i.e., admired personality traits, effective approaches to coaching, valuing relational practice, a whole-person approach, and strength's-based approaches to supervision). The energy shift in discussing these qualities as compared to the unhealthy qualities was palpable. This section will begin with personality traits as the first subtheme.

Admired Personality Traits

When participants discussed the impact of healthy, supervisor personality traits on their working relationship, they noted a grounding, embodied experience—especially when honesty and transparency were present. Faith shared that she believed she could be more open with supervisors who are trustworthy. Faith stated, "I can bring [my supervisor] into my room and knowing you're not going to judge but knowing that you are really focused on finding the positive and helping me grow from the negative." In this instance, Faith described authenticity and trust resulting from her supervisor's openness that impacted the quality of her supervisory experience.

Exploring the impact Brianna's supervisor had on her, Brianna responded affirming the idea being honest and forthright was grounding for her as well. She stated, "Yeah, definitely I would describe the experience in that way. […] I admire the leadership that were open and honest and that genuinely supported me as an employee." In this example, Brianna further explained that she valued openness from her

supervisor—a transparency of sorts that guided supervisee support throughout the experience. Brianna also shared that these grounding experiences are not only given impetus by honesty and support, but more specifically by active listening and positive energy that fostered a reciprocal value and respect of her supervisor's perspective. Furthermore, Brianna named that this positive impact had the ability to override the impact of a dysfunctional administrative leadership team—assuming the supervisor is not also an administrator (i.e., the principal).

Alicia was probably the only participant that did not directly experience unhealthy supervisor dynamics nor a resulting negative impact—at least while working in education. She named that she knew of scenarios from family and friends' experiences but none of her own. When identifying healthy traits she admired, Alicia identified being supportive, a good listener, making time for her even when busy and addressing her need, following through, and being mindful and open to learning new things. She also named that providing opportunities for growth, granting agency and empowerment, transparency, collaboration, and thoughtfulness were present as well. Alicia appreciated supervisors who held her accountable and celebrated her strengths, provided feedback, and made space for her authentic self to be embodied and present. Thus, empowering, supporting, and fostering Alicia's professional development and workplace sustainability.

After reviewing the reflections of Black, educator participants who identified healthy supervisor qualities that aligned with personality traits as a subtheme, the following summary was generated in Table 7. The content presented in this subtheme was more directly related to who the supervisor is, how they present, and the impact of

said presentation. The next section will explore a more action-oriented approach to

identifying healthy qualities through supervisor approaches to developing supervisees.

Table 7

Healthy Supervisor Qualities: Admired Personality Traits

Category	Healthy qualities
Embodied traits	Open, honest, transparent, authentic, trustworthy, hopeful, caring, respectful, charismatic, passionate, dedicated, visionary, organized, thoughtful, embodying integrity
Embodied actions	Engages in active listening and understanding, brings fun to the working relationship, accounts for their own actions, fundraises and provides resource, are critical thinkers, follows through, drives positive energy in the school community, and an all-around nice person

Effective Approaches to Coaching

Regarding this subtheme of effective approaches to coaching, advocacy and

culturally responsive support were identified as important qualities for supervisors to

have. Additionally, teaching experience and content specialty were also identified as

effective and necessary. The following section will begin with exploring culturally

responsive practice as an effective coaching method of Black educators.

Advocacy and Culturally Responsive Support. Some participants shared they

appreciated supervisors who advocated for their needs. Often, this advocacy required the

supervisor to speak truth to power with some level of risk as the conversation would

usually be directed at school administrators, board members, and/or school district

administrators. For example, Esther shared that her supervisor "intercedes for the

[teachers in her department], and he's getting beat-up and he's taking it. […] He is getting

beat up by administration, […] because he's like, this doesn't make sense." In this

example, advocating for one's supervisees is more than just a helpful approach but rather

a risk taken by the supervisor that can have varying levels of cost with greater benefit toward trust and safety building for the Black educator. Ester believed that educators who directly work with students "know what's better for [them, and schools should] stop with people who haven't taught in years, telling [teachers] what to do." In this example, Esther highlighted the importance of Black educators being included in decision-making conversations that impact school structure, culture, and student experiences.

Moreover, there were some participants who believed effective coaching meant integrating culturally responsive and critically conscious tactics. For example, Deja believed that with greater equity, integrity, trust, and follow through there would be less of a need for reactive, erasure measures creating space for her to feel valued, be her authentic self, and trust that she can bond with her supervisor in the fight toward educational justice. Similarly, Alicia described her supervisor's approach to valuing and implementing staff concerns. "Any time we had a concern, […] any time we wanted to see some type of change, she would […] write it down, do the research and then come back to us with results. […] she was just on it." When reflecting on Alicia's account of this experience, her supervisor's responsiveness seemed to provide or communicate value and priority in what she, the supervisee, said she needed and/or wanted thus affirming her concern.

Teaching Experience and Content Specialty. The second area of effective coaching practices was grounded in supervisors' ability to both pull from their own teaching experience as well as have some level of content specialty. For example, Esther strongly believed that it was her supervisor's experience as a teacher that enabled him to be so impassioned and bear the proverbial cross of working to make educator and thus

student experiences more equitable and just—further aiding his ability to value and

prioritize staff input. Ciara also admired an approach her supervisor took that seemed to

draw from her experience as a teacher. She shared,

> I do see her often going back to her classroom teacher self and understanding
>
> what that means. So, she really can relate to you more on a classroom teacher
>
> situation, and to me doesn't see herself above […] I know there are some cultures
>
> in which it's like there is that hierarchy in terms of value too in a system, and I
>
> don't feel like she has that. I think she really values teachers and their voice.

In these two examples, both participants spoke about effective coaching from a

place of experiential knowledge. However, Isaiah's example focuses more on content

knowledge explicitly. When it came to professional development, Isaiah named that his

supervisors were the crux of his growth. He firmly believed that providing content

specific coaching in addition to materials and resources needed for teaching were critical.

Isaiah stated, "If you're going to have [elective] teachers, you got to have someone

coaching them that has some of the experience." He went on to describe a scenario in

which a supervisor may have provided coaching in the fundamental aspects of teaching

but would remain unable to move beyond that and develop their supervisee in content

specific ways. When Isaiah did receive content specific coaching 15–20 years into his

career as an educator, he felt that the supervisor was knowledgeable and well informed

which made for a positive experience. One could hear the energy shift in his voice as he

described the experience as fun, experimental, directive, informed, and collaborative.

In addition to content specific coaching, George believed that finding favor with

his supervisors positively impacted his sustainability. During his interview, he shared the

positive impact classroom observations from supervisors who embodied this quality

made. George stated, "When somebody else who's like a supervisor who's better who's

been teaching longer just comes in and they're like, 'Wow, you did that great. That was

great.' Or 'I love what you did here.' It just validates it." Reflecting on participant

responses that aligned with effective coaching practices, supervisors should not only

coach and develop the whole educator but also be credentialed and ensured their actions

are aligned with their words. In summary, actions listed by Black, educator participants

as preferred qualities that support the themes presented in this section are found in Table

8. While this summary concludes this section, the following section will explore Black,

educator participants shared beliefs on relational practice they felt pivotal to their

experience with supervisors.

Table 8

Healthy Supervisor Qualities: Effective Approaches to Coaching

Category	Healthy supervisor qualities
Feedback and collaboration	Providing quality feedback and genuine support; observing and effectively coaching on supervisees work as well as grounding feedback in the work; being experimental, collaborative, and solutions oriented; providing a great exchange of ideas with supervisees; engaging and investing in supervisee professional development; and identifying highlights in supervisee's work.
Equity and advocacy	Addressing supervisee's concerns; implementing change regarding the work; interceding and advocating on supervisee's behalf; allowing data and documentation to inform the work; holding equitable, realistic, yet rigorous standards for students, staff, and self; having teaching experience; and providing sufficient resources

Valuing Relational Practice

When considering relational value as a subtheme, there were additional supervisor

qualities identified by participants. Being present and genuinely knowing one's school

community was one of them. When discussing her principal who was also her supervisor,

Harriet shared that she appreciated the way in which her supervisor was able to connect with her expressing value in who she was as a Black, woman educator as well as the larger school community. Growing up and attending schools in the neighborhood in which they teach, Harriet described her supervisor's impact on her experience and being able to connect with her in a genuine and authentic way. When asked to share words that described healthy supervisor qualities, Harriet struggled with specific words but rather shared a story with visceral impact. Harriet shared,

> The vice principal now is a person of color, and I'm a person of color, and she'll have those conversations, and she'll also come to meetings. Like, when I send out the [invitation] to a Black Educators' Association [meeting], she'll be there. […] So I know that that's something that's important to her. […] And so, she's not just a face of a person of color. She's really trying to have these conversations and go somewhere.

In this passage, representation (i.e., the Black educator seeing herself in her supervisor) as well as the Black supervisor modeling inclusive leadership and connecting with her supervisee made a powerful impact. This supervisor's actions served as a display where valuing inclusive, culturally responsive, and relational practice was present. Thus, genuinely knowing the community meant holding an authentic appreciation of their cultural identity, norms, and ways of being while moving beyond superficial rapport building. Ultimately, this supervisor was enabled to empathize, relate, and connect with their supervisee on a humanizing level.

When discussing a supervisor from her first job as an educator, Alicia also provided an example of cultural awareness further enhancing the value of relational

practice. Alicia shared, "He was culturally aware. […] he knew that there were certain things that he wouldn't be able to get away with or he wouldn't be able to do as successfully as I may have been able to do it." In this example, her supervisor's awareness of being a gay, white man with mostly Black and Brown students served as guardrails that guided his ability to truly connect with their students and refrain from assumption while acknowledging the limitations of implicit bias. Alicia believed this awareness extended to and informed their supervisor relationship as well.

Lastly, Ciara also shared that she appreciated when her supervisor would know "when to...sometimes she shouldn't address us because she's white, and she knows how to get out of the way, like, that's not her thing." While the other two examples engage Black educators genuinely and authentically, this scenario provides an example where stepping back to create space for the Black educator and an opportunity for agency was helpful. This quality also seemed to create a desire in the Black educator to go above and beyond her normal level of responsibility—thus increasing her intrinsic motivation. Ultimately, participants named a supervisor's ability to be mindful, thoughtful, and think critically about their relationship with their supervisee as healthy qualities to embody.

Value of a Whole Person Approach

Building on relating to educators with mindful, culturally responsive practice, additional participants believed that valuing Black educators holistically was an important, healthy supervisor quality to have. While feedback and collaboration were previously mentioned in summary of effective coaching practices, this subtheme has more to do with the value the supervisor places on their supervisee from a humanistic, perspective. For example, Deja shared that supervisors who value teacher input as well as

develop the whole educator rather than a sole focus on educator outcomes was important.

Deja also named the importance of truly being valued by one's supervisor in general.

Deja shared,

> If you see the potential in me at the beginning of my career and […] and you
>
> maintain that, like you're valuable, you're valuable, you're valuable. I would be
>
> more confident in going for positions of leadership within the program.

In this scenario, not only did Deja find being valued important but she also believed it

would fuel her career trajectory. She named that it would be helpful for supervisors to

engage in a more collaborative approach in order to explore what she can do differently,

how she can improve, and identify what she did well. She believed that this type of

holistic support would create a healthier dynamic with one's supervisee and ultimately

decrease Black educator stress.

Ciara named that supervisors who actively listen and relate to educators as well as

value their input can increase Black educator engagement and buy-in. When discussing

goal setting with supervisees, Ciara named that supervisors in her school will "usually

ask you like, 'What are your goals? What do you want me to look for?' It's a very

collaborative piece." This was an example of valuing Black educators and their voice.

Ultimately, for Ciara, integrity of character and a person-centered approach seemed to

create opportunities for collaboration and relating with each other that not only center

value in what you do but also who you are. Additionally, Harriet named that "just being

seen as a human. […] to connect with you as a person" was invaluable. Having a

supervisor that can acknowledge Black Educator skill set, goals, and identity while also

being open to learning new things and not approaching scenarios as a dictatorship is

highly preferable. Lastly, Harriet identified that supervisors who value the whole

educator tend to increase her trust which makes her more likely to be vulnerable and

comfortable with disagreeing, challenging, and speaking up.

Similar to previous sections, this section will now close with a summary of

healthy supervisor qualities identified by Black educator participants relating to the

subtheme, valuing relational practice found in Table 9. Ultimately, being culturally

aware, stable, safe, consistent, supportive, and approachable meant for more sustainable

experiences for Black, educator participants. This next and final section will conclude

participant perspectives on healthy supervisor qualities with a strengths-based

exploration.

Table 9

Healthy Supervisor Qualities: Valuing Relational Practice

Category	Healthy qualities
Holistic perspective	Making time for supervisee's work/life challenges; supporting supervisee wellness, self-care, and holistic sustainability; making space for the authentic self of the supervisee to flourish; building genuine and authentic relationships with students, families, and staff; and allowing for healing
Empowerment and humility	Bringing excitement to the work; maintaining supervisee confidentiality; being able and willing to apologize when wrong; managing strong relationships and network; an ability to understand the supervisee's perspective; connecting on a cultural level with the school community; aligning with staff; prioritizing supervisee voice and perspective; and being present in good and bad times.

Strengths-based Approaches to Supervision

While there has been a focus on valuing the Black educator through collaboration

and creating space for input, participants also identified strengths-based approaches as

helpful practices to embody. For example, George shared that strengths-based approaches

increased his job sustainability. Displaying honesty, providing feedback, and

sharing/highlighting his work, George felt validated by his supervisor thus increasing his intrinsic motivation and confidence as an educator. George explained,

> I wrote highlights because there are certain times when we've had good meetings where I'll talk to my coach and […] They're like looking for specific things and they know when you did something good or when you could use a little bit of work on it. Highlights always show more invested coaching or managing when you're in your room.

George appreciated when his supervisors were able to think critically about his work even if they were not content specialists. George also shared that when these qualities were present, there seemed to be a different level of engagement from the supervisor as they seemed to be more intentional about the coaching they are providing—ultimately improving the quality of the experience, his ability to thrive, and overall job satisfaction. George shared, "If you have a good coach that knows how to work with you and build you up and make you feel confident about how you're teaching it…it makes you want to stick around." In this example, George highlighted the importance and the impact of having a competent, motivating coach on Black, educator retention.

Deja summarized this nicely when reflecting on supervisor intent and purpose as well as the impetus this gives to a strengths-based approach expressing value for the Black educator as compared to a deficit perspective. She stated,

> I think the most important part as a leader is that you brought your employees on because you see light in them, you saw potential in them. You saw that they had the stuff as they say. I feel like maintaining that aspect of value in your employees is very, very important.

There were many qualities identified that make for healthy experiences for Black, educator participants. As the occurrence of healthy experiences increased, participants named that their sustainability and job satisfaction did as well. Therefore, a summary of strengths-based qualities Black, educator participants admired is found in Table 10.

Table 10

Healthy Supervisor Qualities: Strength's Based Approaches

Category	Healthy qualities
Strengths-based	Affirming and appreciating supervisees; celebrating supervisees' successes; taking the time to recognize and acknowledge supervisee strengths; seeing light and potential in supervisees; and bringing positive energy to the supervisor dynamic

Section Summary

Ultimately, this section reviewed beliefs Black educator participants shared on healthy supervisor quality themes and subthemes (i.e., personality traits, effective approaches to coaching, valuing relational practice, and strengths-based approaches to supervision). During interviews, participants were asked to self-reflect on the impact these qualities would or have had on them in supervisor relationships. This section will now conclude with an overall summary of this descriptive impact divided into four categories (i.e., healthy cognition, positive feeling state, positive being state, and empowered action):

Table 11

Impact of Healthy Supervisor Qualities on Black Educator Participants

Category	Impact of healthy qualities on participants
Healthy cognition	Trust, creative thinking, open to learning, mindful, observant, aware, open to possibility, problem solving, and can see the big picture
Positive feeling state	Vulnerable, feeling validated and confident, joyful, energized, valued, passionate, caring, motivated, driven, submissive, open, relaxed, wanting to be at work, emotionally connected, and optimistic
Positive being state	Having integrity, able to reinforce validation, transparent, respectful, committed, unselfish, humble, genuine, authentic, empowered, purposeful, eustress less distress, values supported, presenting with confidence, and growth mindset
Empowered action	Blaming less, engaged listening, going the extra mile/willing to help, able to have fierce conversation/ willing to communicate more, depersonalizing situations, can agree to disagree, wanting to stay and do their best, engaging in mutual respect, interacting with leaders positively, building community, and collaborative

Healthy Beliefs of Self as Educator

In the last section, participants' beliefs about healthy supervisor qualities were presented concluding with a summary of impact on the Black educator. This section will further explore impact by presenting the beliefs participants shared about self as educator within a healthier context. Therefore, the experiences represented will align with beliefs that gave impetus to a positive impact on sustainability. Further exploring participant perspectives on that which positively impacted their sustainability via supervisor relationships, this section will foreground beliefs of self while backgrounding the context within which the experience happened.

Positive Impact on Sustainability

Pertaining to healthy beliefs that support a positive impact on Black, educator sustainability, this theme has three sub themes: (a) self-fulfillment and authentic expression, (b) confidence and competence in professional acumen, and (c) alignment

with vision and mission. The identified subthemes will be presented in the order in which they are listed here with participant examples to ground them. The following section will begin with beliefs of self that explore fulfillment of one's basic and psychological needs (Maslow & Lewis, 1987).

Self-fulfillment and Authentic Expression. This subtheme explores the importance of being able to represent oneself without restriction, assimilation, or the need to navigate double consciousness. For many participants, having work experiences that enabled them to be their multi-dimensional, intersectional, and complex selves were just as central to having one's basic needs met. Given the historical and intergenerational trauma Black people in the United States have endured that specifically targeted the Black body, loving and representing one's full, ethnic, and cultural self is just as radical as it is essential. For example, Alicia valued a holistic approach to conceptualizing the educator from an authentic, whole person perspective. When discussing being able to be her authentic self with students and colleagues, she noted "that is very important for [students] to see me as a human being" and not just someone there to reinforce learning and outcomes. She later went on to say,

> I think it's important when you are in a professional setting, you have to act, not act, you have to be professional but you can still be human at the same time. And I think when there's that understanding […] you're approaching these administrators saying, "I know that you're busy. I know that you guys have your plates full. This is what I am going through right now, can you meet me here? […] I think that's what has made my personal experiences working in the schools a good one.

In these examples, Alicia shared perspective on the importance of having a healthy self-concept and valuing authenticity. When discussing what she believed contributed to such a positive experience, Alicia named having a strengths-based perspective as a determining factor. Alicia shared, "I think it has been the way that it is partially because of where I am but also partially because of who I am. […] where I was, everywhere that I've been, I've made the best of my situations." In addition to a strengths-based perspective, Alicia believed in giving back to one's community—which served as an extension of her authentic self and moved beyond self-fulfillment to that of others.

In order to combat the racism she experienced, spirituality and ancestral tradition were grounding forces that influenced Deja's ability to stay and persevere toward better, healthier options that enabled her to be her best self at work (i.e., authentic, self-actualized, and thriving). She utilized prayer and the traditional practice of sage smudging to find strength and clear negative energy from her space. Deja explained that prayer seemed to calm her and "there would be times where I would feel like I was being ganged up on or attacked by those in leadership and I would just have to like pray. It's like hey remember who you are." Thus, Deja was able to identify ways in which she believed her best self was edified.

Regarding Ciara's healthy beliefs of self, she introduced self-determination theory. She explained this theory espouses three components that lead to self-actualization and well-being: (a) autonomy, (b) belonging, and (c) competence. She named that being able to fulfill these three elements through her experience as an educator, she has been able to maintain wellness. However, when any one of these components are compromised, her wellness is also. As a Black educator, she expressed

an appreciation for having the space to be her full self not only for herself but also for her

students as the majority of her students are Black and Brown and can find a role model in

her. When speaking of the whole-person, educator paradigm, there was conversation

about the ways in which the arts shape community, culture, and sustainability as it can

serve as a humanizing force within education. The factors identified as having a positive

impact on Black educator sustainability indicated more than an ability to drive goals and

outcomes but rather seeing, addressing, respecting, and fulfilling aspects of the whole

person as educator. Therefore, being valued, heard, and given the space to be one's full

self were essential for positive, holistic sustainability.

Confidence and Competence in Professional Acumen. In addition to self-

fulfillment through self-actualization, many participants also spoke emphatically about

the confidence they had in their skillset and experience as an educator. While the need to

be vocal and unmovable about one's ability was born out of oppression, invisibility, and

survival at work, Black, educator participants developed a strength that fostered self-

confidence, professional growth and development, and an ability to brightly exude one's

greatness. Regarding her competence and confidence, Deja frequently declared

professional prowess. She firmly believed that she is an established educator with skills

to not only do her job but also qualify for promotion. She shared,

> I began to find my footing. I was a staple when it came to my management. We
>
> have visitors all the time, whether they're potential teachers or people who just
>
> want to see what's going on and what all the hype is about when it comes to [my
>
> school]. I always had people in my classroom. […] I was very very confident.

Deja's reinforcement of her value and level of skill counteracted the negative, critical feedback she received from white women supervisors when being overlooked for positions for which she was qualified and denied. Deja believed Black people to be resilient, and it is this resilience that fueled her commitment to growth and learning as well as mentoring younger educators that served as a rewarding and energizing force.

Additionally, Esther frequently, explicitly, and directly named not only her level of skill but also confidence in her skills as a teacher and working professional in her industry as it seemed to reinforce her well-being and have a positive impact on her job sustainability. Esther stated, "I'm definitely not cocky, because I'm doing it for the students, but it is what it is. It's the truth. […] Right, I worked, and I earned every last piece of mine." She believed that setting boundaries, asking for help to avoid being overwhelmed, and engaging in physical self-care as well as activities that reinforce her ethnic culture foster holistic sustainability. One of the ways Esther fueled her cultural identity was to ensure she had opportunities to travel internationally and within the United States where Black people and culture are more prevalent.

Although the extent of expression might vary, Esther also named that she has remained consistent in staying true to her authentic self regardless of the context, the supervisor, or the supervisor dynamic. While this aligns with self-fulfillment and authentic expression, there is a direct connection here to confidence and competence in professional acumen as her intersectional identities seemed to fuel not only her career trajectory and development but also her confidence and competence as a Venn diagram of sorts. When discussing the risk of advocating for Black and Brown students' needs Esther proclaimed, "That's the way I am now. And if it gets too bad, I already know what

I have to offer, I'll just get another job. It won't be a problem." Esther had less years

accumulated as a teacher but more as a working professional within her industry. It is

evident that this experience combined with confidence in her identity as a Black woman

created the perfect combination for empowerment, agency, and advocacy not only for

herself but for anyone within her purview that needed it.

While leveraging great self-reflection, insight, and awareness, Isaiah was also

able to identify and celebrate his strengths. Stemming from youth development work with

different populations acquired over the course of a decade, Isaiah was attracted to the

field of education. He expressed great confidence when identifying these aspects of his

skill development—much of which was independently driven. It was these moments of

accomplishment that seemed to propel him further. Isaiah shared,

I studied everything […] and that was what made me so confident even when I

wasn't 100% confident in everything else. […] I walked into the room going, I

know I have something to offer […] so someone's going to get something out of

me today. And those are the things that I had to do for myself to keep me going.

Isaiah shared another impactful moment where his success really shifted the course of his

career. He arrived at a point in his profession he had not previously mastered regarding

content delivery. Isaiah named that "it worked beautifully," and that he felt "like I could

help anybody, student or teacher. I can still be helped too. But that experience is mine,

you know? And that's my toolbox." Ultimately, Isaiah's trajectory from Black male

student to Black male teacher was powerful. He was able to leverage self-awareness and

insight to draw longitudinal connections throughout his growth and overall human

development. Isaiah believed he had to struggle more than most, but he also believed he

triumphed. In the end, with increased competence and confidence, he was able to embrace the fullness of his journey and positively impact sustained well-being.

Alignment with Vision and Mission. During the interview process, many participants' personal vision and mission were central to their purpose—their calling—in education. This vision and mission usually tended to align with seeking liberation, equality, and justice for Black and Brown students, families, and educators. Given the ways in which white supremacy culture has infiltrated the institution of education, one can imagine the conflict experienced as these two ideals pitted against each other. Despite this conflict, Black educator participants found solace in moments where alignment existed. For example, when Faith aligned with her supervisor and colleagues, her intrinsic motivation increased. In these instances, she seemed fueled by collaborating with other educators who were of like mind and work ethic. If there was a shared mission, she was fully content. Sharing how being in this positive space influenced her work, Faith described being more willing to go the extra mile for herself and her colleagues. Faith shared,

> In the more positive environment, when I'm going the extra mile, it's to kind of push myself so that others can be coming with me. So, we're both going above and beyond, but for self-satisfaction. […] I want to make sure that, whether you're white or Black, you're seeing what excellence is […].

When discussing the positive impact this had on her sustainability, Faith stated, "I feel good. I think in my heart it drives my passion more, instead of it being a job. […] It's more like, all right, I'm going to show up, and we're going to do the best we can." In this

example, Faith identified the relationship between alignment, intrinsic motivation, and sustainability.

Despite a plethora of unhealthy experiences, Harriet recalled healthy scenarios that positively impacted her sustainability as well. She firmly believed that mission and vision alignment on supporting students (which were mostly critically conscious and holistic in nature) provided a direct impact on increasing her own intrinsic motivation. Harriet felt valued in these instances and also stated, "Yeah. I just ... I can't work for someone who doesn't necessarily have the vision. You don't necessarily have to have the same vision as me. […] But a vision that I at least think will help children." Thus, Harriet was more motivated to go above and beyond for that particular supervisor and became more committed to the school itself.

Section Summary

This section provided an in-depth overview of each participant's beliefs of self as educator that made a positive impact on their sustainability. A summary of beliefs is found in Table 12. Regarding spirituality, the belief in a higher power included God as well as ancestral influence that either shaped their destiny to become a teacher or that formed their steadfast determination to push through challenges and maintain integrity of character, professionalism, and a strong work ethic as an educator. Having confidence in one's ability seemed to provide a strength that enabled each participant to stand strong against power dynamics and structures that were often working against them. Lastly, participants wanted their supervisors to view and recognize their value, needs, and overall presence through a multi-dimensional, humanistic lens and an ethnic cultural reality that likely required a different approach to coaching and supervision.

Table 12

Healthy Beliefs of Self as Educator: Positive Impact on Sustainability

Category	Healthy beliefs of self as educator
Spirituality	Belief in a higher power or some form of spirituality that bolstered their perseverance.
Competence	Strong belief in acquired skill set that led to a belief in a positive, healthy self-concept.
Holistic perspective	Belief in a whole-person approach that shapes one's educator identity and interactions with colleagues and supervisors.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explored a vast spectrum of beliefs held by Black educator participants. Grounded in CRT, the chapter began with perspectives on race, inequality, and injustice that centered Black educator experiences as well as whiteness on similar factors. Next, the focus shifted toward unhealthy supervisor qualities and unhealthy beliefs of self as educator that negatively impact Black educator sustainability producing dis-ease. Consequently, the following section reviewed the inverse where healthy supervisor qualities and thus healthy beliefs of self as educator positively impacted participant sustainability producing well-being. While this concludes Chapter 5, the next chapter will build on ECA and explore embodiment through participant feelings, actions, and nonverbal communication.

Chapter 6: Findings—Embodied Analysis of Feelings, Actions, and Nonverbal

Communication

I think for me, that's what keeps me going is a desire to want to be better.
                                                                    –I Poem: George

Synthesizing the work of Albert Ellis and Aaron T. Beck which contributed to the development of the cognitive component of cognitive-behavioral theory, Hupp et al. (2008) noted how Albert Ellis grounded this portion of the theory in cognitions leading to emotions. Having represented beliefs held by participants on racial justice, supervisor qualities, and self as educator, a foundation has been laid to now explore feelings held and expressed by Black educator participants about their experiences with direct supervisors. Building on embodied critical analysis (ECA), this section will explore the ways feelings were embodied as well as actions that were taken by Black educator participants while recounting their narratives. A section reviewing nonverbal communication expressed during interviews will follow. Given ECA's critical lens, this chapter will begin by situating the exploration of participants' emotions within the context of Black, educators' historically marginalized experiences. Below Figure 15 provides a visual aid representing the overall structure of this chapter.

Figure 15

Outline of Chapter 6
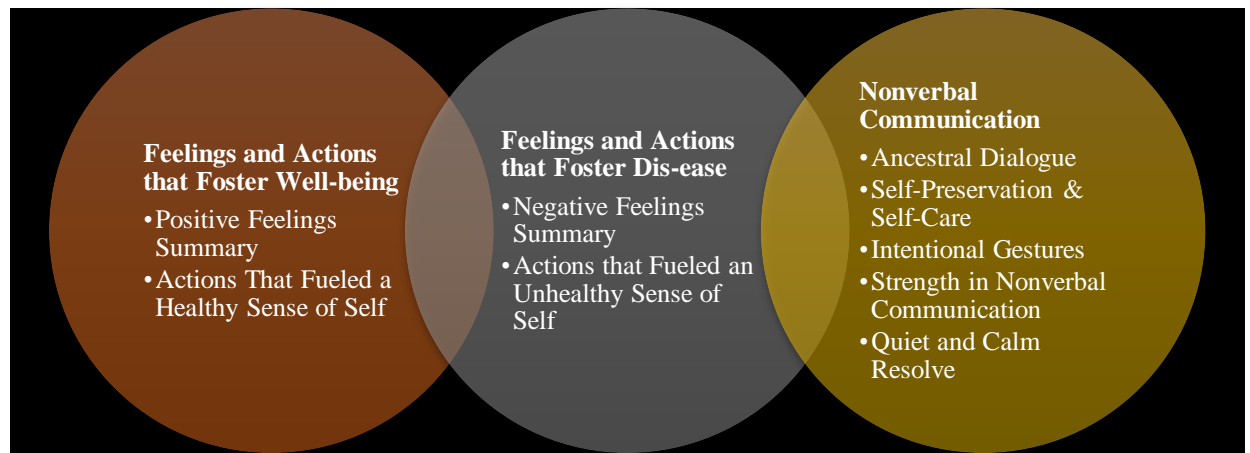
Feelings and Actions that Foster Well-being

This section will provide an exploration of feelings expressed and actions taken throughout participant interviews. The structure of this section will include a positive feelings summary and transition to actions that fueled a healthy sense of self. The feelings shared were a symptom of the impact their supervisors had on their beliefs (which according to cognitive-behavioral theory would influence feelings). The actions were given impetus by their emotions held and/or expressed. The following section will review positive feelings experienced grounding content focused on actions thereafter.

Positive Feelings Summary

Table 13 represents the positive spectrum of emotions presented by participants when recounting their experiences. The first column determines primary emotions felt by participants, and the second column represents secondary and/or tertiary feelings. These emotions were identified during data analysis from the feelings wheel presented in Chapter 3. It is important to note that the feelings represented were the feelings shared and explored during the interview. This list is not exhaustive nor does it fully account for

feelings that may have been subconsciously experienced. The exploration of this content

will ground the reader in participants' spectrum of positive emotions while also providing

some examples and a concluding summary. The subthemes in this section are

synonymous with the feelings listed in the primary feelings category (i.e., joyful,

peaceful, and powerful).

Table 13

Feelings that Fueled a Healthy Sense of Self

Primary feelings	Secondary and tertiary feelings
Joyful	Cheerful, energetic, optimistic, hopeful, creative, stimulating, excited
Peaceful	Thankful, content, secure, relaxed, trusting
Powerful	Proud, important, confident, successful, worthwhile, valuable

Joyful

Feeling joyful, a primary emotion experienced by participants, was incredibly

palpable. Many participants expressed this feeling when validated by their supervisor,

experiencing professional growth, or engaged in strong community. For example, Ciara

stated feeling "dynamic, exhilarating, let me see…inspiring, high pressure. What else?

Joyful." When exploring this primary feeling further, Ciara felt hopeful, optimistic,

creative, energetic, excited, and stimulated. Most of these emotions seemed to result from

positive experiences with supervisors and/or her school culture in general. Consequently,

when Brianna experienced joy, these moments were also mostly in relation to healthy

supervisor experiences or positive school community and culture grounded in secondary

and tertiary emotions like cheerful, energetic, optimistic, and hopeful.

Isaiah's shared that it took 20 years to feel accomplished as an educator. When sharing his growth and accomplishment, the shift from feeling stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, and lacking confidence, to feeling strong, competent, free, creative, and hopeful were felt and embodied. Isaiah seemed to feel the most joyful when he received content specific coaching from supervisors that were able to directly address his skills' gaps. As a result, Isaiah spoke up more and applied for positions with greater leadership. His perspective and mind frame began shifting as his joy was fueled by hope, creativity, energy, stimulation, excitement, and optimism.

Peaceful

While some participants expressed a multitude of emotion, others were more tailored. When Black, educator participants felt valued and trusted by their supervisors, they tended to experience feelings of peace. For example, reflecting on Harriet's feelings that fueled a healthy sense of self, she expressed peaceful emotion that resulted in feeling secure, content, trusting, and thankful. When sharing about the positive impact one of her supervisors had on her experience, she identified the ability to be vulnerable and open resulting from trust built between them. Similarly, Esther seemed to experience peace when her supervisor was supportive of her growth and development. Despite the impact of this external source, most of Esther's peace seemed to come from an intrapersonal locus of control grounded in confidence and competence held in her skill and ability. Additionally, when discussing supervisors around whom she could feel her authentic self, Brianna on more than one occasion named that she felt comfortable and at peace—often embodying calm energy when recounting her experience. It was in these moments she seemed to feel most content, secure, relaxed, thankful, and trusting.

Reflecting on experiences that incited peaceful feelings for Isaiah, he shared the impact of having a supervisor that provided effective coaching. Isaiah stated,

It relaxed me because, I think a lot of my career, […] I was figuring things out [independently] as I went along. I really couldn't afford to relax and it's almost like you can't really show exactly who you are.

Isaiah went on to share that he believed much of this is related to race and gender and identified overt struggling may not bode well for him. In these instances, Isaiah's supervisors were able to grow and develop him in a way that fostered value and attunement in the relationship. When feeling peaceful, Isaiah often seemed to be content, secure, relaxed, trusting, and thankful. As a result of these opportunities for more concrete growth and development, Isaiah also felt powerful leading toward proud, important, confident, successful, worthwhile, and valuable feelings.

Powerful

For many participants, joy and empowerment were almost synonymous. It is important to note that feeling powerful was experienced in an empowered sense and not a controlling or inequitable use of power. For example, Faith shared experiences that produced joyful and powerful feelings; however, this presentation will focus more on the powerful component. Faith explained the difference between distress and eustress and their emotive impact on her. Faith shared, "It's a different kind of stress […]in the sense that you're constantly thinking about ways to improve […] you're constantly trying to problem solve. […] Even though I'm showing up longer, there longer, I'm exhausted but it's still positive." While some of Faith's secondary and tertiary feelings aligned with being joyful (i.e., hopeful, creative, energetic, stimulated, and excited) or peaceful (i.e.,

secure, content, trusting, and thankful), her sense of empowerment in who she is as a Black woman as well as an accomplished professional was most dominant resulting in feeling proud, important, confident, and successful.

Alicia also expressed feelings that were joyful (i.e., hopeful and optimistic) or peaceful (i.e., content, secure, relaxed, trusting, and thankful); however, the focus in this example will again foreground her experiences of empowerment. When exploring feeling powerful, there seemed to be an overwhelming sense of gratitude as she felt proud, important, confident, and successful. Alicia shared, "It's just a different vibe. […] I'm not a morning person. I wake up every day on time and I'm at my job, my career because I love it. It does not feel like work to me. I love it there." Throughout her interview, Alicia frequently named how fortunate she was to have had the job opportunities she has been afforded in education. Grounded by peace and joy, she was able to flourish and foster strength and a sense of power as a Black, woman educator.

Synthesis of Positive Emotions

Thus far, this section reviewed three groups of primary feelings separately. However, participants also experienced these emotions in concert. For example, Deja and George experienced a full spectrum of positive feelings (i.e., joyful, peaceful, and powerful). Deja spoke of feeling joyful (i.e., cheerful, energetic, optimistic, and hopeful) and peaceful (i.e., content, secure, and relaxed) when referencing the optimism she felt toward a new job opportunity that would provide a healthier work environment. There also seemed to be a sense of relief from no longer having to struggle when navigating unhealthy experiences. On the other hand, George felt joyful (i.e., cheerful, energetic, optimistic, hopeful, creative, stimulated, and excited) when motivated and driven by his

work, which usually was the result of positive interactions with supervisors. Resulting

from changes in his school that created less stress, feelings of overwhelm, or being in

environments with other Black educators that enabled him to be more authentically

himself, George also described feeling peaceful (i.e., content, secure, and relaxed). He

said, "I feel more comfortable being myself around them and just being more Black

around them pretty much and just being able to crack jokes." In this example, George

identified feelings of affirmation resulting from within group comradery.

When Deja felt powerful (i.e., proud, important, confident, and successful), it was

often in relation to the confidence she developed in her skill set as an educator or in her

ethnic and gender identity as a Black, cis gender woman. George also named feeling

proud (i.e., important, confident, successful, worthwhile, and valuable) when receiving

affirming feedback from supervisors or feeling in control of his classroom and

curriculum. Thus, the experience of feelings presented here were palpable, poignant, and

at times complex. They were often driven from experiences Black educator participants

had that shaped beliefs about their supervisors, themselves, and the nature of their present

reality. While some feelings were more focused and foregrounded, others were more

complex and interwoven. This synthesis of feelings provided context for the next section

that will focus on participant actions.

Actions That Fueled a Healthy Sense of Self

This section represents an overview of participant actions as they navigated

relationships with their supervisors. Often fueling a healthy sense of self, these actions

appeared to further participant well-being and sustainability in the workplace. The

feelings Black, educator participants exuded in the aforementioned section ultimately

supported job satisfaction. Thus, the theme explored in this section will review actions that fostered well-being with the following subthemes of agency, determination and resignation, advocacy, and boundary setting.

Agency

When exploring the ways in which agency and locus of control impacted participants' experiences, positive beliefs of self as educator and their sense of empowerment, agency, and determination were embodied despite present obstacles in participant work environments and/or relationships with their supervisors. For example, Alicia balanced a strong, dynamic approach with an empathic perspective. She shared that in supervisor relationships, she is perceptive and will notice when the dynamic is unhealthy. She identified her own ability to engage in cognitive flexibility, resist taking the situation personally, and engage her supervisor in a strengths-based way. She stated, "I feel like because that's who I am, I've been able to have these fortunate occurrences with the people that I'm working under." She believed and said, "All I can control is me, what I'm doing, how I'm doing it, and making sure that I'm doing it to the best of my capabilities. You either like it or not." This perspective allowed her to be mindful, observant, and often cautious by seeking clarity through conversation and/or being solutions oriented in nature.

Additionally, Deja shared how she developed more agency and independence of thought when it came to her experience as a Black educator. As her confidence increased, she was more likely to push back, speak up, and advocate for herself. She often challenged supervisors in individual conversations where they may have been manipulative, controlling, victimizing, and essentially upholding the status quo of white

supremacy culture within their supervisor dynamic. Ultimately, agency was an essential characteristic as both of these participants leveraged this subtheme differently while navigating supervisor relationships.

Determination and Resignation

In addition to agency, many participants shared narratives where choosing to leave their current place of employment was the best fit solution to seek a healthier quality of life. Leaving one's job was an action that presented when participants were not able to grow and develop professionally and/or the school and thus their supervisor was not aligned with their personal vision or mission. Saying that participants exercised grit would be facetious and patronizing, as the process and time it took to make this decision and take this action drew on extensive determination and strength for a healthier and more equitable work experience. If this determination for success and betterment of one's skills and overall experience resulted in leaving the school, this was a cost they were willing to take.

For example, Isaiah expressed a fair amount of remorse as he recognized lagging skills in teaching were attributed to his experience as a student in the public school system. He acknowledged this lag later impacted the beginning stages of his professional career. Isaiah also attributed some of his challenge to a lack of development by supervisors. His determination to grow, learn more, and independently develop as a teacher is a prime example of his steadfastness. However, in some instances, his efforts proved ineffective resulting in him choosing to leave the school. This was usually due to an inability to grow and/or make enough money.

Harriet left two different schools. She chose to leave one because her supervisor was not aligned with a critically conscious praxis, and she was fired from the other without explanation. She later learned the decision was the result of implicit bias and a lack of cultural understanding on her supervisor's part as he viewed her tone when speaking to students inappropriate. Harriet sat at many proverbial tables where decisions were being made district wide. She saw the inequitable allocation of resources firsthand and named that many of the decision-makers did not represent the students' and families' racial or financial demographic. Harriet was vocal and often advocated for her needs, her colleagues' needs, and those of her students' and families'. Ultimately, while determined and committed to seek justice and change she also made a difficult decision to prioritize her sustainability and leave a school that did not support an anti-racist praxis. Although the circumstances in which these actions took place were not all healthy, the actions taken did help to reinforce a positive and healthy sense of self. In general, the actions that seemed to fuel a healthy sense of self were actions that created space for self-actualization. Ultimately, Harriet was able to show up as her full and complicated self (i.e., Black, a woman, an educator, a mother)—a multidimensional being.

Advocacy Toward Equity and Justice

With continued exploration of actions that fueled a healthy sense of self, advocacy for equitable decision-making was powerfully present. Often engaging resistance against the impact of white supremacy culture in their schools, participants advocated for equitable decision making that impacted their experiences as well as those of marginalized communities. As participants developed more confidence and competence, their ability to be vocal increased while their fear of retribution decreased.

For example, Esther was seasoned within her industry and had the identity of a veteran despite 3.5 years of teaching. This experience fueled confidence in herself, her work, and her passion for educating Black and Brown children. When unfairly targeted for being late to an all-school professional development session, Esther fought back by going "to the union rep. I said, 'I've got a problem with that.' I said, '... because she put me down, she put [another Black teacher] down, but she didn't put the [white] person down." In this instance, Esther's supervisor noted written documentation of tardy behavior and neglected to do the same for a white colleague. Esther named that it was "the system, yeah the system, institutionalized racism, […] that's the underlying system" that contributed to her being treated unfairly. Ultimately, confidence in her employability further supported her confidence in advocating toward equity and justice.

Faith also shared an experience where she was impassioned to advocate for her needs and the needs of other Black educators. While being evaluated, her supervisor was going to give her 'needs improvement' status; however, she believed her skill level was higher. Faith had a white woman supervisor for her first 2 years of teaching and she "had to fight to be able to get proficient on [her] evaluation." Faith explained that her supervisor's justification for this rating was that new teachers usually receive needs improvement, and she is a new teacher. However, Faith objected. She shared,

> White teachers in this school are proficient and exemplary. So, I'm not going to stand for that. […] I know I'm proficient. So, I don't need you telling me, because I'm new. This was my first year of teaching, but it's not my first year of living. It's not my first year working with students of color. It's not my first year working in this community. […] Watch me teach. That's what you need to do.

Moving forward, Faith never received an evaluation solely from a white supervisor and requested additional representation from a person with Black, Indigenous, Asian, and/or Latinx background who could bring a critically conscious lens to their evaluation of her. Faith was determined to be a change agent and believed assimilation was not an option. While she recognized being her authentic self clashed with the school's culture, she accepted this. Thus, taking action that enabled both Esther and Faith to advocate for equitable decision making fueled a healthier sense of self for them both.

Establishing Boundaries

Regarding establishing boundaries, protecting one's well-being seemed to be a coming-of-age enterprise among Black educator participants. Many shared how the level of rigor both required and often times celebrated at their respective schools impacted or had the potential to impact their well-being. Some participants initially believed this was part of the school culture and thus required if they wanted to succeed. There was a subconscious agreement of sorts that this level of self-sacrifice was necessary if they wanted to be valued by their supervisors and align with school culture that carried undercurrents of dominant white ideology. Participants grew to realize the negative impact overworking was having on their livelihood and began pushing back, speaking up, and saying no to asks that could jeopardize their overall health.

For example, Isaiah spoke of an instance where he had no time in the day to take care of his basic needs. He was moving from one responsibility to the next, was on his way to a professional development session for staff and got to a moment where he just stopped. He said, "Man, I remember I was on the stairwell, and I stopped […] and I leaned on the railing and I was like, I'm not going. I turned back. I'm not going. […] I

was doing that, you know?" Isaiah believed it was so difficult for him to set boundaries

around work/life balance because it was culturally engrained. Recognizing his

responsibility for his own well-being, he explained that he became angry with himself

and wondered why "you got to wait until you're almost broken before you say

something?" His use of the word broken was really powerful as it produced an empathic

and visceral response in me as the interviewer.

Ciara, a veteran educator, also spoke with great depth about well-being and

setting boundaries. The embodied energy of a veteran staff member was felt as Ciara was

highly explicit—adamant—about the importance of prioritizing her self-care and well-

being. She spoke against her supervisor's wishes to take on more work and/or meeting

expectations that would compromise her physical or emotional self. There were often

correlations to race here as she spoke about the importance of setting boundaries when a

school or leader did not align with nor implement anti-racist practice. She was bold and

confident while emphasizing the importance of being in a space that was healthy for her

mind, body, and intersectional identity. Therefore, she was empowered by setting

boundaries that maintained her well-being as well as supported and validated her cultural

identity and criticalist values.

Supervisors Empowering Black Educators

Supervisors engaging in a genuine and authentic recognition of their Black

supervisee's inherent value and potential seemed to impact longevity and greatly

improved the supervisor/supervisee relationship. Many of the participants discussed how

their experiences as Black educators made it more difficult for them as educators in

general. Often, when they did not have the support of their direct supervisor to grow and

develop or simply feel valued for what they currently offer, participants expressed feeling invisible or lacking worth. However, when said value was present, it made the world of a difference. This often led to an increase in intrinsic motivation as well as commitment and loyalty not only to the work but also to the leader themselves. All participants named that there was a personal commitment to doing their jobs well; however, being seen, valued, and heard fueled a desire to work harder and do even more.

For example, Faith spoke of an experience with a Black, male supervisor who was a new principal at the school and immediately able to recognize her skill and value. He encouraged her and advocated for her to advance in leadership. Through the support of her supervisor, her agency was reinforced as well as an intrinsic knowing or ability to be the ultimate determinant of her own destiny. When reflecting on a role historically held by a white woman teacher, Faith was challenged by her supervisor to consider applying for the role herself. She said,

I was like, "Wait a minute. No one has ever challenged her." I was like, "What? Now I'm going to challenge her." So, I ended up in that position after interviews and all this stuff. I became the lead teacher of my school [and] now I have a platform, now I have a voice, now I could actually move up other teachers of color.

Faith was successful in accomplishing her goal. Had it not been for her supervisor, she may not have considered the opportunity.

Esther, who seemed to receive positive reactions from most supervisors, was fortunate to experience value and career growth as well as impact and influence. Her supervisors often advocated for her as well as took accountability for mistakes made that

negatively impacted their relationship. As a result, she was able to bring her authentic self to work as a Black educator refraining from assimilation, code switching, or any other inauthentic representation of self. Esther was highly self-assured both in her ability as a working professional as well as in her cultural identity. This same assuredness was further reinforced by supervisors who recognized, appreciated, and fostered the development of her potential.

This section reviewed actions that fueled a healthy sense of self. Whether the actions were driven by supervisors or the participants themselves, all of the subthemes represented in this section aligned with empowerment of the Black, educator participant. Resulting from a positive experience that reinforced one's agency or a negative experience that positioned one to leave their job, an empowered sense of self seemed to be developed or reinvigorated causing the participant to increase confidence and self-assuredness through adversity or triumph. Having explored feelings and actions that fueled a healthy sense of self, this next section will explore the inverse of the same topic.

Feelings and Actions that Foster Dis-ease

While the previous section explored feelings and actions through a well-being lens, this section will explore participants' feelings and actions through a lens of dis-ease. Negative experiences shaped beliefs held by participants about supervisors and themselves which influenced feelings and actions fueling an unhealthy sense of self. Aligning with ECA, this section will build on the beliefs shared in Chapter 5 by providing a feelings summary followed by an exploration of actions.

Negative Feelings Summary

Table 14 represents the spectrum of negative emotions presented by participants when recounting their experiences. The first column determines primary feelings felt by participants, and the second column represents secondary and/or tertiary feelings. These emotions were identified during data analysis from the feelings wheel presented in Chapter 3. It is important to note that the feelings represented were the feelings shared and explored during the interview. This list is not exhaustive nor does it fully account for feelings that may have been subconsciously experienced. The exploration of this content will ground the reader in the participants' spectrum of negative emotions while providing examples and a concluding summary. Different from the section on positive feelings, all except for two participants experienced the full spectrum of emotion that seemed to produce dis-ease and the two remaining experienced two out of the three. Therefore, the following section will begin with framing the three primary feelings listed in the table below with a synthesis of the ways in which corresponding secondary and tertiary feelings presented in participants via subtheme categories.

Table 14

Feelings that Fueled an Unhealthy Sense of Self

Primary feelings	Secondary and tertiary feelings
Mad	Angry, hostile, frustrated, critical, skeptical, hurt, frustrated, distant, irritated
Sad	Depressed, apathetic, tired, helpless, discouraged, insignificant, lonely, isolated, inferior, remorseful, guilty, ashamed
Scared	Discouraged, anxious, helpless, rejected, insignificant, insecure, inadequate, overwhelmed

Mad, Sad, and Scared

Many participants throughout their interview processes experienced a full spectrum of feelings that fueled an unhealthy sense of self via negative emotional energy expressed. Given the context of most of the interviews, Black educator participants' recount of negative experiences with supervisors was visceral and embodied. Attempting to separate the ways in which mad, sad, and scared were present proved difficult as they were highly intertwined. Participant examples will therefore present secondary and tertiary feelings synthesized via subthemes of racism and toxicity, remorse and guilt, silenced and unheard, and inequitable limitations and expectations rather than foreground the primary feeling category.

Racism and Toxicity. Reflecting on the impact of racism in education and the resulting impact inequity had on their lives in general, participants shared specific beliefs on the impact of racism, social injustice, and inequity in Chapter 5. Accounting for the impact this subtheme had on her emotional state, Alicia identified feeling angry, hurt, frustrated, helpless, depressed, insignificant, and discouraged. When discussing the likelihood of racism shifting toward equality and justice, she shared how it hurt to think that this social phenomenon would never change. Alicia stated, "It's tough to say that […] it makes me sound so pessimistic or unhopeful. […] it's like how can we change this worldwide epidemic of racism? Is that even possible? And it scares me to think that no." This experience is evidence that despite positive experiences as an educator, racism was a phenomenon she was unable to escape.

Brianna also expressed hurt, became distant, depressed, apathetic, tired, helpless, anxious, and discouraged because of her experiences with supervisors and toxic school

environments. She named that these emotions, while experienced with white supervisors, were magnified with supervisors of color—namely Black supervisors as noted in Chapter 5. When experiencing a lack of support from previous supervisors, she seemed to feel insignificant and misled. Brianna shared, "I feel it leads people on and then they lose hope, and they feel like okay, I'm not supported in this environment. This person's just stringing me along and lying to me. No one likes to be strung along." Ultimately, Brianna believed this behavior resulted from a toxic, racist culture that was dishonest and disenfranchised historically marginalized groups.

Remorse and Guilt. Sharing feelings of guilt resulting from their anger, sadness, and fear, two participants presented in this feelings space. This subtheme is poignant as many participants shared both an individual and a collective responsibility to acquire equitable rights where they did not exist often bearing much proverbial weight; it was this weight that gave impetus to the guilt and remorse felt. For example, when reflecting on a decision made by her department and supervisor (i.e., principal) to not hire a Black, male teacher, Ciara shared how she challenged, pushed, and advocated for who she believed to be more holistically qualified. Ultimately, Ciara "still felt like...just regretted that decision made as a team," expressing remorse and guilt over not being able to direct a different outcome. Ciara also shared moments of stress and being overwhelmed especially when required to wear multiple hats and balance conflicting responsibilities as noted in Chapter 5. Throughout her narrative, Ciara felt angry, hurt, frustrated, critical, skeptical, irritated, remorseful, guilty, anxious, overwhelmed, rejected, and insecure.

Additionally, Deja noted feeling guilty for her inability to be her authentic self while choosing to wear a proverbial mask. She often experienced anger, hurt, frustration,

critical sentiments, skepticism, distancing, loneliness, isolation, inferiority, remorse, guilt, helplessness, and overwhelm. Anxiety also seemed to be present as she shared the impact unhealthy supervisor experiences had on her physical health. Deja shared,

> My anxiety shows up in my fluctuation of weight. […] there'd be times where I would be very, very skinny […] And then it would settle. And then it would yo-yo. I would gain tons and tons and tons of weight and people just didn't understand why. I also felt my anxiety with sleep.

Deja named that she believed anxiety increased the longer she remained in a toxic work environment where feelings of isolation were potent. Grounded in guilt and remorse, anxiety seemed to result from an inability to self-actualize and be her true self among other factors.

     Silenced and Unheard. Reflecting on this subtheme, there were many participants who expressed feeling mad, sad, and scared when silenced and unheard. While feeling unheard was usually the result of a direct action from a supervisor, being silent or silenced was often self-imposed resulting from working in a school environment whose culture was shaped by hegemony. For example, Esther shared feeling angry, hurt, frustrated, rejected, insignificant, insecure, inadequate, and overwhelmed in her environment. While most of Esther's anger and fear was related to supervisors not doing what she felt was best for Black and Brown students and educators, it is important to clarify that the feelings mentioned had less to do with her ability and skill set and more to do with being unheard.

     Isaiah shared feeling silenced, insignificant, and fearful throughout his experience as a Black male educator. With further exploration, he expressed feeling angry, hurt,

frustrated, irritated, depressed, apathetic, tired, helpless, insignificant, lonely, isolated, inferior, anxious, overwhelmed, and discouraged. Isaiah stated,

> It's like insecurity in a way where you just fear sharing that you don't know something, […] the thought of maybe being judged as an uneducated Black man. "How'd you get here and you don't qualify to be here." It's too bad because I think a lot of that may have held, might've held me back from maybe gaining some information from someone or getting more support.

Isaiah expressed a fair amount of frustration when reflecting on the support he did not receive and how it could have catapulted his career.

As previously noted, Harriet gained unique perspective as she was involved in multiple levels of education (i.e., school, community, and district). Creating a greater scope of knowledge and a corresponding feeling, Harriet named there were times she felt hopeless as well as helpless, silenced, and unheard. Harriet stated, "I think that in the past, there has been times where I've just kept things in and waited because I was afraid of the reaction or response." While Harriet is no longer afraid of the response she will receive from supervisors, she thought it important enough to share that this was not always her reality. As a result, Harriet felt angry, hurt, frustrated, depressed, apathetic, tired, helpless, discouraged, insignificant, anxious, and overwhelmed at times.

Inequitable Limitations and Expectations. When working with supervisors who lacked understanding of his content, were unable to invest in his development, or seemed inauthentic and transactional, George experienced anger, hostility, frustration, irritation, depression, apathy, fatigue, helplessness, discouragement, insignificance, anxiety, overwhelm, rejection, insecurity, and inadequacy. He often associated frustration with

positions that limited his potential and lacked an opportunity for growth and development. When feeling sadness, George often lacked the level of engagement he desired from his supervisor. Most of the scenarios that caused George to feel scared involved stress resulting from exhausted bandwidth.

Reflecting on Faith's experience, she named needing to be extremely cautious. As her advocacy increased, so did the contention she experienced with supervisors as well as the rigorous standard to which she was held. Faith stated, "Yeah, it was exhausting, extremely exhausting. Yeah, and that's what a lot of times we go through as educators of color. It's exhausting." Majority of the time Faith presented as highly empowered and confident in her competence and purpose; however, there remained moments of fatigue, shame, guilt, anxiety, and overwhelm.

Concluding this section on negative feelings that fueled an unhealthy sense of self, a spectrum of mad, sad, and scared feelings were presented with greater complexity as secondary and tertiary feelings were explored. The subthemes for this section were also more complex as primary feeling categories were experienced in concert and thus more difficult to represent in silo. This factor, one could argue, was due to the experiences themselves being more complex than those producing a healthy sense of self. One could also argue that the impact of racism and dysfunction on participants produced a trauma response—minimally a dysregulation of sorts that made for a more difficult experience when processing and expressing one's feelings. Nevertheless, it was important to present feelings in this section with fidelity as they provide context for the following section on actions that resulted from said emotions.

Actions that Fueled an Unhealthy Sense of Self

This section will build on negative feelings explored in the last section by presenting supervisor and participant actions that fueled an unhealthy sense of self for participants. Whether birthed out of obstacle or triumph, these actions did not improve participants' holistic sustainability nor well-being. Some of the experiences shared drove short-term impact on well-being while other scenarios were longer-term in nature. This section will include two subthemes (i.e., oppression and internalized oppression).

Oppression: Villainizing and the Inequitable Exertion of Power

Beginning with unhealthy supervisor actions that negatively impacted Black educators, participants shared that supervisors would often exert power inequitably' which was nevertheless incredibly impactful in the scenarios described. Supervisors pushed past Black educator comfort zones, threatened job security, and even bribed a Black educator to achieve their personal outcome. Thus, blaming and villainizing Black educator participants were present. In these instances, participants advocated for themselves as well as their Black colleagues, students, and families. They advocated for resources, culturally responsive curriculum, stronger community to be a part of their school culture, accurate evaluations, and proper recognition of their work and effort. As a result, supervisors blamed the Black educator as the impetus of the problem while negating the impact of their actions and neglecting to acknowledge how they—the supervisor—contributed to the challenge in the first place. While more lenient expectations were placed on their white counterparts, Black educator participants experienced an undue and unrealistic amount of responsibility placed on them. Ultimately, trust between the supervisor and supervisee was eroded.

For example, Deja shared an instance where she decided to leave her school mid-year. She recalled communicating a plan for reaching out to her students and families to share her news. Deja's supervisor told her that she would rather pass a note to Deja's students and contact her students' families for her to notify them of her departure. Deja said, "I remember she said, 'If I'm being honest with you […], no note that you give your children is going to erase the fact that they feel you've given up on them.'" Recognizing no action could thwart such abusive interaction, at times Deja felt hopeless. She also stated, "I think they use our strength against us. We always have to be exceptional […] as soon as we show any weakness at all, make any mistakes at all, we are villainized for them in a way it's scary." Feeling blamed and villainized, Deja was heartbroken and enraged. While leaving was a difficult decision, she could no longer manage her well-being, grow, and develop. Not only was her supervisor's response inappropriate but it was also an exertion of power and oppression.

Harriet was also negatively impacted by racialized actions taken and exertion of power by supervisors. Referenced in Chapter 5, she described how a white woman leader did not support or protect her in a dangerous situation with one of her students. The supervisor wanted to talk with her about it, and Harriet set a boundary asking if they could talk the following day. The supervisor then offered a financial bribe to persuade Harriet to meet with her and talk. Harriet was completely off put and felt disrespected and objectified. She named that she also felt misunderstood. She believed that her administrators were prioritizing white supremacy culture over a multicultural and critically conscious approach to education. While Harriet maintained her stance in this scenario, there have been occasions where she succumbed to the influence of whiteness

and the additional stress of trying to persist through exhaustion toward self-protection and survival. Ultimately, the impact of weathering and carrying an allostatic load increased stress, weight gain, and drinking to cope (Geronimus et al., 2006).

Oppression: White Supremacy Culture in Career Transitions

Some participants named they experienced challenges with supervisors when trying to advance their careers. Whether there were responsibilities added to their current job, a higher-ranking job for which they were highly qualified, or not being positioned to fully leverage their skills and experience in the job they currently held, participants identified that white supremacy culture was the caveat that interrupted their trajectory and colored the lens through which their supervisors evaluated their preparedness. Participants were forward in their expression of their vision to do and be more within their school or the field of education. In the worst case scenarios, Black educators were not only retained but let go resulting from their supervisor's implicit bias colored by a privileged lens.

For example, Brianna shared that she had a Black woman supervisor who did not support her growth or development after having shared her vision. Brianna explained "I was stressed all night when I got there. […] I told her about all the things I wanted to do and that was my plan right before the other principal had left." Brianna's principal hired a friend of hers to do the very same job Brianna, "described [she] wanted to do. [She] felt she was like, […] So, it's either you don't go to school or get a new job or something." In this instance, an ultimatum was presented. Recognizing white supremacy culture can infiltrate and impact all racial groups, it is important to note that the supervisor in this scenario was a Black woman leader.

Deja also shared clear and apparent discrimination against Black educators in her school as there were white staff members who took similar actions and were either praised and favored or escaped penalty. Deja shared an experience of applying for a position a few times and questioning the integrity of the hiring manager and her supervisor. She stated, "So I just become very angry at this point. I feel like I am still doing what I need to do inside the classroom, but professionally I feel like I'm being taken advantage of." Deja was confused and did not understand why they were engaging in an external hiring process if she was qualified, knew the systems, and expressed interest. She firmly believed the decision to choose a white staff member or engage in an external search was racist.

Internalized Oppression: Code Switching and Restricted Self-expression

The examples in the above section represented oppressive action committed by supervisors acted upon Black educators highlighting dynamics that often led to participants' inability to engage in self-actualizing, authentic behavior. Often, participants shut down or merely tolerated their job until the school year ended and/or they were able to leave. They felt stifled, suppressed, and suffocated. Although the quality of their work maintained, their well-being suffered. However, this section with explore ways in which oppression was acted upon oneself. For example, some Black educators found themselves code switching or fully assimilating to survive supervisor dynamics or broader school culture. Many participants believed the only safe space to fully be themselves was in their classrooms where their students were predominantly Black and Brown or with colleagues that were also Black.

For example, Brianna's code-switching seemed to impact low intrinsic motivation and decreased well-being. Lacking inhibition in expressing one's authentic self at work seemed to restrict aspects of her cultural identity that often led to an unhealthy sense of self. She stated, "In certain work environments that you've been in, you have to present yourself a certain way and as Black people we've learned to do that, the code switching." There was an avoidance of contact and caution that guided her self-preservation. When Brianna's supervisor displayed inauthentic, unstable behavior, Brianna noted that she was unable to gauge her standing with her supervisor often leaving her on edge, hypervigilant, and avoidant. Ultimately, Brianna found herself losing sleep, ruminating, and working to create value for herself with hope that her supervisor would recognize her efforts.

Deja was also inhibited from existing in a self-actualized state. Most central to her survival and ability to thrive at work, she found that code switching behavior and assimilation (i.e., wearing certain clothing) was necessary. As introduced in Chapter 4, Deja stated, "I had to hold this mask up, where I could only take it off around people who looked just like me. […] just getting ready for work. Sometimes I feel like I am putting one on. And it's exhausting." Deja also highlighted an incident where she was targeted for how she dressed. She shared,

> I wear the same things that people who are white wear, but […] if you can see anything that's below the hip line, it's like, "That's inappropriate." But if it's a skinny white girl, it's not an issue. I'm proud of where my ancestors come from. I can't help it. It just is what it is.

Deja acknowledged that choosing what to wear to work is something she believed all women consider. However, there was a racial overtone that made her feel uneasy in this

instance. When she addressed her discomfort with this feedback, Deja named that she experienced expressions of white guilt and fragility with simultaneous victim shaming, blaming, and targeting. Ultimately, this experience set an unspoken expectation that white ways of being, looking, acting, thinking, and teaching were preferred. Anything contrary to this was met with intolerance. Therefore, choosing to code switch or assimilate toward white culture and away from Black culture served as a survival tactic that perpetuated Deja's internalized oppression.

Reflecting on actions that fueled an unhealthy sense of self, the complexity and pervasiveness of the ways in which oppression and internalized oppression shaped the supervisor relationship and thus the well-being of the Black educator were powerful. While this narrative represented participants' recount of their past experiences, the following section will explore nonverbal communication during interviews providing greater depth of participants' embodied experiences.

Embodied Communication

Having reviewed participant feelings and actions recounted through narrative on supervisor experiences, this section will shift to focus on the embodied expression of said narrative as represented during participant interviews. Serving as an important element of ECA, exploring nonverbal communication seemed to represent a non-binary spectrum of energy expressed allowing for greater depth of analysis. This section is highly unique as each code required comprehensive memoing to both situate the code as well as provide color and context for the observed expression or gesture.

When arguing factors of subjectivity, Carspecken (1996) noted "the act of symbolizing subjectivity involves a series of representations that move through very

vague, holistic, and bodily felt forms outward toward delineated and explicit symbols" (p. 168). Carspecken also noted that "the holistic experience of meaning is something felt in one's body" (p. 124). Exploring the prelinguistic and intersubjective nature of embodied, nonverbal expression, Carspecken noted this holistic experience of meaning making though nonverbal communication as first a physical felt sense. Additionally, I would also argue that this bodily sense is not only communicated and felt by the actor but also felt and interpreted by the observer of said communication on the same embodied level. Therefore, this section will begin with the exploration of a unique theme reviewing the significance of smiling and laughter throughout participant interviews. Additional themes in this section include self-preservation, intention, strength, and resolve.

Ancestral Dialogue

Reflecting on the presence of laughter and smiling, the significance was complex, rich, and on some level ancestral. As observance of this trend increased, its prevalence only grew stronger. Thus, it became apparent that this form of nonverbal communication warranted greater attention. The subthemes represented in this section include lack of congruence, emotional release and self-regulation, and collective knowledge.

Lack of Congruence

While there are a few subthemes to be discussed, lack of congruence, or possibly the presence of cognitive dissonance was one such theme. Often, when smiling or laughter were present, the context within which it happened was anything but humorous. For example, there were moments where Esther smiled sarcastically or laughed to emphasize disagreement regarding her experience with her supervisor. In these moments, there seemed to be an expression of mutual knowing between myself and the participant.

Consequently, Harriet's laughter and smiling also seemed to inversely align with her lack of comfort. When describing unhealthy experiences with her supervisors, she often smiled. The unhealthier the experience, the more she shifted from smiling to slight laughter to full laughter. Despite Isaiah's laughter seeming to be congruent with an expression of pleasure and safety, there were also moments where a lack of congruence was present. In these moments, laughter seemed to be a healthy way to express a negative emotion while recounting an unhealthy circumstance. It is also possible that Isaiah's smile helped him navigate the complexity of experiences producing double consciousness (i.e., "being forced to view [him]self through white perspectives while maintaining [his] own self-definition"; Black, 2007).

Emotional Release and Self-regulation

While some participants' laugher and smiling seemed to represent opposing feelings, others seemed to leverage these nonverbal tools as a form of release and self-regulation. Depending on the situation experienced with one's supervisor, the participants' subconscious intuition seemed to direct the impetus of the approach taken. For example, Deja's laughter was often in response to a negative or unhealthy racialized experience. Frequently appearing as a release of sorts, it seemed that underneath the laughter was pain, anger, or both. Laughter seemed to be an empowered expression that prevented Deja from letting the situation get the best of her. Deja stated, "I never let them see me sweat. [Laughter] I feel that's part of the culture there too. Especially with […] women of color there […] who […] are experiencing the same things." Deja's laughter seemed to represent a recognition of the ridiculousness of situations described or possible validation of the continued injustice endured. In addition to laughter, there were also

moments where Deja smiled sarcastically as if to represent a facetious gesture. The energy when smiling was different than when laughing, as smiling seemed to express intrapersonal, aligned, and congruent validation of self or relief that fostered a sense of self-efficacy and empowerment.

Collective Knowledge

Regarding this subtheme, laughter and smiling seemed to represent a broader collective meaning. More than a subjective knowing, collective knowledge generated through laughter and smiling seemed to incite intersubjective understanding with great accuracy of interpretation as well as affirmation for the participant. For example, Faith laughed when she said the word "no" and described being resistant toward her supervisors' actions. Most often, her laughter was slight. Occasionally, her laughter was more full, but that was rare. Faith's laughter often accompanied facial expressions reminiscent of coded language Black people used to communicate and still do. The following memo describes a shared moment between the participant and me as the interviewer, where the importance and significance of having Black supervisors who are supportive and see the Black educator's value was acknowledged. I wrote,

It [the laughter] represented this collective, subconscious, and unspoken understanding of "you got me"—akin to the ways in which enslaved Africans used to braid escape routes and messages into their hair or drum rhythms sending messages to each other. "You got me," either through language or action, is a way to express a shared understanding that Black people have a history of white supremacy culture working to erase and devalue our very being. This inner knowing of support could be observed through others' actions (i.e., signs or

symbols) but had such deep meaning that it often remained difficult to verbalize.
Maybe this same universal, unspoken language lies within laughter and smiling as
the coded language in this moment carried a powerfully visceral experience of
attunement and feeling. Attempting to strip Black people of their culture, family
structure, values, and strength, "you got me" symbolizes that not only do I
recognize that this has been your plight, but I am also recognizing that it is a
shared plight; therefore, I am committed to showing you I will protect you and be
here for you. I am in it with you.

Thus, the idea that laughter was the result of Black educators'—Black people's—learned
behavior to circumvent oppression and assuage intergenerational trauma as described by
Degruy-Leary (2005) and Menakem (2017) developed potency.

Ultimately, the expression of smiling and laughter was complex and existed far
beyond a positive or negative binary. Attempting to determine the presence or lack of
health in these scenarios proved more difficult than with prior themes. This theme was
more than a means of nonverbal communication as it also served as an expression of
communal attunement. It was an opportunity to communicate, which words may not have
fully expressed or been able to heal, calm, or validate. This next section will explore
nonverbal communication through a thematic lens of self-preservation.

Embodied Self-Preservation and Self-Care

While previous chapters and sections in this chapter have explored the ways in
which participants' beliefs, feelings, and actions fostered self-preservation, this subtheme
will explore the ways in which self-preservation and self-care were represented through
nonverbal communication. Observing the ways participants held their bodies in general

as they sat in their seats during different points of their narrative was intriguing as themes

of self-preservation and self-care arose. For example, through much of her narrative,

Deja's body was turned away from me. She sat at the head of the table, and I sat to her

left as she recounted an unhealthy experience with her most recent school and series of

supervisors. With her body facing straight forward and leaning forward with forearms

resting on the table, she looked at me through the corner of her eye with her head tilted

slightly. When she finished sharing her experience, Deja shifted her body such that she

turned her chair, leaned back and to the left with forearms resting on the arms of the

chair—physically opening up by turning her head and her torso toward me. Due to the

way she embodied her narrative and the retelling of her experience, she appeared to

subconsciously need to physically protect herself. As she arrived at the point in her

narrative where she left her previous school, Deja appeared more relaxed and

comfortable by remaining this way for the duration of the interview.

While Faith sat back in her chair and appeared physically calm for most of her

interview, there were moments of self-soothing. When she described her worst self at

work and the impact of working with a supervisor who embodied negative qualities, she

placed her hands inside the sleeves of her opposite arm. Like a self-soothing gesture

seeking comfort, she rubbed her forearms with her opposite hand inside her sleeve. While

reflecting on the impact of the additional burden she bore as a Black woman educator,

she deeply exhaled when describing her stress. Faith stated, "Oh my gosh. I was stressed.

I was tired. I felt like my family was suffering […] I felt like all my time was just around

making sure ... I always have to go above and beyond." Despite these gestures, Faith also

frequently leaned forward when recounting a need to advocate for herself and ensure her

evaluation was equitable. At times, her lean forward was accompanied by squinting or a straight-faced expression. In these moments, the impact of white supremacy culture on her supervisor relationships seemed to resonate the most.

Lastly, when reflecting on Brianna's unhealthy experience with a supervisor, her expression was full-bodied as her face displayed fear and anxiety. Her eyes were darting back and forth as if to be on the lookout. Her shoulders lifted and her arms drew in close to her body as if to protect herself from a threat. There was another instance when she raised her hands to touch and frame her forehead. This gesture indicated the level of stress experienced while preparing for a particular conversation with her supervisor. When talking about the proverbial baggage Black educators carry, she took a deep breath and exhaled as if she was currently sitting with and releasing the heaviness of that weight. Although the presentation of these gestures was subjective and nuanced, they served as examples of self-care and self-preservation through nonverbal communication.

Intentional Gestures

While some participants used gestures frequently, others were minimally expressed. In these instances, the use of nonverbal communication made a greater impact as it was more overt and explicit. For example, Esther's use of nonverbal communication did not seem overly expressive. However, there were poignant moments where certain expressions emphasized something meaningful like when she tilted her head down and looked up over her glasses or looked directly at me and paused after she made a statement. This was significant because Esther often looked into the distance as she spoke refraining from eye contact with me as she engaged in her own process of thought. When asked a question midway through the interview, Esther made an affirmative auditory

sound and leaned forward while looking at the papers on the table as if I asked her a covert question requiring her to listen intently. This was the first and only time Esther did this and could have represented a moment of increased attunement where feeling valued and heard increased participant engagement. Nevertheless, it was impactful to experience her energy shift.

Despite her previous example, Brianna also seemed to be less expressive in general as her gestures were minimal. One could almost feel the weight of her torso, arms, and hands flowing downward into her chair. However, when Brianna shared an impactful moment, she became lively. She often made facial and/or full-bodied expressions that involved shaking her face and neck simultaneously or at times leaning in with her torso as she shook her neck and face for added emphasis. As captured in an interviewer memo, I wrote that these expressions seemed to

> Emphasize the boundaries […] set when she feels going to her supervisor for help is no longer healthy or fruitful, or the representation of a Black, cultural gesture of neck shaking to communicate displeasure. She also used the same gesture to communicate inauthenticity of a white supervisor's use of neck shaking per: poor attempts at between group cultural identification.

In addition to head and neck gestures, Brianna also isolated eye movements by rolling them upward simultaneously in disapproval or looking toward the side while shrugging her shoulders sarcastically. In one instance, this eye rolling was accompanied by a guttural sound of disgust and a slight shrug of the right shoulder. It also seemed to signify being over or done with the situation. With time, Brianna seemed to become more expressive or even reenact a narrative representing her worst experiences with

supervisors or when describing qualities she found unfavorable. Ultimately, when reflecting on interviewer memos that explored the meaning of said facial expressions and bodily gestures, there was representation of Black, cultural influence in both interviews where gestures were highly intentional.

Strength in Nonverbal Communication

Often, when participants became passionate, their gestures and expressions matched their internal energy. This was most apparent during George and Ciara's interviews. George exuded strength and an intensity of focus that were distinct. As noted in an interviewer memo, I wrote that "there was a strong energy that came from him when he named that he felt he was being underutilized. It was like he who knew his worth […] and chose to stand flatfooted in his truth." When George spoke, he made strong, intentional hand gestures that were often in one direction that moved toward or away from his torso.

When talking about the benefit of having a BIPOC and more specifically Black, male supervisor, he gestured from his chest upward toward what he seemed to be admiringly envisioning as a role model representative of himself. This gesture seemed to reinforce his desire and longing for a Black, male supervisor as well as the impact seeing oneself in one's mentor could have. When emphasizing a self-directed approach that drove his own growth, his eyes widened emphasizing the energy and self-determination he embodied to make this happen. He was also very intentional about making sure that I understood his growth was his doing and that no one else did that for him. In short, this gesture emphasized the fact that George got himself to his current professional level as there was a striking intention and intensity in this moment. The strength of George's

expressions and gestures did not seem angry or disapproving but rather embodying an intentional intensity earlier noted.

Regarding Ciara's nonverbal communication, there were moments later in her interview where she maintained a grounded energy while embodying a firm quality in expression. When discussing boundaries set with her supervisors around work/life balance, she emphatically shifted from a smile and more jovial nature toward a more serious facial expression and stiffened torso as if to make a point. While holding this facial expression, she lifted her arms bent and wide and dropped them stopping mid-air before they hit her lap—making an end gesture.

There was another moment when sharing disagreement with her supervisor's decision to hire a new Black staff member where she tilted and shook her head while looking straight at me without blinking. In an interviewer memo I recounted that in that moment "her veteran status was embodied. […] when her torso becomes erect and this time with the added emphasis of tilting her head sideways, nodding, and not blinking…there was a use of power and/or ownership of her power and position." While many examples of nonverbal communication are unique, participant narratives in this section held themes of veteran status and unabashedly embodied strength as it influenced their beliefs, feelings, actions, and now nonverbal communication in powerful ways.

Embodied Quiet and Calm Resolve

The final theme of the embodied communication section of this chapter explored a calm, balanced, and grounded sensibility. Beginning with Harriet, when describing negative interactions, she rarely expressed negative energy as there was a calm presence about her throughout the interview. This may have been her general demeanor, or this

could have represented a certain resolve she embodied about her work experience. She often spoke with a specific and somewhat soft tone of voice. When sharing the resoluteness she had when making a decision to leave one of the schools at which she worked, she calmly said "no" proclaiming to herself her time at that school was complete. It was striking as she shook her head slowly and embodied extreme calm. There was a sweetness to her voice as it was quiet and soft yet not meek. There was an assuredness in her "no." She was not angry nor agitated. Her no was a complete sentence.

Harriet's confidence in her professional acumen matched this calm, quiet resolve or knowing. Her embodied presence did not seem to convey a lack of confidence but rather a solid foundation on which she could rest. She had a level of leadership and a connection to power beyond her school or school administration that may have also helped shape her confidence, grounded being, and energy. When Harriet described the bond that she and other BIPOC colleagues shared at one of her schools, she described it as impervious to toxic traits or culture. In this instance, she was also shaking her head no. When she spoke of their bond surpassing the principal's impact, it was as if the slow head shaking back and forth "no" indicated how their bond and their resistance toward power thrived despite the principal's negative qualities.

Ciara also displayed a grounded, confident, and centered embodied energy. Leaning forward for most of the interview, it looked as if most of her body weight rested on the table as she held herself up. There was a settled, grounded energy she exuded while holding this posture. Toward the beginning of the interview, Ciara lifted her arms above her head, took a deep breath in, and stretched as if to get ready or loosen up for the conversation. She seemed mindful, present, and grounded in her body in this experience

of her physical being. Ciara also displayed notable facial expression with less full-bodied engagement. When describing what it felt like to work at her school, her eyes widened, and her eyebrows lifted. It was as if her entire face brightened from a strong visceral knowing. When describing the image she selected to represent her best self at work, Ciara emphasized how she likes to be in a flow-like state. Ciara shared, "Well, there's something very dynamic about teaching where you can adapt and you can go where the kids are going. You're going, and your colleagues are going. So that's why I picked something also around water." In this moment, her arms and hands were flowing back and forth very gently as if to symbolize the movement of water or trees swaying in a calm breeze. There was harmony in her movement, and it felt calming to witness.

Chapter Summary

While some of the feelings, actions, and nonverbal communication explored in this chapter are humanly universal, it is also likely that coded language enslaved Africans used to circumvent their slave masters knowing and guide their survival has been passed down through generations of Black Americans. It is also possible that this same unspoken meaning making was part of African culture, normed throughout the diaspora before colonization, and was strong enough to endure the atrocity thereafter. Symbolic of a coded means of communication representing so much more than the moment in which it is found, feelings, actions, and gestures can hold generations of intuition, meaning making, resilience, shared experience, survival, attunement, and diasporic, familial connection. Having reviewed participants' feeling and action states as well as nonverbal communication, Chapter 7 will present the final component of ECA with a focus on culture and power types.

Chapter 7: Findings—School Culture and Power Analysis
I just think the trust is there and trust is so important in relationships.
I just think that those systems, and the people making those rules.
I think you should be able to walk into every school in the same system and get
the same education.
                                                                    —I Poem: Harriet

Thus far, the presentation of findings reviewed embodied critical analysis (ECA) from a critical, holistic lens via intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. This chapter will explore this context on cultural and institutional levels. Carspecken (1996) described reconstructive analysis "at heart [as] a creative endeavor, akin to the creativity involved each time we understand other people in everyday life" (p. 94). Drawing on a metaphor of an artist embracing tools for painting, Carspecken encouraged qualitative researchers to engage in reconstructive analysis in much the same way. Thus, reconstructive analysis is shaped by a creative, intersubjective driving force where an articulation of "cultural themes and system factors that are not observable and that are usually unarticulated by the actors themselves" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 42) are present.

Adding critical, epistemological context to ECA, there is an acknowledgement that beliefs, feelings, and actions do not exist in a vacuum but rather within a cultural and institutional context that shapes personal and interpersonal experiences of power and privilege. As aforementioned, ECA encompasses thematic, embodied, and reconstructive analysis. While Chapters 5 and 6 focused on thematic and embodied analytical components, this chapter will center reconstructive analysis framing an embodied experience of the school environment. Therefore, this chapter will explore participant perspectives on healthy and unhealthy school culture and its impact as well as an analysis of power types as they exist in participant narratives. This chapter will then close with a

review of participant solutions aiming to disrupt said power. Figure 16 provides an

outline of the topics and themes presented.

Figure 16

Outline of Chapter 7
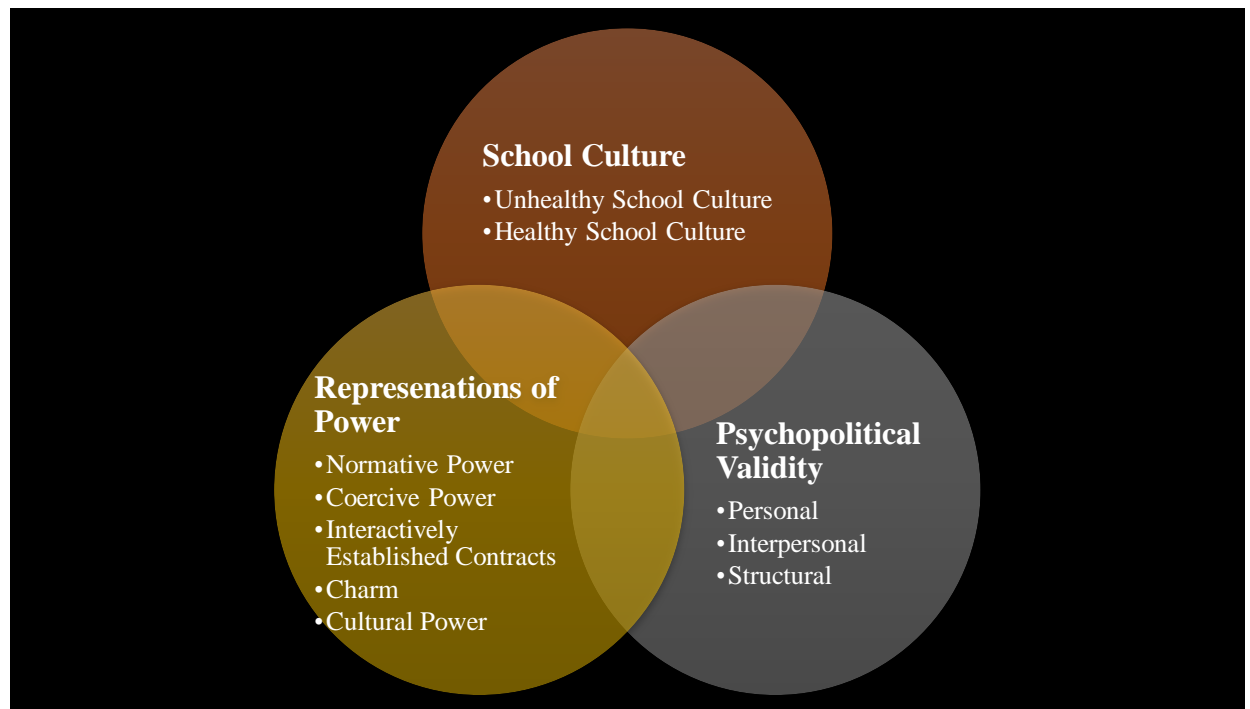
School Culture

Toward the end of the interview, participants were asked to reflect on their school

culture and the ways in which said culture has impacted their sustainability and/or their

supervisor relationships. With school culture deriving from a set of norms, values, and

beliefs (Schein, 2017), a connection between school culture and the holistic sustainability

of Black educators seemed important to explore as the spectrum of impact was full. As

previously mentioned, there were elements of ECA that were inspired by Carspecken's

(1996) work in critical ethnography. Regarding culture, Carspecken wrote of a

normative-evaluative domain in which "social regularities occur through the manner in

which actors understand norms and values, claim them tacitly or explicitly in all

interactions, and negotiate them when disputes arise" (p. 84). "Rooted in the process of

position-taking structuring meaning," normative-evaluative claims therefore "are claims

about what is proper, appropriate and conventional" (p. 83). Within the context of this

research topic, white supremacy culture has shaped and determined what is proper,

appropriate, and conventional—ultimately disenfranchising Black educators. This next

section will explore the impact of unhealthy school culture on participants.

Unhealthy School Culture

Reflecting on thematic prevalence, participants named school culture shaped by

institutional racism as unhealthy. For example, culture that is toxic, dysfunctional,

chaotic, lacking in efficiency, and riddled with unsustainable systems all give impetus to

a negative impact on Black educator well-being. Given most experiences are not binary,

there may be healthy aspects of culture represented here; however, it is not dominant and

thus backgrounded. The following content will review three subthemes: (a) internal

dynamics and dysfunction, (b) systemic impact and resource allocation, and (c) white

supremacy culture and community.

Inter-personal Dynamics and Dysfunction

Throughout participant interviews, they described the ways toxicity, hegemony,

and a lack of harmony impacted their experiences. Participants shared that ultimately it

was the responsibility of school leaders to shift the culture of the school when it was

unhealthy. For example, Brianna named that school administrators who embodied

negative qualities affected school culture and cohesion among staff. As a result, Brianna

experienced cliques, division, toxicity, and dysfunction among colleagues. She named

that staff would often avoid toxic administrators out of fear. Briana shared,

> Everybody just stayed to themselves and only reported important information like
>
> if [the principal's] coming to your class, what mood was she in […] people just
>
> kind of stayed in cliques. […] It was very divided. You can feel it.

When Brianna was in a school with administrators that embodied healthy

qualities, staff agency was fostered leading toward engaged community building.

However, when this was absent, the disfunction experienced was palpable. Ultimately,

Brianna believed that if the educational system or even the school administrators are

unable to support the educator and lacks value for the educators' work, a healthy and

authentic Black educator experience can be compromised.

In addition to isolation and manipulation, Deja named that most of the white

women leaders at her school formed an exclusive group where covert competition among

them caused staff to feel uneasy and in competition with each other. Describing school

culture as "straight hunger games" Deja stated that "the culture of leadership is based on

connections and the fact that they're friends." This implied that anyone whose identity

fell outside of that which this group of leaders deemed proper, appropriate, and

conventional (i.e., like them) was not the norm and thus substandard. Connecting to the

hunger games reference, Deja also spoke of the obsessive and incessant nature of school

administration to constantly revise and innovate one's work which she believed took

away from her ability to get "ahead of the curve." Ultimately, this aspect of school

culture is incapable of lending itself to the self-actualization of the Black educator, staff

critical consciousness, or whole person paradigm resulting in dysfunction.

Likening the culture of the school to a home environment and teaching like parenting, Alicia believed that when dysfunction was present, the school community suffered much like a home or a family would. She described a scenario in which school principal retention was low and inconsistency in the school was high over an 8-year period. Alicia stated, "There were a lot of changes in administration, a lot of changes in staff. And so it was creating this instability for the... it's like a broken home, right? Like if mom and dad aren't there." This perspective was poignant as it not only served as an example of Alicia's assessment of the toxicity of her work environment but the intimacy and relational approach with which she related to her place of employment.

Systemic Impact and Resource Allocation

While the focus of the interviews was primarily on the impact of supervisor relationships on the Black educator experience, participants also reflected on the influence of broader systems and the impact a lack of resources had on their ability to thrive as educators. For example, Brianna and Harriet identified the impact a lack in material resource and staff can have. Brianna believed her administration "was not really supportive. It was like I was just left alone with a bunch of kids in the classroom with no end objective." Brianna identified how educators at her school lacked enough staff or material resource to help their students.

Harriet also discussed how limited resources in staffing made her job less sustainable. Identifying barriers that prevent parents from becoming more involved and thus making her day-to-day experience more difficult, Harriet discussed having to create differentiated plans for a relatively large number of students while "there's a school down the street that has two teachers and a para in every classroom with a bunch of kids who

aren't of color." Harriet went on to say that while those teachers may be working hard, she believed their experience of working hard was not equitable nor comparable to her experience. Identifying proverbial baggage Black educators carry, contributing factors to said baggage thus seem to include inequitable resource distribution due to a misallocation of funds stemming from institutional inequity.

Describing the ways in which identity, access, and position of power intermingled with broader educational systems, Faith described an experience with a Black principal (also her supervisor) who was less available, had higher levels of accountability to district level leadership, and lacked the social capital among wealthy constituents that would enable him to build resource equal to that of previous white leaders. When speaking of teachers in general, Faith shared,

> No one knows that this is what's happening. All you know is that you had music, you had this, you had that […] This is not coming from the budget that the school is giving you or the district is giving you. This is like my friends who have a lot of money that fundraise and can write me a check. […] Now you have a principal who grew up in the community, who doesn't have all of those connections yet. I say yet, because I know he's going to build them, and I see that he can build them. But you still expect the same.

She went on to describe that as a result, white staff seem to be less flexible and less able to adjust to having a principal that may be less available or less able to provide the same level of resource with less resources himself. Faith also stated that "there also seems to be a gap in folks understanding that it is just purely different for us…again at all levels." Given Black leaders' contention with whiteness in education, a school culture in which

the Black leader would either meet or not meet the expectations of staff seemed to create a dynamic ravished with stress and frustration.

According to Deja, Black educators are saying, "We're telling you that we need help and you're not giving it to us." To achieve true equity of resource distribution and design approaches that benefit historically marginalized populations, Faith explained the need for diversified parent teachers' association involvement. She shared, "You can't then say you want to diversify but then leave. That's not what diversity is." While inequitable resource allocation continues to negatively impact Black educators, according to Ciara, they are naming again "and again, it's the system," and questioning, "why you keep on burning out? […] it's the quality of education. […] Just continuing the racist effects in our public education system." Lacking the resources they need, Isaiah emphasized that he was left to feel "like I was given what I needed too late to get started. I felt like I was building the airplane while I'm falling out of the sky." Thus, when resources are lacking, holistic, sustainable practice becomes deprioritized as more is required of everyone and less value is placed on catering to educators from a whole-person, well-resourced perspective.

White Supremacy Culture's Influence

When discussing the impact of white supremacy culture on the culture of schools, many participants identified characteristics deemed by Dr. Tema Okun's (2000) resource on "white supremacy culture" where perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, binary thinking, power hoarding, and objectivity were among those listed. For example, Deja listed controlling, cult like beliefs; impersonal dynamics; data obsessed; overworking; chaotic; long, unsustainable

days; and relational hierarchy as characteristics of culture in her school. As a result, Deja described feeling judged and isolated which she "felt was very potent. […] And that's the culture." Regarding the controlling, cult-like beliefs, Deja went on to say

> It's a bubble. They have you in there so long, days and years, and they make you feel they're the only campus that exists, the only institution that's doing really great work for children […] and it's just not true.

Ultimately, Deja found this environment unsustainable. With greater insight, confidence, and competence, she decided to leave.

Esther expressed a strong connection between school culture and institutionalized racism. She believed that the structure of the school, pedagogy, curriculum, staff development, and relationships with students and families were all driven by white supremacy culture. This resulted in a restrictive school culture riddled with challenges in expectations for productivity as well as relational dynamics at work. In one instance previously noted where Esther and another Black employee were marked late by her supervisor while their white colleague was not, there were three normative elements present: (a) that punctuality is important and an inflexible alignment to that norm is grounded in white dominant culture, (b) that Black people are unprofessional and therefore must be reprimanded or trained to align with normative standards, and (c) that on a more humanistic level, there was a lack of respect given where this supervisor neglected to check-in with Esther in order to gather more information regarding her tardiness. In this instance, exploring the supervisor's implicit bias and how it may have informed her narrative on leadership, power, management, and accountability as it relates to Black educators could have been useful.

Framing the difference between an older, established school versus a new one, Isaiah described this difference in school culture. While at a newer school, he named that guardrails on time were less restrictive and overworking was valued more. The cultural expectations on productivity also seemed to impact their holistic sustainability. For example, according to Isaiah, the process for staff coverage when a colleague called out of work meant

> You could end up picking up someone's classes and teaching their classes on your prep period or on your time when you're supposed to have your lunch or whatever. […] As the school grew, that became very stressful on everybody.

In addition to this expectation that educators would align with shifting their schedules last minute, Isaiah also identified the impact of a strong focus on data. He named that valuing data was a centralized, core aspect of their school community. Having predominantly white staff and lacking BIPOC diversity for much of his time there, Isaiah named that such an emphasis on data resulted in limited focus on his growth and development and greater emphasis on his outcomes.

Ultimately, toxicity and dysfunction in school communities were a result of the ways hegemonic impact on school norms. Prioritizing overworking, antiquated rules and paradigms, as well as a lack in diversity were all factors. Per George, leaving Black educators to feel like they "don't want to go and socialize with other people because it's just not a pleasant interaction or it's negative or it's just not uplifting or making you feel good," such toxic cultures often resulted in harm. Having reviewed factors via subthemes that contribute to an unhealthy school culture (i.e., inter-personal dynamics and

dysfunction, systemic impact and resource allocation, and white supremacy culture's influence), George described it best when he shared,

> There's been times […] where we've been […[deeply overworked. […] That just
> contributes to burnout. […] the [school] system really contributes to you wanting
> to stay or to leave. Because if it just works you and works you and works you and
> there's no balance, it just sucks.

As stated by participants, this example supports the idea that school culture is susceptible to a broader systemic structure that shapes culture and norms impacting resource allocation, dynamics between leadership and staff, and ultimately impacting Black educator holistic sustainability and job satisfaction. Having explored the impact unhealthy school culture can have on Black educator participants, this next section will explore the inverse.

Healthy School Culture

This section will explore themes that represent healthy ways in which participants' school culture impacted their sustainability. There was a spectrum of reflections and thus codes generated that supported healthy impact; therefore, this section will explore healthy qualities in school culture. When reflecting on the most frequent codes, participants named teambuilding and being part of an affirming, open, and collaborative community (especially among BIPOC staff and allies) as important aspects of school culture. They also named focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as clear school systems and structures as important. Subthemes represented in the following section include valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion, being inclusive and collaborative, and person-centered practice.

Value of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For many participants, valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion not only created

opportunities for attunement and alignment regarding culturally responsive practice, but

it also meant feeling valued and respected as Black educators. Participants whose school

culture embodied this value created environments that were not only physically but also

psychologically safe for Black educators. For example, Alicia named that she felt

incredibly fortunate that her experiences as an educator have been so positive as her

schools valued diversity equity and inclusion. This made for an impactful experience and

created connectedness among BIPOC staff and BIPOC allies. At one point, Alicia said, "I

think I can feel confident in saying overall, as a school, we're in a place where we're

having these conversations and there is an awareness of race." She also noted that

trauma-sensitive school environments shaped expectations on relational dynamics and

team building. Providing an example of how her school implements said structure, Alicia

explained the arc of the year and how their school community came together as a unit as

well as smaller groups to engage in professional development focused on diversity,

equity, and inclusion with a trauma-sensitive perspective.

Harriet shared an example that made individual impact. During a week of school

that centered Black Lives Matter (BLM), there was a white parent who called the

superintendent's office challenging the teaching of BLM when they believed all lives

matter. Harriet explained that her principal shared what happened and how she stood up

for Harriet's critically conscious approach to curriculum. Harriet was filled with gratitude

and named that none of her other principals would have responded in kind. Harriet

shared, "I definitely think that I feel more free to […] be open with my students about our

realities." In this instance, the support Harriet received to implement diversity and equity in an inclusive way in the classroom not only affirmed her approach to educating but her identity as a Black, woman educator.

Inclusive and Collaborative Culture

When exploring a collective power beyond one's individual self, participants spoke of the importance of community versus individualistic school culture. They found power and support in community and preferred this approach. Speaking of the humanizing aspect of comradery in her school, Alicia shared, "There are genuine people that actually care about you here. Not just on an academic level" that enables authentic self-expression.

Others spoke of a broader sense of community. For example, Ciara shared how her school was really grounded in the concept of a team. When describing collaborating with her department on curriculum, she shared, they "provides a lot of support, because you are one, developing curriculum together with a unit. You are...talking about students together, all of the pieces that can make teaching challenging by yourself, you have team support." Thus, Ciara embraced having a support network in which trust, growth, and collaboration was found. Driven by educators' passion and commitment, collaborative team culture was intentionally weaved into the very fabric of the school.

Describing favorable school culture as open and collaborative, Harriet named an inclusive and collaborative school culture as a place where school spirit is high, staff want to work, and students are excited to come to school. She described having power in numbers as there were occasions where educators had to create their own structure and culture when the principal was unable. Harriet shared, "We had such a good community

that I don't think it mattered who the principal was. […] Our academics were strong. Our

classroom environments were strong. We still liked going to work every day." This

example speaks to the power of school staff and more specifically Black educators'

ability when utilizing agency to create the school culture they prefer and need to thrive.

This scenario also represented an empowering experience that provided support and

comfort among peers as well as had a positive effect on educator relationships with

students and families. Whether community and collaboration were embodied in a group

or the value of community was extended to an individual, participants' well-being was

strengthened. Ultimately, because of Black educators' collective, cultural alignment,

tradition, community, connection, and a collectivist point of view were brought into the

school setting as a means of sustainability and increased well-being.

Person-centered Practice

Throughout the interview experience, participants named appreciating supervisors

who embodied a whole-person approach. When reflecting on school culture, this theme

continued as Black educator participants appreciated a school culture that was person-

centered as well. For example, Deja believed school culture should nurture the whole

educator allowing for expression of one's most authentic self, joy, and holistic

sustainability. Realizing schools need to center and value the well-being of educators—

especially Black educators—as much as they do students, Harriet agreed. Harriet stated,

"That's a good idea of like […] I always think about my kids. You want to educate the

whole child. You need to also do the same thing with the teacher. Like, the whole teacher

needs to be in there." This example is akin to the metaphor often used with parents that in

the event of an emergency when on an airplane one needs to put the oxygen mask on

themselves first to increase the likelihood of saving and protecting both themselves and their child.

Alicia also spoke frequently about the importance of a person-centered approach where empathy was a central tenant highly necessary for her sustainability. She believed job experiences that allowed her to be her most authentic and autonomous self were healthiest. When describing school culture and the opportunity to create space for one's whole self, Alicia stated that "as an entire staff [we] have the ability to share our thoughts and our feelings and our concerns and our ideas." This was incredibly meaningful for her. In order for Black educators to thrive, Alicia believed schools must adopt a person-centered approach that allows Black educators to embody their authentic selves.

Lastly, Ciara also believed schools should nurture the whole person—enabling the Black educator to thrive at work. Describing teaching as dynamic and an experience that fosters growth, she believed school culture should create an environment that fosters teacher and student well-being. Supporting shared gratitude, Ciara described how her school community created such an affirming culture by stating,

> Every week at staff meeting, […] it's like, Oh does anyone have any shouts today? It's like you're giving recognition to your colleagues or the students […]. And that's part of the culture. It happens every week. […] There's a culture also of affirmation that's part of the community.

Given the in-depth integration of the traditions Ciara described, there remain aspects of the culture that foster wellness, community, and sustainability. Based on Ciara's described impact, those factors seemed to outweigh less healthy aspects of her experience—fueling staff retention.

Ultimately, this section highlights the importance of school culture imbued with a genuine, authentic person-entered approach. Brianna shared that being able to "really enjoy […] a workplace where people can be their authentic selves" and experience well-being seemed to be an environment in which participants would thrive and experience joy. When considering this subtheme of person-centered practice, having the space to be valued, recognized, and heard was important and helped drive increased Black educator sustainability. While this overall section reviewed healthy school culture and its impact on Black educators, the following section will deepen an analysis of culture by exploring the impact and influence of power on participant experiences.

Representations of Interactive Power in Embodied Experiences

Weber (1978) provided sociological discourse on power domains rooted in broader concepts of domination, obedience, and culture. He argued that there are three grounds for power (i.e., rational, traditional, and charismatic) that lead to three types of authority (i.e., legal authority, traditional authority, and charismatic authority). Weber described legal authority as order or rule established by an entity in which "the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands" (p. 215) are evident. Thus, under legal authority, the person with greatest power as well as their subordinates remain unexempt to normatively established order.

Consequently, traditional authority rests "on an established belief of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them" (Weber, 1978, p. 215). This form of authority is less bureaucratic than the former as power rests more with an individual and that individual's alignment with normatively established traditions as well as their subordinates' loyalty to said individual. Lastly, charismatic authority takes a

further step away from the organizational toward the interpersonal "resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber, 1978, p. 215). Thus, charismatic authority affirms the power of impact and influence an individual can have on their subordinates by virtue of their character strengths.

Building on Weber's theory, Carspecken (1996) further postulated definitions and thus negotiations of power redefined through a critical, embodied lens. Beginning discourse with the notion that "the connection between meaning and bodily states unavoidably points toward the connection between meaning and power" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 128), Carspecken amplified theories of other scholars who also posited claims of power, action, embodied experiences, and oppressive cultural conditions being inextricably linked. Ultimately, Carspecken described four power types (i.e., normative, coercive, interactively established contracts, and charm) that will be defined and discussed in this section. Carspecken also described a fifth power type grounded in culture where the normative guardrails of a group of people provides the context within which the power types live. Therefore, beginning with a review of normative power, this section will review power types as represented by Carspecken and the ways in which these power types were foregrounded in participant narratives.

Normative Power

While reflecting on themes presented from participant findings, an exploration of the ways in which types of power impacted identity and the embodied experiences of each participant were evident. Carspecken (1996) defined normative power as a "subordinate consent[ing] to [the] higher social position [of a] superordinate because of

cultural norms" (p. 130). This power type, Carspecken argued is similar to Weber's

(1978) traditional authority where consenting to a higher position of power displayed

participants' navigation of said power and understanding of self within that context.

Thus, expressed desire for and an appreciation of accountability that lends itself toward

submission to one's superordinate served as a grounding force.

For some participants, respect was deemed highly important toward one's

supervisor and/or school administrators (which often overlapped). In these instances, the

inherent nature of the supervisor holding power and the supervisee consenting to said

power was part of negotiating and aligning with a normative power type. Tending toward

consent rather than dissent, with greater alignment between supervisor and supervisee

came increased Black educator trust and vulnerability. Although participants often

advocated for their needs, when normative power was its strongest and supervisor

dynamics healthiest, the Black educator rarely challenged power—neglecting to resist the

system while remaining mostly compliant. There was a recognition that to some extent

this level of power was beyond participants' influence. Consenting to a higher position of

power was also present in participants' behavior where code switching or aligning with

hegemonic cultural norms in order to meet their supervisors' expectations were

expressed. This behavior often presented when the participant lacked the experience,

position of power themselves, or the influential power to speak against it.

While exploring beliefs that negatively impacted Black educator sustainability,

there seemed to be a common thread regarding normative power, voice, and relationship.

For example, George named that the weight of his perspective and thus voice was

minimal in comparison to administrators and board members. Explaining a perceived

obligation toward compliance, he shared, "I don't have much of a say […] I can have a little bit of a push back […] but […] I still have to do this thing for this board member who runs the program." In this example, George identified how leaders with greater position of power hold more influence than staff. He also went on to describe how people in these positions may be able to manipulate their agendas but often lacked an ability to know what was best for their population served (i.e., students)—making his job more stressful. After some time, navigating this type of dynamic led to decreased sustainability resulting in George's resignation.

When accounting for the larger system, there were some participants whose consent to a higher power extended beyond their supervisor and/or school administration to broader educational systems and leadership within their cities (i.e., their school board, the teachers' union or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). Harriet noted, "my struggles in education […] are not necessarily just with admin, but with like central office, or the union […] or Department of Education. […] There's just so many other leaders who […] also impact the […] school environment." Therefore, one could summarize that the difficulty experienced by Black educators navigating school culture and broader systems that impact culture exist on different levels holding varied amounts of impact and influence. Thus, normative power proved influential as it shaped participant beliefs, feelings, actions, and holistic sustainability.

Coercive Power

While normative power aligned with a traditional form of authority where power was yielded through an intersubjective, tacit agreement of normative traditions and compliance with those who are positioned to uphold said norms, coercive power occurs

when the "subordinate acts to avoid sanctions imposed by [the] superordinate"

(Carspecken, 1996, p.130). Regarding the desire to avoid sanctions, there were instances

where participants expressed wanting to make one's supervisor proud and/or wanting to

avoid a poor evaluation or reputation of one's work. There was also clarity around a

desire to avoid sanctions especially when they were inequitably driven by implicit bias

which often led to an inaccurate representation of the Black educators' skillset and

experience. While participants held a strong work ethic driven by an intrinsic desire to be

and do their best, many participants recognized that accepting unsatisfactory behavior or

outcomes often lead to sanctions which ultimately had an impact on their job

sustainability, retention, and growth. Therefore, despite sacrificing well-being, they

aimed to avoid sanctions at all costs.

For example, when naming what Harriet believed was causing low morale in her

school, she shared an example of broader power structures impacting their content

delivery and overall approach to teaching. She described school culture not being as

positive as she would have liked as well as an acknowledgement of systems influencing

her principal's leadership. Harriet shared, "Academically, our school's struggling. So,

we're part of a new cohort, so we have a bunch of powers that be that are pushing us in

different ways, and thus pushing her, so she's pushing us." This example referenced

Harriet's superintendent no longer requiring certain testing for students; however, her

school was struggling academically and still part of a cohort working with an institution

of higher education that was mandated to continue implementing said tests every 2

months. Implied in the coercive nature of the principal's approach, Harriet went on to

describe that there would not only be sanctions from her principal but also the institution

that is responsible for overseeing their implementation of models determined to advance students' academic outcomes.

Lastly, there was also a scenario where normative and coercive power seemed to overlap. Despite not letting her work faulter when she encountered an unhealthy supervisor dynamic, Brianna seemed to be influenced by consent to a higher power as well as a desire to void sanctions. For example, she was both guided by a strong work ethic as well as a belief that Black people and thus Black educators can be judged and/or targeted by negative stereotypes. Therefore, she embodied a commitment to working against said stereotypes by displaying characteristics that counteracted racist, prejudiced beliefs. Working to avoid sanctions (i.e., coercive power) and consenting to a higher position power (i.e., normative power) were the impetus for said actions and thus intermingled as she negotiated supervisor dynamics.

Interactively Established Contracts

Defined by Carspecken (1996) as a "subordinate act[ing] for [a] return of favors or rewards from [one's] superordinate" (p. 130), interactively established contracts was most aligned with Weber's (1978) legal authority. This power type yielded scenarios in which reciprocal rewards and favors exchanged between the Black educator and the supervisor rang true. As aforementioned, all participants held a strong work ethic. In relation to interactively established contracts, there was an expectation that if they maintained their commitment to their work, their supervisors would and should do the same. Ultimately, there was a belief (or minimally a hope) that if the participant delivered on their outcomes, they would be rewarded for doing well in return.

For example, Isaiah named that a lack of growth opportunities contributed to him leaving previous jobs and that having growth opportunities in the future highly influenced his ability and desire to stay. He shared, "Yeah, so what pushed me to leave here was, I felt like I wasn't growing. […] Yep. I didn't feel like I was growing. I didn't feel like we were being taken serious as teachers." In this scenario, Isaiah was looking to grow and make a greater impact with students. He recognized his competence was not where he needed to be more proficient. Therefore, he took it upon himself to develop professionally in areas that were not being fostered by his current supervisor. When he began developing desired skill set at a different school, his intrinsic motivation increased as did his sustainability. For Isaiah, working in exchange for growth and development was the reward.

While some rewards were tangible, others seemed more relational. For some participants, being verbally celebrated and valued by their supervisors led to expression of one's authentic self, job satisfaction, and job sustainability. This positive reinforcement also strengthened their intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, and professional identity development. Exploring this dependency further, one could argue this fostered an external locus of control where externalized power influenced participants. This locus of control seemed to shift as the competence and confidence of the participant grew. While their ability to unapologetically name the inequitable facets of the educational systems and culture of which they were all apart also developed, they continued working sacrificially in order to navigate their environment.

Lastly, given the socio-political and historical context previously noted in Chapter 2, the expectation for interactively established contracts was present when advocacy

toward justice and more equitable ways of functioning in one's department or school were pursued. When participants were more vocal, the aim was for their advocacy to be rewarded with a shift toward an anti-racist decision, action, policy, etcetera. While this type of reciprocal reward or favor may not be traditional, a critical perspective may challenge the very definition of reward and its value based on the cultural identity of the recipient. Supporting the idea that advocating for equity would yield alignment with anti-racist practice and decision-making, supervisors who engaged in this type of power with Black educators provided opportunities toward more equitable and just work experiences. It is important to note; however, that the reciprocity of equality does not define or ground the value of the Black educators' being nor validate the worth of their work. The Black educators' worth, competence, and confidence are mutually exclusive from and not derivative of the reward given by the supervisor but rather the supervisors' response was aligned with the action of advocacy.

Charm

Defining this power type as a "subordinate act[ing] out of loyalty to the superordinate because of the latter's personality" (p. 130), charm was akin to Weber's (1978) charisma authority. Having an impact on participants whose supervisors displayed healthy characteristics, loyalty to one's supervisor simply because of who they are seemed to play an influential role in their narrative. While some participants' loyalty resulted in a decreased ability to speak one's truth, George named that he would either leave his current school and follow a school leader he really admired and/or remain at a school despite challenges because of his loyalty and admiration. In these instances, the

relationship was central even when he deflected or minimized the less desirable aspects of the relational impact.

While there were similarities across supervisors with varied race and gender, race was an interesting factor that provided greater depth in experience of one's loyalty. Participants noted that Black supervisors who displayed unhealthy qualities hurt more than their white counterparts who displayed the same qualities. There seemed to be an expectation that Black supervisors or supervisors of color in general were to foster healthier and more positive experiences than someone from a different race. However, when healthy supervisor qualities were present in Black supervisors, there seemed to be a greater sense of pride and commitment to said supervisors not only in their role of power but also as leaders belonging to a historically marginalized racial group.

When supervisors valued supervisees, built relationships with the school community, supported their efforts to create community and safe space for Black educators within the school, and embodied growth and development themselves, Black educator loyalty increased. For example, Faith shared the impact her supervisor's growth and development had on her sustainability. Faith described these moments as empowering,

> In the sense that I am learning so much from you as a person of color, being able to work your way up […] and here you are combating all of the things that have been thrown at you... So, I am looking at the way that you're doing things and the way you're operating within the system. I'm just learning.

Like Faith, participants' loyalty toward their supervisors was magnified and drove them to work harder as there was a commitment not only to the work but also to the person

leading them in the work that ignited palpable, intrinsic motivation. Ultimately, participants' loyalty to their supervisors impacted their decision to remain at their schools out of respect for their supervisor as well as from joy experienced from their work.

Cultural Power

Having explored types of power grounded in normative expectations or individual authority, culture power is a more pervasive power type that tends to live in the subconscious and shape implicit interactions. While tacit, cultural power is far from passive as its influence often "penetrates to the very identity of people, and where it works its effects one will always find pain" (Carspecken, 1996, p.136). Therefore, exploring and identifying what lies beneath, shapes, and guides said power is imperative. In this context, one could argue that cultural power was foregrounded by way of hegemony producing toxic supervisor behavior and an unhealthy school culture that impacted the Black educator experience and well-being. While this would likely cause a strain on all staff, there was greater strain on Black educators in particular as the conundrum of managing and navigating racism within and outside of one's place of employment was magnified.

For example, when considering the ways in which school culture and the systems that run the school clash making sustainability more difficult for Black educators, Ciara described how traditions from her department that build strong culture among staff and students alike conflicted with broader school obligations that burdened her with additional responsibilities. She stated, "So I guess that's almost like a combination of my humanities team tradition, that structure, at the same time coming into contact or intersection with a school structure. And that is very hard to feel." In this instance,

tension was created between the joy and community Ciara preferred to build and focus on versus competing obligations that took her away from building said culture creating more stress trying to do so. Ciara went on to explain that the emotional difficulty stemmed from decreased self-actualization as this conflict impeded expression of her competence and autonomy.

As participants navigated cultural power within their work environments, there was a constant intrapersonal negotiation albeit conscious or subconscious that drove their actions and decision-making. This cultural power, shaped by white supremacy culture, permeated their identity leading to internal conflict and pain (i.e., impacting their physical and mental health). Situated in their own ethnic cultural identity, double consciousness (as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6) was a constant reality for some. While some participants chose to push against norms and power that sustain this pain, others chose to navigate within its parameters ultimately aligning with white supremacy culture as a means toward survival. Participants were clear that white supremacy culture influenced their work environments and supervisor relationships shaping their well-being and driving their work ethic. With the understanding that (in this context) norms are expectations placed on behavior informed by cultural standards pre-determined by historically dominant cultural identity groups, norms therefore shape human behavior including dynamics between supervisors and Black, educators.

Defined by a critical epistemological perspective, cultural power has shown an ability to color other power types as well as the beliefs, feelings, and actions presented in prior findings chapters. While some elements of cultural power are rooted in white supremacy culture, ethnic/racial culture also shaped participants' intersectional identities

and guided their moral compass in positive ways. For example, whether found in a religious spiritual practice or an ancestral orientation, participants found this aspect of cultural power to be grounding, restorative, and strengthening. Discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, there seemed to be trust in a spiritual authority and broader ethnic cultural tradition or spiritual practice that was believed to protect and guide their lives. Despite challenges, it was participants' ethnic cultural power that fostered resilience. Therefore, cultural power in this context centered Black educators' cultural power while redefining, reconstructing, and thus re-imagining this power type through a critical prism. While the cultural power shaped by white dominant culture weathered participants via carried allostatic load (Geronimus et al., 2006), their own ethnic cultural power simultaneously worked against this negative impact resulting in a complex analysis of intrapersonal as well as interpersonal dynamics.

Thus, Black educators worked to be their best selves and fought to prove they could stand up to, match, or even surpass their white counterparts. Often finding themselves supplementing, compromising, adjusting, and sacrificing as they orientated to their environments, the negotiation of power types in this chapter proved nothing short of complex. In the instances where their own cultural identity was compromised, there was an internal battle between power and the ways it permeated their identity versus a genuine expression of their authentic selves shaped by their ethnic culture. Therefore, this next section will represent participant voice through an expression of solutions they believed would drive toward change.

Psychopolitical Validity and The Disruption of Power

In Chapter 3, the concept of psychopolitical validity was introduced by describing the ways critical qualitative methodology would create space for the empowerment of participants in practice. Prilleltensky (2003) defined psychopolitical validity as "the extent to which studies […] integrate (a) knowledge with respect to the multidisciplinary and multilevel sources, experiences, and consequences of oppression, and (b) effective strategies for promoting psychological and political liberation in the personal, relational, and collective domains" (p. 199). Prilleltensky described two domains therein (i.e., epistemic and transformative). While epistemic psychopolitical validity includes psychological and political elements of oppression, transformative psychopolitical validity "demands changes toward liberation at personal, interpersonal, and structural domains" (Prilleltensky, 2003, p. 200). In the spirit of transformative psychopolitical validity, participants were asked at the end of each interview to share reflections for continued thought as well as actions they wanted to pursue resulting from their interview experience. There was a range of responses as participants shared reflections and/or solutions that would impact their personal and professional lives. Chapter 4, the first findings chapter, presented an overview of participants—introducing them to the reader. Thus, this last and final findings chapter will close with a selection of participant reflections toward transformational change represented in personal, interpersonal, and structural categories.

Personal Reflections

Throughout the interview process, participants seamlessly transitioned between personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels of reflection. Given the focus of

this study was on the Black educator, there was an intentional invitation to focus on self.

Toward the end of Harriet, Deja, and Isaiah's interviews, they shared reflections and

intentions in the spirit of transformative psychopolitical validity that were more personal

in nature.

Harriet stated,

> I think it's always important for me to think […] It's always important for me to
>
> focus on my love for my classroom, and also, […] the not blaming thing. So,
>
> being reflective on that is always at the center for me. […] I love my kids. […] I'll
>
> be in front of them, and not blaming my principal, not necessarily blaming the
>
> superintendent […].

Deja shared,

> I am wanting to make sure that the experience that I went through, especially as of
>
> late doesn't happen to other people. It's not fair. And I feel like because we're in
>
> education, right? We're actually teaching the future and I don't want them to have
>
> to deal with what I'm dealing with. […] I don't know where I would be if I had the
>
> tools I got around my mid-twenties […] at like 18 or even younger. […] So I want
>
> that for them, that makes me want to do something to make sure that they get it,
>
> especially our girls, I love our boys but especially our girls.

Isaiah stated,

> I mean, my immediate use of this is definitely with my own children. […] I have a
>
> son who's 12 and […] I see myself in him. […] my mom always raised me to be
>
> respectful and to be a good kid, you know? But sometimes I'm like, man, I wish I
>
> was a little bit more flip at the mouth because you tend to speak up a little bit

more. […] I want him to feel supported […] the things that I felt like I needed, then, I'm thinking back and I'm like, okay, I want to make sure that if he needs those things, I'm providing those things.

Harriet's intention involved love for her students, Deja's involved a personal and heartfelt desire to equip Black and Brown students to better navigate racism, and Isaiah's involved a personal hope for his son. While these scenarios involved others, the thought and the feeling centered the Black educator participants' hope for the future and their intention to fulfill their desire. Shifting the focus slightly, the reflections in the next section will center the participant less and their hope for the school community or more specifically the supervisor relationship.

Interpersonal Reflections

In this section, suggestions for professional development that grounds embodied experiences, healing space for Black educators, and leveraging the supervisor relationship toward sustained well-being were offered. While the embodied sense in the last theme felt more calm, this topic seemed to fuel participants in a more active way.

Alicia stated,

I have an idea that we should definitely have PD where […] we [simulate racist] experiences so that way [white people] can understand where we're coming from. Not just from a personal level but from a historical level, from a spiritual level, from a psychological level, there's so many levels, from an economic level […] this could be a five-year long PD. […] you cannot genetically change who they are to see your perspective especially when you're not living it every day. […] It's not just about talk, it's not just about oh what do Black people complain about

> […]. No, this is our life. This is why we feel the way that we feel. […] That's how I would approach it.

Brianna shared,

> I always wanted […] to have a place where people of color who work in the education system can just talk. I mean, we have other places where we can go but not just sit like this in that setting and talk and talk. You feel that release. That's something I've thought about and something I want to do somehow.

Ciara stated,

> I often talk to kids about like super structures, right? […] And I never really thought about supervisors as a superstructure impacting my health, but it did. […] what I feel like your study is showing […] or exploring through research [is] depending on people's... educators' experiences [with] supervisors, it could put them in this [healthy] space or this [unhealthy] space. […] What I would maybe do is figure out actually how I could use that super structure of supervision […] to support my health and wellness, right? […] I didn't connect […] the supervising experiences I've had throughout the years and how it's impacted my trajectory as an educator. […] I definitely didn't connect it to my health and wellbeing.

Whether on a large scale like Alicia's example of school wide professional development or Brianna and Ciara's that would engage interaction on a more intimate level, the overarching goal was to create safe, healthy, and healing spaces where value, respect, and recognition of their reality as Black educators would be esteemed. Shifting from solutions that engage small or large groups of people, this next section will broaden the scope further exploring participant reflections on a systemic level.

Structural Reflections

Regarding reflections on structural impact participants would like to make or changes they would like to see occur, many identified the need to create an educator demographic that reflected the students taught and served or ways they could either partner with leaders and/or position themselves as leaders to impact change.

Alicia shared,

I would love to talk to people about having us in the classroom. Just making people more mindful that we are here […] the goal for me in this, is recruiting more people of color to be educators because it's lacking. And our kids need us. And need to see us. Because they always ask us why. Why are we learning this? I wish I could flip the curriculum around and make it more relatable to things that they need to actually use to apply in real life. But I'm not at that point yet. I'm still learning […] I'm young in terms of my career.

Brianna stated,

Stayed longevity at places. Yeah, I think especially being in a school, longevity helps with the culture of the school, the students, building relationships with the community and the families but when every year five or more teachers are gone, there's a whole bunch of new people, always something new new new then you run into the issues you have when you have a failing culture. […] I would really enjoy seeing a workplace where [Black educators] can be their authentic selves.

George shared,

Well, the one thing that I was thinking about doing is joining this diversity equity inclusion thing, that initiative the state is doing. They're trying to get different

teachers in the arts to create like a culturally diverse curriculum for other teachers. I was thinking about doing it before, and then having this conversation is making me think even more like, "Wow, all the things that I'm saying is a very real thing." […] I just said to myself, "I hope they have some people of color […] who they're going to select to be on this board. I wonder, part of me is like, "Should I apply for this thing?" […] Having this conversation is making me say, "Maybe I should apply for this thing".

Deja stated,

What I'm noticing is that in positions of leadership, you usually have a person of color who is like disciplinary. […] I've heard people say, well, the only time that people of color are hired [for leadership roles] in education is when they're the ones who would be doing all the discipline consequences. And I feel if there was more people [of color] in leadership but not necessarily as dean it wouldn't be an issue. So, I'm just trying to figure it out now. […] thinking of ways that I can develop a concrete argument as to why it is actually the best combination of identity for people in that position.

Esther shared,

I want to follow-up on them doing these MCAS boot camps, because that's the main thing about us getting out of level four. […] myself and that other math teacher, […] we asked the executive director, "Hey, when are we going to start the boot camps? We need this done […]. Let's start them now." […] One of the projects that me and the sophomores were working on yesterday and today is cleaning up some laptops so they can have better performance, so we can loan

> them to some math teachers, so they could start prepping their kids, because the MCAS are now online. […] It became a project for my kids, and then we get to collaborate and assist our fellow teachers that are helping their kids do better on the exam. So, we're going to follow-up with that boot camp, that's what I'll follow-up with.

Faith stated,

> I'm still working with the principal to kind of really think about how we're going to restructure and think about what is the best thing for our students, because there's some bubbles that have not been working out, right? […] I think that the thing that I'm going to definitely think about is working with the end in mind. I started teaching, because I want to have an impact on Black and Brown students around their self-esteem and their academics, because they both go hand-in-hand, their social and emotional development in a positive way and their academics and making sure that they are growing academically and socially emotionally, and they have a good balance. That's why I went into teaching.

Regarding psychopolitical validity, Prilleltensky (2003) acknowledged that "we know a great deal about the sources and dynamics of oppression [and] are also quite knowledgeable about processes of empowerment and liberation" (p. 195). He then made an argument for the need to integrate this knowledge into research and action. From increasing Black educator recruitment and retention to working with leadership toward equitable change, the reflections in this section supported approaches one could take to shift the hegemonic cultural tide of the institution of education.

Presented in Chapter 2, trauma theory created a foundation for the iterative development of trauma-sensitive and healing centered methodological practice. Reflecting on the restorative impact of their interview experiences, participants used the following descriptive words: revelatory, thought provoking, thoughtful, a release, needed and enjoyed, validating, important, not surface level, helpful, producing a lighter feeling, divinely timed, reflective, therapeutic, lovely, relieving, amazing, appreciated, grounding purpose, perspective shifting, eye opening, and positive. Additionally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge participant reflections on the impact of having a Black woman researcher, who shared some within group experience, facilitate their interviews. George shared,

> I think that it's definitely like a big deal. But I think that if it was a white person that was doing this same interview with me, I think that a lot of information that I said might be a little bit different. Just because I wouldn't know the context of how they're going to use it, and I trust you. So, I know that you're going to use it for what you say you're going to. I think that if you're white, I wouldn't want to say things that somebody could use to compromise or turn or twist what I'm saying. Because, you know what I mean, it's coming from me authentically. But…I don't want to say that I don't trust somebody else, but trust is a big thing, especially, when you're talking about such sensitive things. I don't think I would trust somebody else, unfortunately, as white to say everything that I said exactly the way I said it and still have the same intent when they're saying it. […] I think it's just different, and […] I don't think they would understand the same way.

> They would get it and they would be able to empathize, but they wouldn't really
>
> understand about it.

George shared the most on the impact having a Black supervisor could have on him. This answer was provided in response to a question asked during his interview. While other participants represented these sentiments in other, less direct ways, I was given impetus to explore George's perspective through his continued exploration on the impact of having a Black interviewer further. His reflections were honest, rich, and heartfelt.

Chapter Summary

Participants acknowledged the therapeutic impact of being able to have space to share the fullness of their complex, embodied experiences with authenticity. Providing a platform to voice the impact of their experiences, this space also enabled the exploration of their perspectives on said experiences where they are usually void of both. Participants shared that this study enabled also them to explore the impact and quality of the systemic infrastructure and culture of their schools and the ways power impacts their supervisor relationships and well-being. Simply put, they named they felt valued and appreciated throughout this process. Having explored culture and power as well as the restorative impact of this interview experience, the following and final chapter will briefly review chapters presented thus far and discuss overarching themes, metatheory, methodological reflections, and implications for research and practice.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Implications for Research and Practice

> I want you to understand what I'm doing so you can give me authentic feedback.
> I just started seeking out my own, furthering my own education.
> I didn't always like that.
> I spent most of my time in a neutral position.
> I just lived a lie.
>
> —I Poem: Isaiah

In "Just Research in Contentious Times," Fine (2018) quoted Aime Cesaire who eloquently professed that "poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge" (p. xiii). Beautifully capturing the essence of Fine's approach to content development, Fine expressed that she "write[s] and speak[s] in a pidgin of science and poetry" (p. xiii). It is this intersection of the creative and the scientific that "metaphors […] rooted in biography and desire […] rise from [her] belly to [her] tongue to [her] fingers" (p. xiv). The powerful elegance of these quotes not only captured the iterative experience that grounded this dissertation but also the integration of creativity and science. Situating the research topic, Chapter 1 provided space to illustrate narratives that formed my identity as a practitioner, leader, and scholar. Through self-reflexive content, these components (i.e., the artist, the social justice advocate, and the healer) fused to develop this research topic and question: How are Black professional and administrative employees' work experiences impacted by direct supervisors in public schools?

In Chapter 2, critical race, trauma, and organizational theories were presented to frame the research question. Throughout the remainder of the chapter, literature was reviewed to explore ways these theories have been represented through research thus far and to situate the need for this study as other topics focused mostly on Black students, educational program models, or curriculum for example. Following this content, Chapter 3 presented critical epistemological and methodological frameworks for research practice

and implementation. Borrowing from liberation psychology, critical qualitative

methodology, and my personal narrative identities, embodied critical analysis (ECA) was

manifest. Chapters 4–7 presented a review of findings with an in-depth exploration of

ECA's components (i.e., beliefs, feelings, actions, culture, and power) that provided

content in direct response to the research question. From this analysis, three higher level

themes were derived that will be explored in the following section.

Thematic Overview: A Kaleidoscope of Critical, Ecological, and Holistic Perspectives

Providing an opportunity to conceptualize the Black educator experience, three

themes are presented in this section (i.e., systemic impact, levels of need, and self-

determination). Throughout data analysis, there were facets of coding that led to broader

themes and generated higher order conceptualization. Grounded in a critical

epistemology, critical race, trauma, and organizational theories were leveraged to situate

the concept of Black educator holistic sustainability where a spectrum of well-being

began crystalizing through analysis of participant narratives. Thus, a critical perspective

on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model first reviewed in Chapter 2 will be presented next.

An Ecological Design for Historically Marginalized Groups

Having discussed CRT in Chapter 2 and critical epistemology in Chapter 3, this

section integrates a critical perspective with Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model.

In Chapter 2, Bronfenbrenner's model was discussed providing context for the ways in

which systemic levels interplay and can impact individuals. Providing a historical and

socio-political context for said integration, the review of literature in Chapter 2 leveraged

a critical perspective to show how institutional racism has impacted Black people in the

United States and thus Black educators (i.e., from the chronosystem to the individual). Applying a critical perspective to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model provided an opportunity to explore the impact of (un)healthy, (in)equitable, and (un)just systems, structures, and culture on Black, educator participants through ECA.

Figure 17 provides a visual representation of the following description. Working outward from the smallest to the largest level of the model, the Black educator is situated at the center (i.e., the individual level). Choosing to center the Black educator in this research topic as well as this ecological model was an intentional decision shaped by a critical stance. Participants' schools, colleagues, supervisors, friends, and family would then be at the microsystemic level and the ways in which the components of their microsystem interact embodying power and privilege or a lack thereof would remain at the mesosystemic level.

The components beyond participants' immediate environment (i.e., the teachers' union, school boards, and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) would exist at the exosystemic level where local, state, and federal governmental policy and practice reside. Encompassing hegemonic norms, the macrosystemic level therefore includes cultural attitudes and ideologies that influence the other levels therein. It is at this level where Schein's (2017) organizational cultural theory is strongest as the factors contributing to organizational culture intermingle and are established. Lastly, the chronosystemic level captures the interplay of the aforementioned levels listed as well as their oppressive or liberatory impact on the individual over time. While the breadth and depth of that systemic impact was explored in Chapter 2, the findings in Chapters 4–7

highlighted the need to apply a critical perspective when exploring systemic levels and their impact on the individual.

Through acknowledging the pervasive nature of white supremacy culture within the United States', one cannot accurately explore the phenomenological experiences of Black educators situated within the 5 systemic levels without identifying the impact of said culture. During the interview process, the identification of white supremacy culture throughout the chronosystem situated the macro-, exo-, and meso- systems respectively. Furthermore, these three systemic levels influenced the microsystem (i.e., the supervisor/supervisee relationship) and ultimately the individual (i.e., the Black, educator participant). Therefore, to isolate the Black educator experience in silo from the supervisor relationship without a broader critical, systemic context would have been negligent.

Through an exploration of the multi-systemic impact on resource allocation as well as on professional opportunities for growth, development, and embodied authentic self-expression, participants requirement of needs fulfilled to achieve well-being became apparent. Without said needs being fulfilled, participants' holistic sustainability was compromised. Thus, the following section will center the individual level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model with a thematic focus on Black educators' needs.

Figure 17

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model
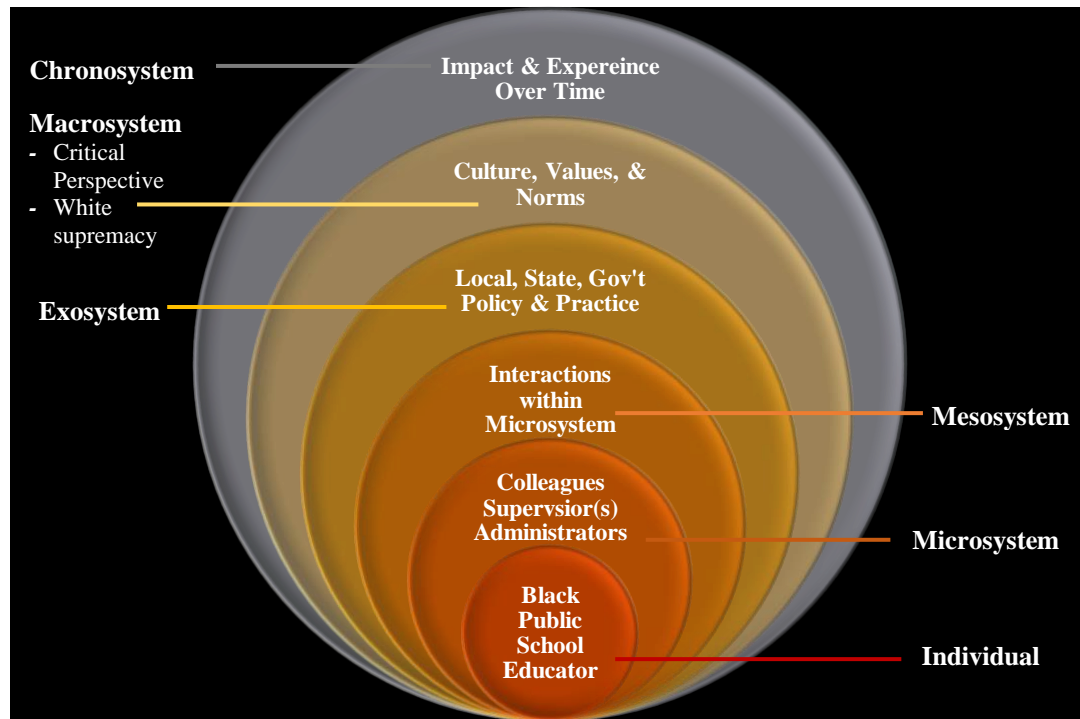
## A Critical Hierarchy of Needs for the Black Educator

While a critical perspective on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model accounts for systemic interplay within as well as between levels, Maslow's hierarchy of needs briefly cited in Chapter 2 accounts for well-being and the Black educators' self-actualization as multi-dimensional when leveraging a critical perspective (See Figure 18). Depending on the levels of oppression and liberation present throughout the broader ecological model (i.e., the supervisor relationship or the school), the Black educator is more or less likely to have their basic, psychological, and self-fulfillment needs met (Maslow & Lewis, 1987). In short, it suggests that there are foundational levels of basic needs all human beings require to feel physiologically fulfilled and safe (Maslow & Lewis, 1987). The next two levels include psychological needs of belongingness/love and esteem that

provide additional building blocks for attainment of the final level of self-fulfillment

needs through self-actualization (Maslow & Lewis, 1987). Attainment of the first four

levels is thought to be produced through an extrinsic motivational deficit where intrinsic

motivation decreases as needs are met; however, attainment of self-actualization, the

ultimate level, is achieved through intrinsic motivation and an internal locus of control

(McLeod, 2007).

It is important to note that this model is not fixed in the sense that one is not only

able to experience and/or fulfill needs at higher levels while seeking lower-level

fulfillment but also able to revisit levels previously achieved (McLeod, 2007). For

example, a person can experience belonging and esteem with friends and family while

addressing food insecurity, a basic need. Thus, the impact of culture and values on one's

experience of needs fulfillment influencing movement throughout Maslow's levels is of

note as Maslow excludes these components.

Figure 18

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
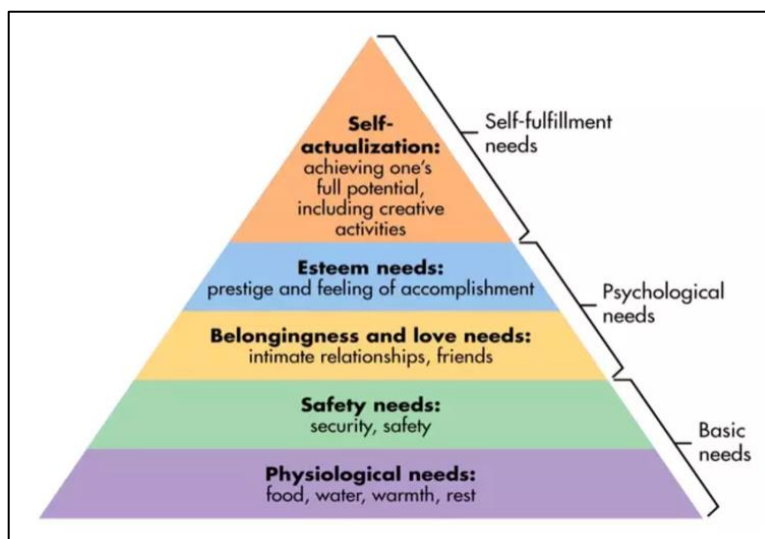
Note. Adapted from "Maslow's hierarchy of needs" by McLeod (2007, p. 1).

Decolonizing Maslow's Hierarchy

With a review of the development of Maslow's model, neglecting to mention the influence of the Blackfoot Nation's cultural philosophy of self-actualization would be complicit with white supremacy culture. While this history is nuanced (Feigenbaum & Smith, 2019; Kaufman, 2019; Michel, 2014), scholars argued that Blackfoot culture and perspectives on self-actualization were appropriated and unjustly represented by Maslow committing "epistemic violence" (Teo, 2010). While McLeod (2007) acknowledged Maslow's development of additional meta-physical levels of actualization (i.e., cognitive, aesthetic, and transcendence), he neglected to acknowledge where Maslow may have engendered these concepts (i.e., from the Blackfoot Nation).

Figure 19 represents said revised hierarchy of needs alongside the Blackfoot Nation's system of beliefs on self-actualization that account for culture and community experience across time. Blackstock (2009) explored this in great depth through writing and lecture and added that had Maslow fully integrated indigenous perspectives, he would have accounted for (a) the realization that one cannot fulfill said needs without relationship and the broader community, and (b) that fulfillment does not end with the actualization of oneself but rather begins there developing toward community actualization and the eventual cultural perpetuity of the collective.

Figure 20 represents a deeper exploration of Blackstock's (2009) theorizing where Maslow's model was reinterpreted with a decolonized, indigenous perspective integrating the four components of Cross's relational worldview model (i.e., cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional). These components are structured into a four-quadrant medicine wheel where cognitive needs include self and community actualization, role, and identity;

physical needs include housing, food, water, safety, and security; spiritual needs include

spirituality and life purpose; and emotional needs include relationship and belonging

across time and dimensions of reality shaped by context and culture. Blackstock argued

that the four components of the relational worldview are indeed aligned with indigenous

culture as they represent the seven grandfather teachings (i.e., respect, humility, love,

truth, honesty, bravery, and wisdom) of the Ojibwe tribe "situated within a holistic

worldview that requires balance among the spiritual, emotional, physical, and cognitive

elements of self and community" (pp. 34–35).
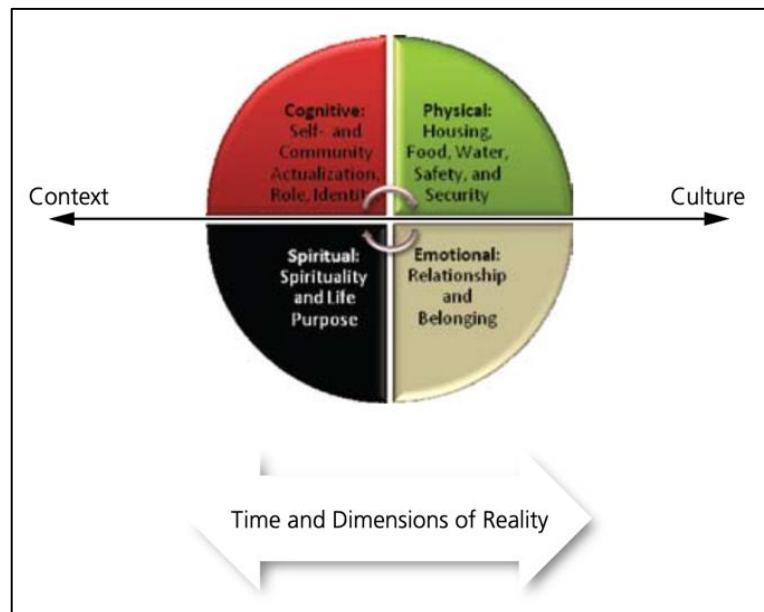
Figure 19

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Informed by Blackfoot Nation
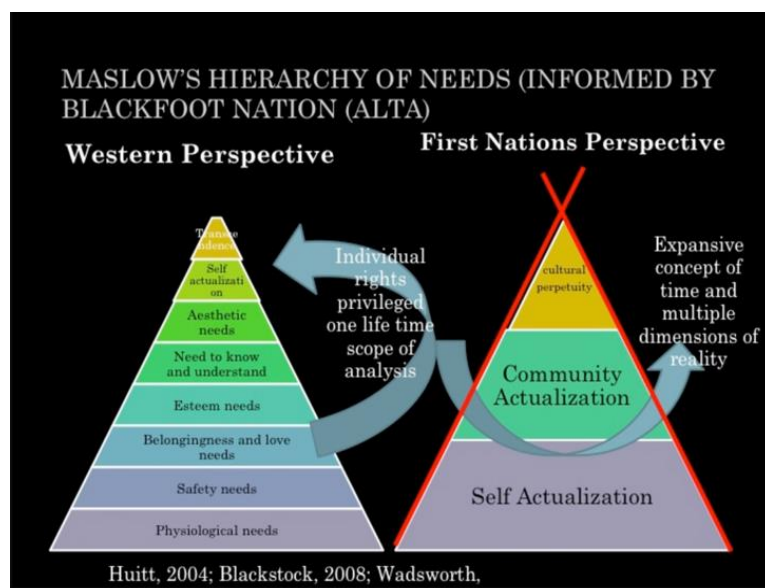
Note. Adapted from Blackstock (2014).

Figure 20

Cross' Integration of Relational Worldview Principles with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Note. Adapted from Blackstock (2009).

Decolonized Theory of Needs for the Black Educator

Connecting Blackstock's (2009) model with presented findings, Chapter 4 began with an introduction of each participant, including images they used to define their healthiest and least healthy selves at work. When describing their least healthy selves, some shared traumatic experiences that ultimately compromised their physical and mental health as well as their ability to protect and defend themselves. Although many advocated for their needs, they too remained scathed with compromised cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being. Therefore, in addition to a well-being spectrum, I began to wonder what may be lacking in physical and emotional safety for Black educator participants in this study.

Building on Chapter 4, Chapters 5–7 explored healthy and unhealthy factors that impacted Black educators' sustainability and well-being. It was often found that

participants experienced restrictions in autonomy, expressions of authenticity, and self-actualization when overworked. This was usually given impetus by inequity resulting from inefficient systems and a misallocation of resources (Brown, 2014; Dollarhide et al., 2014; Hellebuyck et al., 2017). Regardless of intention, unhealthy supervisor impact on the Black educator experience was one of being ignored, judged, targeted, penalized, or fired due to implicit bias (Godsil et al., 2014; Staats, 2016), stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), or full-fledged racism. Influenced by white supremacy culture in public schools, these factors often led to unmet needs resulting in decreased well-being for the individual as well as the collective group (Blackstock, 2009). When these unhealthy qualities in the supervisor or the school system were present creating a trauma-uninformed environment (Bloom & Farragher, 2010), Black educators ran the risk of enduring racism at all levels of the ecosystem on a spectrum of most to least harmful. Painstakingly, the harm participants endured not only triggered racialized experiences from their lifetime, but also intergenerational trauma passed down to them from their ancestors' own historical racialized trauma (Degruy-Leary, 2017; Menakem, 2021).

Given more than half of the participants spoke about self-actualization in one form or another, conceptualizing a medicine wheel of needs for the Black educator began to emerge and questions exploring an approach to said model were generated. For example, how can need be defined from a critically conscious perspective? What would safety (both psychological and physiological) look like for the Black educator in public schools? If we were to structure a medicine wheel of needs for the Black educator where they felt safe and had their cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional needs met, what would we need to include?

Fortunately, the answers lie in the findings that amplified the narratives of nine

Black educators who shared their perspectives on their experiences with direct

supervisors. For example, safety needs could be met through equitable allocation of

resources; effective coaching from trained supervisors with content specific competence;

opportunities for growth and development; healthy/healing spaces where professional

development, affinity groups, and supervision can be held; and value, respect, and

recognition of their reality as Black educators could be esteemed. Psychological needs

could be met by taking a whole-person approach to supervising Black educators;

committing to a stance and perspective grounded in diversity, equity, and inclusion;

advocating for one's supervisee; engaging in strength's-based, relational coaching;

fostering an inclusive and collaborative culture; and implementing person-centered

practice where holistic sustainability is encouraged. Ultimately, participants described the

positive impact supervisors along with school administrators, systems, structures, and

culture had and could have on their well-being increasing intrinsic motivation, job

satisfaction, and positive, intrapersonal factors contributing to maintained holistic

sustainability.

Moreover, participants identified that cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional

needs were met through positive supervisor qualities that fostered a healthy work

dynamic. They also acknowledged sustainability factors found in the organizational and

cultural components of the school. While accounting for one's needs fulfillment, the

impact on their well-being would have been mute if a critical perspective were not

integrated. For many participants, valuing and supporting them as educators meant

valuing them as Black people; therefore, the recommendations and reflections toward

Black, educator well-being found in Chapters 5–7 accounted for this perspective where the absence of racial violence and trauma would ensure met need. When looking at these factors from an ecological perspective, the interplay of race, systemic inefficiency, and compromised agency ultimately seemed to negatively impact the self-actualization of the Black educator. Connecting with and amplifying themes represented by Black, educator participants in Chapters 4–7, participants seemed to equally revere community and self-actualization among other needs. Therefore, I would argue use of Blackstock's (2009) model where actualization, an individual as well as a collective pursuit, is equally revered with the other need groups leveraging a decolonized perspective. Leading to a deeper exploration of self-actualization and self-determination, the third and final theme will be presented in the next section along with examples of need fulfillment.

Self-Determination Theory and Person-Centered Approaches

Acknowledging the insight gained from the nine Black educators who participated in this study, there was another element that developed while adopting a decolonized theory of needs from a critical and systemic perspective. Exploring their narrative on achieved well-being, self-actualization and expressions of authentic self were often synonymously presented. Reviewed in Chapter 3, ECA lends theoretical underpinnings from person-centered theory (Rogers, 1979). In relation to self-actualization, Rogers stated that person-centered approaches to interaction create a directional process whereby "in every organism an underlying flow of movement toward constructive fulfillment of its inherent possibilities" (p. 99) produces "a natural tendency toward a more complex and complete development" (p. 99). He wrote that this process—termed actualizing

tendency—can be violently interrupted or destroyed at the cost of destroying the

organism (Rogers, 1979).

Acknowledging varied social-environmental conditions as well as conditions of

worth, the individual's inherent drive given restorative opportunity and circumstance is

therefore toward health and well-being (Rogers, 1959). However, as seen through

participants' recounting of their experiences with supervisors and schools in general,

well-being can be thwarted where the response to "unfavorable social-environmental

conditions is for the actualization of self to become incongruent with the individual's

organismic experiencing, leading to development of self in a direction that is discrepant

with the *intrinsic* motivation toward positive and constructive functioning" (Patterson &

Joseph, 2007, pp.121-122).

Patterson and Joseph (2007) explored similarities between self-determination

theory and person-centered theory. Positing that self-determination theory maintains a

more contemporary approach, nevertheless, there remains an internal locus of control that

lends itself toward self-actualization. Patterson and Joseph argued that self-determination

theory is grounded in three principles:

The first is that human beings […] have the potential to act on and master both the

inner forces (viz., their drives and emotions) and the external (i.e., environmental)

forces they encounter, rather than being passively controlled by those forces.

Second, human beings, as self-organizing systems, have an inherent tendency

toward growth, development, and integrated functioning. Third, […] for people to

actualize their inherent nature and potentials—that is, to be optimally active and

to develop effectively—they require nutrients from the social environment. To the

extent that they are denied the necessary support and nourishment by chaotic,

controlling, or rejecting environments, there will be negative consequences for

their activity and development. (pp.123–124)

Regarding nutrients from the social environment, Patterson and Joseph drew a connection

between basic needs and necessary and sufficient conditions (i.e., components of self-

determination and person-centered theories) through identifying competence, relatedness,

and self-autonomy as three primary psychological needs for well-being, growth, and

development. However, when these conditions are not present, Patterson and Joseph

argued that "following adversity, […] chaotic social environments may serve to break

down existing conditions of worth, thus releasing the tendency toward actualization and

the possibility of becoming more fully functioning" (p. 134). Thus, conditions for the

self-actualization, self-determination, and resilience of the Black educator have been

given context and theoretical position.

    With a reflection on findings, examples of self and community actualization needs

fulfillment for the Black educator included: being valued not only as an educator but as a

Black, professional in education where one's whole self can be present; adopting a

system and a culture where growth and development are available for the individual and

the collective Black educator community; and being empowered by supervisors to

embody agency, determination, resignation, advocacy toward equity and justice, and

established boundaries. There was one participant who drew on self-determination theory

explicitly to frame the way in which she understood the conditions of her well-being at

work. She named that much like the theory states, when she had a sense of autonomy,

belonging (i.e., relatedness), and competence, she experienced well-being. It is in this

state of well-being that she as well as other participants noted they felt authentic,

actualized, and thriving. For many participants, this state of being was powerful as it

meant shifting from embodied feelings of stress, anxiety, overwhelm, and insecurity

toward a strong, competent, free, thankful, creative, hopeful, and powerful self.

Aligning with a broader African diasporic cultural tradition, Black people tend to

define themselves as whole, multidimensional beings who require competence,

relatedness, and self-autonomy to feel cognitively, physically, spiritually, and

emotionally fulfilled and to achieve optimal career growth and development (Emdin,

2020; Utsey et al., 2007). Acknowledging the ways in which their Black identities and

Black bodies have been targeted (Coates, 2015; Menakem, 2021), "personal problems are

[therefore] political problems" (Hanisch, 1969, p.114) and being able to be one's

authentic Black self at work refraining from code switching or assimilation would be

powerfully affirming—a core, central tenant of existing. To be one's best self at work,

fulfillment of basic or psychological needs as identified by Maslow (McLeod, 2007)

would not be enough if they are unable to be fully, truly, and authentically who they are.

For the Black educator, achieving one's full potential must include full acceptance and

expression of one's whole self.

Section Summary

Reflecting on themes in this section (i.e., ecological systems, components of need,

and self-determination), the integration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model,

Blackstock's model of needs fulfillment, and Person-centered/self-determination theories

all grounded in a critical perspective would best serve Black educators' well-being and

holistic sustainability at work. Supporting and providing a through line for CRT, trauma

theory, and organizational/systems theory reviewed in Chapter 2, Blackstock's model of needs fulfillment is thus centered with integrated elements of Bronfenbrenner. It is important to note that while Blackstock (2009) acknowledged Bronfenbrenner's model is misaligned with First Nation's beliefs of interconnected systems due to a compartmentalization of levels and time bound within an individual life cycle, I have chosen to integrate these systemic levels representing a model for Black educators as they must function within the Western context. Additionally, person-centered/self-determination theories are captured in Blackstock's approach to self-actualization from an indigenous perspective.

Figure 21 depicts a synthesis of these concepts where the broader sphere is divided into four quadrants representing cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. Along the vertical plain, each quadrant interacts with four systemic levels (i.e., individual, microsystemic, mesosystemic, and exosystemic) represented by the vertical, bi-directional arrow moving through the center of the sphere. Represented by a horizontal, bi-directional arrow centered in the sphere, context, both etic and emic, is defined by CRT; the macrosystem is synonymous with broader culture. Encapsulating the sphere, a third realm represents time and dimensions of reality preceding and succeeding the individual as well as the chronosystem representing the individual's life cycle. This structure not only enabled the components of each model to maintain fidelity as the needs components are equally represented and the systemic components are represented as levels, but it also represented the needs components' ability to be influenced by the presence or lack of equity and resource within each systemic level.

Connecting this theoretical summary to the research topic, I would posit that integrating a critical and holistic perspective throughout each level of the ecological model from the chronosystem to the individual frames healthy and impactful conditions for the Black educator. This integration thus provides an opportunity to explore healthy, equitable, and just, systems, structure, and culture on each level aligning with the reflections as well as the experiences of the participants presented in the findings. Bearing in mind the structural interaction of the Black educator within respective systemic levels as they move along the well-being continuum, the remaining question is how to go about developing a culture, system, and structure that integrates and embodies these characteristics? The answer will be explored in the following section.

Figure 21

A Critical System Integration of Well-being for the Black Educator
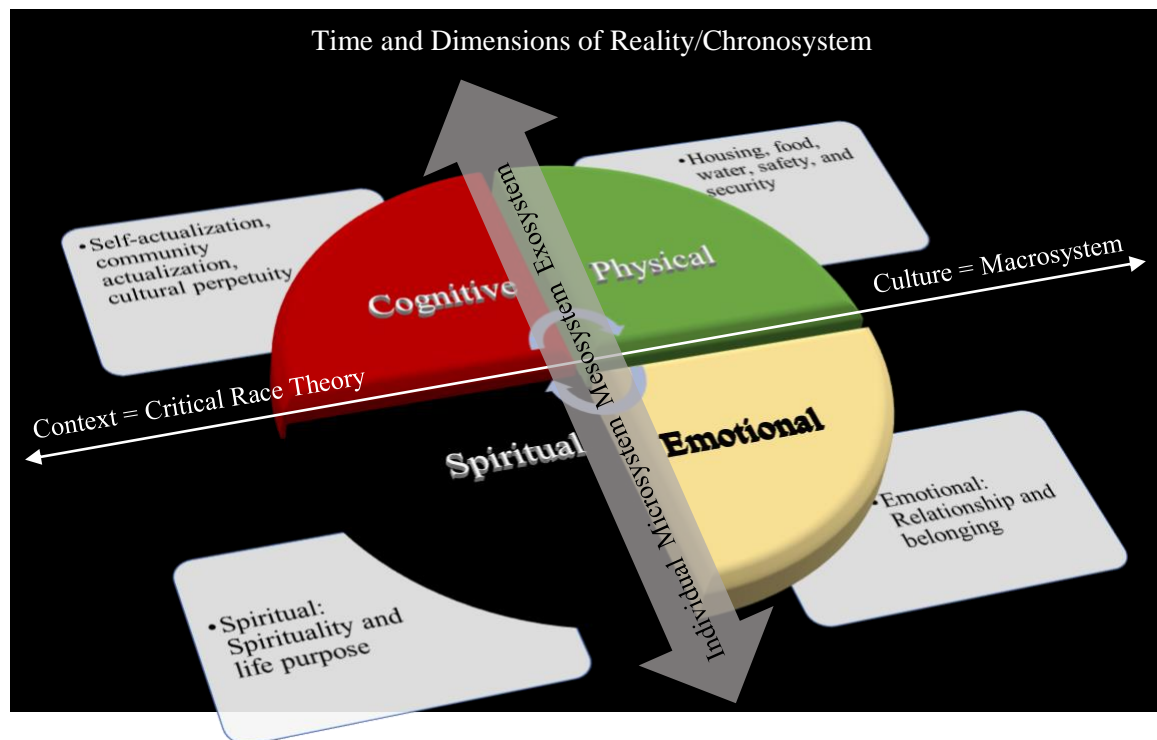
Note. Adapted from Blackstock (2009) with revisions from Rodrigues (2021).

Implications for Research and Practice

Having presented three high level themes synthesized from the findings, the above section can be viewed as a call and the content found in this section the response. In Chapter 1, burnout among educators in public schools and the impact of trauma primarily on students was presented. There was also reference to varied theories and approaches that aimed to ameliorate said problem. With a general synthesis of proposed approaches, there were many solutions presented in Chapter 1 for changes to systemic structure, programming, professional development, research, and general clinical practice with which I agree. However, the problem I found was that some of these programs or approaches seemed best fit for a utopian environment in which communication is stellar and funding abounds. In the most comprehensive approaches, I perceived an innovative gap on multiple levels as they seemed to neglect the sustainability of the educator.

Chapter 2 reviewed organizational culture and systemic oppression in education. With a focus on the history of education reform and the ways oppression infiltrated those stages and paradigms, a closer look at the progression of disenfranchisement in education through colonization, deculturalization, desegregation and the pitfalls of integration were presented. Leading toward a movement, both collective and individual, Black educators served as change agents integrating CRT and trauma-sensitive practice in pedagogy, curriculum, and school culture. However, due to trends surfaced in Black educator work experiences regarding job satisfaction and retention factors, this was not enough as the institution of education itself (i.e., organizational culture and systemic levels of functioning) need reformation. Having implications for research and practice, this section will review three foci that not only address this dilemma but also result in a framework

whose evolution began during my experience as a practitioner and leader. Further

developed through academic study and the empirical research completed in this

dissertation, the developmental process of this framework was highly recursive. The first

foci presented will explore healing and well-being of the organization.

Critical, Holistic Organizational Structure and Culture

Reflecting on participant findings, school culture, systems, and structure were

influential factors that shaped much of their experience including supervisor dynamics

and overall well-being. This emphasized the notion that "certain social-environmental

conditions nurture self-regulation based on organismic valuing and lead to a process of

growth and change in the direction of healthy functioning and psychological well-being,

whereas other conditions thwart this process and contribute to ill-being" (Patterson &

Joseph, 2007, p. 125). Reflecting on Chapter 2, Abdallah (2009) and Campoli (2017)

identified building collegiality among educators had a positive impact on community and

retention among Black educators ideally nullifying risk factors found by Farinde et al.

(2016), Dollarhide et al. (2014), and Hellebuyck et al. (2017). Therefore, conceptualizing

a healthier organizational environment is presented first to situate the context within

which individual holistic sustainability can be addressed. Without neglecting the

culturally conscious elements required of organizational development in marginalized

communities and schools, intentional components have been identified that will help

ensure a successful shift in school culture and structure.

Value, comprised of group vision, context, needs, and action, is a tenant of critical

community psychology that fosters liberation and well-being in communities of people

and organizational systems (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). As discussed in Chapter 7,

most values explored through content focused on school culture and power analysis

illustrated the prevalence of hegemonic culture in schools through artifacts, espoused

beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions that embodied dominant white

ideology (Schein, 2017). Therefore, the first step to effective organizational development

begins with exploring, identifying, and challenging said values toward equity, justice, and

liberation. Through this step, schools will invariably reground and redefine culture but

also purpose as this process will likely expose spaces where implicit bias and white

supremacy culture have immersed.

When embarking on such a comprehensive change management process and

strategic planning, exploring and reframing value is an important first step as the school

would need to ensure they are prioritizing their new focus and have the bandwidth to

engage in implementation. This development takes value a step further ensuring that the

creation of organizational change is not only valued but prioritized with the goal of

equitable resource allocation and capacity building among educators. Rejecting a

compartmentalized, separate but equal approach to organization development and

strategic planning, this proposed, inclusive method would yield a holistic,

comprehensive, and culturally responsive culture and structure.

Ensuring the revised model will be an organic part of the school or organization's

environment, this redesigned approach will likely lead to the development of new norms

that would support equitable and critically conscious change within the system. This

process of exploring value, purpose, priority, capacity, and bandwidth aim to secure the

sustainability and the scalability of the school's structure and culture avoiding

disbandment resulting from a reduction in fiscal resource. Therefore, accounting for

transtheoretical stages of change within this process is key in order to leverage steps that procure possible relapse toward previous stages of systemic and cultural dysfunction (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). Having reviewed holistic organization structure and culture, this next section will shift focus to a more intrapersonal perspective.

Critical, Holistic Staff Sustainability

As discussed in Chapter 2, Bloom (2013) acknowledged the functional human impact lacking physical and psychological safety caused by a dysfunctional environment could have on individual or group reenactment of trauma or a cyclical process of re-traumatization should the dysfunctional system remain unrepaired (Bloom & Farragher, 2010). Danzer et al. (2016) as well as McGee and Stovall (2015) built on this notion through acknowledgement of the racial, traumatizing factors on life and work experience and the need for healing, atonement, and reclamation. As presented in Chapter 5, Black educator participants shared perspective on self as educator and circumstances that fostered or neglected sustainability. This impact was further explored through Chapter 6's embodied presentation of participants' feelings, actions, and nonverbal communication. Through effectively and comprehensively developing new or revised systemic and culture models, stronger systems, structures, vision, and direction are provided for educators helping to address the negative impact identified in the chapters aforementioned. With clear, equitable systems, educators can address the challenge of burnout. Positioned to engage their passion, skillset, and expertise, intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation are thus stirred through better established, holistic, and culturally responsive alignment between the Black educator and the school. Addressing the holistic

element of sustainability, critical community psychology describes an approach to

wellness with levels of personal, relational, and collective well-being (Nelson &

Prilleltensky, 2010). While collective well-being is accounted for in the section on

holistic organizational structure and culture, relational well-being will be accounted for in

this section. Therefore, the component most focused on is personal and relational health

and well-being.

As presented by Acker (2012), the work of human service can still cause

unavoidable burnout even if the system and the culture of the school support the service

provider. Most people that work in helping fields tend to be very passionate about their

work and willing to go above and beyond what is expected of them as noted by the

participants in this study. Looking at the whole educator from an intrapersonal and

interpersonal perspective, the content of the work (i.e., goals and outcomes) would thus

be weighed equally with the process (i.e., the experience of getting the work done).

Through person-centered (Rogers, 1979) approaches to stress management, nutrition, and

culturally responsive practice, this focus adopts trauma-sensitive, "healing centered"

(Ginwright, 2018, p. 3), and critical perspectives ultimately targeting the four

components of need presented in Blackstock's (2009) re-imagined model positioning the

Black educator for self-fulfillment through self-actualization.

Moreover, Hesselbein and Shrader (2008) identified individuals from a whole

person paradigm through which one's mind, body, spirit, and heart are recognized.

Ultimately, it would be hypocritical to put insurmountable effort and energy into

organizational systems and the development of students receiving services within public

schools toward healthier functioning and not put the same amount of focus on those

providing the service (i.e., the Black educator). By neglecting to acknowledge the whole

person, Black educators will therefore "remain unsatisfied in their work" while "[schools]

fail to draw out the greatest talent, ingenuity, and creativity of their people and never

become truly great, enduring organizations" (Hesselbein & Shrader, 2008, p. 8). Having

discussed holistic approaches to Black educator development, this next section will

explore that of the supervisor.

Critical, Holistic Leader Development

As reviewed in Chapter 2, Brown et al. (2010) and Milner (2012) represented the

impact poor leadership and school culture can have on Black educators through micro-

and macroaggressions that dull Black educator voice, ethnic identity, and normative

cultural practice. Shaw and Newton (2014) presented servant leadership as the antidote.

As explored in Chapter 5, beliefs Black educator participants held regarding healthy and

unhealthy supervisor qualities, race, social justice, and equity intermingled in robust

ways. Participants described the impact unhealthy qualities had on their well-being and

sustainability and the trauma white supremacy culture in said supervisor dynamics caused

them. Thankfully, Black educator participants were also able to recall healthy

experiences where they felt valued, supported, and seen. From this narrative reflection,

they were also able to identify recommendations for qualities they believed would

facilitate healthy supervisor experiences.

Ultimately, this content was analyzed through ECA's critical, cognitive-

behavioral components. Therefore, leveraging a critical cognitive-behavioral coaching

model for supervisors would enable their ability to develop skills and foster intrinsic

motivation in their supervisees. While "joining union with [them], leaders can avoid

paternalistic efforts to tell the oppressed what they need and instead work toward cultural

synthesis" (Miller et al., 2001, pp. 1085–1086) through humility, faith in and solidarity

with Black educators, hope in future possibility, and critical exploration of school

systems and structures. Without the opportunity to explore their own embodied reality,

supervisors will continue to lack awareness and the conscious or subconscious impact on

Black supervisees will remain. Through this approach, a restorative space could be

fostered for the supervisor and Black supervisee also creating a strong sounding board for

a collaborative approach to organizational development and systemic change.

Therefore, I propose and have developed the intersectional stages of change (ISC)

framework as a meta-theory and organizational intervention that facilitates the

development of critically conscious and skills-based leaders, holistic staff sustainability,

as well as organizational development and strategic planning. Rather than

compartmentalize systemic restoration or solely explore how one can develop effective

leadership or educator well-being in mutually exclusive ways, this approach integrates all

three of these components encompassing a social justice, trauma-sensitive, and "healing

centered" (Ginwright, 2018, p. 3) praxis. This praxis enables supervisors and school

administrators to further develop empathic and collaborative systems and structures that

are comprehensive, holistic, and equitable. Prilleltensky (2003) wrote that oppression,

liberation, and well-being all contain psychological dimensions. He went on to say that

"the well-being of individuals depends on psychological health as much as on political

structures. […] Liberation, then, is the process of resisting oppressive forces and striving

toward psychological and political well-being" (Prilleltensky, 2003, p. 195). Therefore,

taking an intersectional, ecological, and holistic approach not only allows one to be more

inclusive and incorporate multiple facets of an organization, but it also accounts for the

ways in which these elements (e.g., leadership, stages of organizational development and

strategic planning, and holistic staff sustainability) impact each other as an organism.

Honoring the true meaning of intersectionality coined by Crenshaw (1995),

intersectionality in this framework accounts not only for the intersection of unjust

systems but also their impact on persons with multiple identities from historically

marginalized groups evoking the spirit of Bloom's (2013a) sanctuary model providing

multi-modal, "healing centered" (Ginwright, 2018, p. 3) praxis at work. Ultimately,

public school systems will be positioned to design for the margins (i.e., those belonging

to historically marginalized groups), improve quality of life for Black educators, and lead

the development of more sustainable, multicultural, and empathic practice. Before

concluding this chapter, the next two sections will explore reflections on ECA's

methodological practice and considerations for future research.

Methodological Reflections

While a grounding critical epistemology and methodology created a strong,

comprehensive foundation for the genesis of ECA, factors remain that influenced the

experience, generation of data, and data analysis. Therefore, this section will explore

challenges to said factors (i.e., the sample, methodology, and member checking) that may

have impacted the validity of findings.

Regarding the sample, there were nine participants in total. While all of them

identified with a Black racial designation, there were only two participants who self-

identified as cis gender men. The remaining participants identified as cis gender women.

Given this was a qualitative study, generation or simulation of a sample size

representative of the general population of Black educators in the state of Massachusetts was not possible nor was it necessary as the purpose was aligned with exploring the phenomenological, embodied experiences of participants in order to generate thick, descriptive data as opposed to generalizable data. Nevertheless, while there generally tends to be more women in education than men, the same holds true for Black professionals in this field. Therefore, it was highly beneficial to have two male participants to represent a different point of view, narrative, and experience. Yet, themes generated from the findings could have been more robust had there been a greater proportion of men. It is also necessary to mention that there were no self-identified transgender or non-binary participants. Had the sample been more gender diverse overall, different themes may have surfaced and/or greater variance in response could have created a gendered analysis within the context of findings presented. The next reflection will explore methodological process and execution.

Since the development of ECA was innovative and highly iterative, the factors explored here could also be viewed as elements for methodological development. During the inception of data generation, the location at which the interviews were being held change. The location of the pilot study was an open, comfortable room with cushioned sofas and chairs. This set up enabled a full-bodied view of nonverbal communication. Unfortunately, this location was no longer available and the permanent location for the interviews was more formal as it was a business lab working space. This location had reservable conference rooms with varied size. It was less open with large tables and seating available to serve the function of the space. While setting up chairs and the video camera alongside the table in a corner of the room was a consideration, this structure

seemed more awkward and less organic for the participants. Therefore, the interviews were conducted at the table. Given the furniture and structure of the room, observation of nonverbal communication was limited from their waist to their head as participants' legs were beneath the conference table. During the pilot, there was a more robust representation of nonverbal communication as the body was not restricted by a large table, and there was a full, embodied expression of feeling as the participant relived her experience. Despite this challenge, the nonverbal communication observed remained rich.

Additionally, as coding of participant categories developed, there was variance in the proportion of beliefs, values, feelings, and actions represented. While this seemed to occur organically, there ultimately seemed to be more beliefs and actions than feelings represented. Often, when participants shared a thought, the statement would begin with "I felt that" but the remainder of the statement was a thought or belief. While there was some level of interpretation with data analysis, a commitment to presenting participants' truth as authentically as possible was paramount. Recognizing interviewer intersubjective perspective was unavoidable, it was important to memo and account for this parallel process of analyzing beliefs, feelings, and actions so as not to taint participant data. Recognizing this challenge, it became apparent that asking more questions, not only about feeling states during their experiences with supervisors but also in the present moment of the interview would have been beneficial. For example, further exploration of their present moment embodied experiences while re-living their narrative during the interview process may have proven even more robust and powerful. This brings this discussion to the third and final factor, member checking.

Originally, part of the methods and data generation process included bringing participants together as a group after the interviews were completed for a collective, restorative experience that could have served the purpose of member checking. While trauma theory was a substantive concept used to ground the study, there were restorative, trauma sensitive, and "healing centered" (Ginwright, 2018, p. 3) elements interwoven throughout. For example, resources for continued therapeutic support (should participants need it) were provided as well as a gifted book centered on mindful practice at work and healing from stressful occurrences in appreciation for their time. An opportunity to explore their well-being state from a visual, artistic center enabled participants to use tools other than language to conceptualize and communicate the beauty and harm endured building rapport with the interviewer in a safe and progressive way was adopted. Lastly, a series of interview questions were leveraged and structured such that participants were led to explore their narrative and transition safely out of their stories so as not to leave their mental and emotional state vulnerable and open. While none of the participants needed continued support, they did find the interview experience therapeutic as described in Chapter 7.

Nevertheless, upon completing the interviews, COVID-19 soon spread, and the pandemic shifted safety, access, and availability dramatically. Since the sample included public school educators, their schedules were already complicated and full—making it nearly impossible to bring all nine participants together in a timely fashion. However, I was able to engage 6 of the 9 participants individually. Through brief 30-minute conversations, I shared participant's I poems with them and asked them to share reflections on resonance with their voice and experience and to identify a section or a

couple of lines that resonated with them and why. I also shared my findings. All participants expressed joy in reading their poem. Many did not realize it was all their content at first but recognized phrases that captured their essence and stated that their poem captured their voice and experience accurately. They also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on and come back to the work. Having discussed methodological reflections, the next section will explore future research considerations.

Considerations for Future Research

Throughout this dissertation process, there were ideas for future consideration that surfaced from methodological reflection, iterative revisions to data analysis, and imaginative, creative thought processes. This section will briefly discuss some of these considerations. Should future researchers or I choose to leverage this topic and analysis method, it may be interesting to explore different sampling options. Deciding to solely recruit participants who self-identify as male may prove interesting or minimally provide a more equal distribution of men. Similarly, it would be interesting to explore the impact of systemic oppression on Black public school leaders. While the decision to focus on educators was intentional, I do believe Black public school leaders have a powerfully unique, complex, and likely harmed narrative to explore and share as well. Continuing with the theme of exploring options within the sample, it would also be interesting to explore another racial group completely. Indigenous American, Asian, Latinx, as well as other racial groups have also had unique educational experiences and exploring that of professional educators within those groups could be valuable.

Focusing on the methodology, embarking on a deeper exploratory experience with the embodied element by coding the actual physiology of the nonverbal

communication through use of a notation system could provide greater depth. This was going to be one of the original approaches used to analyze nonverbal communication during the interview; however, there was substantial context surrounding participant movement that needed to be coded in narrative form and analyzed as the movements were highly nuanced. Given the robust nature of such a coding procedure, it also meant that the level of analysis was becoming its own individual study and not reasonable for this topic. Lastly, as interviews ended, participants were asked to share remaining thoughts or actions they might consider as a result of this experience (see Chapter 7). It is important to name here that a researcher could also leverage this topic toward participatory action research where participants could convene as a working group to align on a project they would like to implement that could shift their school environment toward greater equality and/or their supervisor relationships toward greater health. The next and final section will conclude this dissertation.

Conclusion

Love (2000) shared that "to be effective as a liberation worker—that is, one who was committed to changing systems and institutions characterized by oppression to create greater equity and social justice—a crucial step is the development of a liberatory consciousness" (p. 599). Love wrote that this consciousness enables awareness and intention to live in oppressive systems that challenge hegemonic socialization. From this awareness, resilience, vigilance, compassion, and activism are given impetus. This dissertation, therefore, served as my crucial step—my love song to justice for Black educators in public schools.

Phenomenological interviewing through ECA methods created a relational

process and shared experience as a Black researcher and educator interviewing Black,

educator participants. Through ECA, an embodied theory of meaning not only positioned

me to explore participants' multi-dimensional meaning making but also my own.

Therefore, this has been a self-reflexive process of becoming. As previously stated, peer

debriefing and memoing were implemented to account for inter-subjective perspective.

These steps were vital as they helped inform my methodological contribution allowing

me to honor my artist identity as well as my within group experience. Through these

interviews, I not only gained further cognitive insight but also a visceral knowing of the

ways in which rapport building and career identity development can be an embodied

experience as my own narrative as a Black educator and administrator has involved

familiar complexity. Embarking on my own "healing centered" (Ginwright, 2018, p. 3)

journey from the impact of white supremacy culture at work, I too recognized the

importance of having my cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional needs met.

Consequently, this dissertation began with situating the problem statement as well

as framing my intersubjective perspective through a brief exploration of my narrative and

the ways in which this narrative has not only shaped my practitioner and leadership

identities but also my researcher identity and thus this study. As a Black woman leader,

practitioner, and scholar, this topic was nuanced, purposeful, impassioned, empowering,

validating, and complex. This work not only allowed me to explore the experiences of

Black, public school educators on an intimate intra- as well as interpersonal level but also

from broader cultural and institutional levels. It was important that I explored the history

of Black educators in Chapter 2 through a socio-historical context that captured the

history of education from a cultural and institutional perspective situated within a broader narrative of the history and intergenerational trauma of Blacks in the United States. From chattel enslavement of Africans to the segregation and desegregation of schools, the fabric of this country which formed the hegemonic culture of the institution of education at all levels was palpable in the narrative of the nine Black educators that participated in this study.

During data analysis, one of my memos reflected that many Black educators are still defending against the impact of desegregation. While desegregation solved the issue of integration, it has merely been flirting with inclusion over time. While the mainframe of the institution of education remains shaped by and grounded in white supremacy culture, Black educators are left to not only push toward inclusion but rather liberation of themselves, their students, and their students' families to have culturally responsive and "healing centered" (Ginwright, 2018, p. 3) experiences in schools. This shift as well as others that have followed (i.e., the school choice movement) have been highly nuanced as there have been benefits and drawbacks like brining a gentrification of education with them. Nevertheless, Black educators brought their ethnic cultural ideals into historically white school systems authentically, genuinely, and organically implementing and advocating for what they know their Black and Brown students as well as colleagues need. However, the institution of education as it stands was never set up for that. It was no surprise that many of the qualities Black educators identified as unhealthy supervisor and/or school culture qualities went against those generally grounded in an African diasporic cultural context.

Given the history of school desegregation, Black educators' fundamental and holistic needs were disenfranchised by cutting over 31,000 Black teaching positions (see Chapter 2). Colonization and chattel slavery established a culture of racism through an initial institution of agriculture that shifted toward the industrial age later morphing into more modern approaches of oppression (i.e., emancipation, challenges of the 14th amendment, reconstruction and resistance, the Black codes, Jim Crow laws, redlining, the school to prison pipeline, modern day lynching of Black men and women by police, etcetera); therefore, desegregation was never set up to account for any of the ethnic cultural and identity needs of Black educators and students forced to integrate. Racism and its adjoining intersectional isms (i.e., sexism, classism, transphobia, etcetera) were and are executed on institutional and cultural levels while sustained within and between individuals. Therefore, it is important that all four levels in our fight toward liberation of Black educators in public schools are accounted for if justice and true change are to be achieved. While many educators are highly accomplished, self-actualized individuals, I must question at what holistic cost? If well-being was or is compromised, is self-actualization experienced in its truest form?

Groves' (1951) account of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the decision by the Supreme Court to establish "separate but equal" institutionalized racist systems served as the foreground to *Brown v. Board of Education 1953* discussed in Chapter 2. Thurgood Marshall, lead legal counsel on said case, leveraged research from Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark that explored the impact of segregation on Black children's self-esteem (Bergner, 2009). This study was used as a powerful tool to dismantle the belief that segregation's impact on Black people's emotional well-being was of minor importance;

therefore, the argument against changing "separate but equal" to an inclusive institutional structure was mute. In "Amend: The Fight for America," an excerpt of a prior interview of Dr. Clark was shown (Leon & Green, 2017, 0:10:45). While speaking of the impact his research had on him, Dr. Clark simply explained his displeasure; however, watching his facial, nonverbal communication display a grimace with tightly closed eyes and a slight, quick shake of his head "no" spoke an embodied anguish far beyond what words could provide. Thus, emphasizing the cognitive and emotional impact of a marginalized status, "the Clarks concluded that the children had internalized society's racist messages and thus suffered from wounded self-esteem" (Groves, 1951, p. 299). In the legacy of these scholars and activists, my intention with exploring how the experiences of Black professional and administrative employees were impacted by direct supervisors in public schools was not only to fill a gap in research but also to amplify the voices of Black educators who continue to suffer post-desegregation.

Thus, in order to achieve Black educator self and community actualization with sustained well-being, schools need to be trauma-sensitive, "healing centered" (Ginwright, 2018, p. 3). organizations if they are truly to be committed to an anti-ism mission. Healthy systems and healthy approaches to supervising educators must be developed, maintained, and integrated. Therefore, holistic sustainability and the well-being of all school staff—especially BIPOC staff—need to be a priority including an integration of Black culture and norms. True love, liberation, and equitable transference of power cannot be achieved without it. As the culture and structure of the school system is evaluated and redesigned through a critical lens, CRT, trauma theory, and

organizational/systems theories need to be employed if we are to comprehensively

address the fullness of the need. Menakem (2017) wrote:

> Clean pain is about choosing integrity over fear. It is about letting go of what is
>
> familiar but harmful, finding the best parts of yourself and making a leap—with
>
> no guarantee of safety or praise. This healing does not happen in your head. It
>
> happens in your body. And it is more likely to happen in the body that can stay
>
> settled in the midst of conflict in uncertainty. (p. 166)

It is my hope that we will all journey toward clean pain. In honor of the nine Black,

educator participants who shared their time, energy, and stories with me, I will close this

dissertation with a reflection written to whom I felt most accountable during this process.

This letter is for the Black, educators who participated in this study as well as countless

others who remain vigilant, impassioned, and committed to their professional calling.

Dear Black Educator,

You are an impactful member of an ancestral heritage that has been impassioned

by and committed to teaching, educating, and loving future generations of Black children.

Your essence and the very DNA of your cultural fortitude is and will always be with you.

Please know that these traits speak beyond lesson plans and bell schedules but rather

inform your way of being on mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual realms that impact

students and colleagues alike. Please also know that I see you—your personhood and

your accomplishments, your challenges and struggles. This educational system was not

created for you or by you—yet you persist. As you persist, I stand with you as we

amplify our collective voice together in an effort to reconstruct the system or build an

entirely new one if need be—where your full, beautiful, and whole self can thrive and

flourish toward and within your calling.

In solidarity…Myisha

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Appendix A: ECA and Participant I Poems

I Poem: Alicia

I'm hoping I can help you with this
I thought of a flower where it's in full bloom…it gets its water, it's fully grown, the sun is hitting it right
I love sunrises and sunsets
I picked this one just a field of purple and sunlight makes me...it made me happy
I try to be very transparent with my students
I try to reassure my students I'm not just here for a paycheck
I'm still showing them that despite it all I can still smile, or I can still get what I need to get done
I absolutely love it
I've been very, very fortunate and blessed in where I've been as an educator
I believe for me, that was a spiritual thing
I know a lot of people have had completely different experiences
So, I can't complain

I was temping for a little bit, but the glass ceiling was actually cutting my head
I was literally paycheck to paycheck
I made that drastic decision
I left my job
I'm one of those people
I don't like to break my promises
I'm not going to say it if I don't think I can do it
I'm going to do everything that I can to make sure I can get it done
I knew that I wanted to continue to progress wherever I was going to go
I could teach
I thought about, well my favorite subject is math, I'm Black, I'm a female, how many of those do you see in a school
I just loved working with youth
I'm trying to be mindful
I was very professional
I came and I did what I had to do
I'm not saying that to say I'm giving myself credit
I hope that answers your question

I have to find my own voice
I showed up
I showed out
I have the mindset of when I'm teaching
I know what the objective is
I know what the activities are going to be
I know what the overall outcome should look like or what I'm expecting, right
I hope that answers your question

I was teaching what I wanted to teach
I had a lot of autonomy
I'm glad I made that decision
I'm not a morning person
I wake up every day on time and I'm at my job, my career because I love it
I'm able to be myself
I don't have to be, oh good morning, how are you…being fake
I don't have to
I don't feel like I have to be that way anymore
I get along with my coworkers
I love what I'm doing

I'm very aware of who I let get close to me
I think that's just because of things that I've gone through
I've made the best of my situations
I can think about scenarios that are negative
I would probably have to change some things around
I really feel like school is an extension of parenting
I also got to care for you
I got to look out and make sure that you're safe

I had this mindset of, I'm here to learn…Right…Even though I'm teaching, I'm still here to learn
I'm actually still like that right now
I think humility is huge
I'm not coming in there acting like I know everything because I don't
I ask if people are willing to hear my suggestion and then I give it
I was a loner for a long time
I'm very observant
I like to just see where I'm at, see who I'm dealing with
I can be myself and then if I'm not feeling that vibe I'm kind of like
I'm still cordial, I'm still professional
I'm only going to let you in so much
I definitely treat others the way I want to be treated
I find time to communicate but
I try to find the right time
I don't know if I should say it like that because there's never really a right time or a specified time but
I'm very mindful of just where I am

I believe that God has strategically placed me where I need to be and has surrounded me with people that I need to be around
I think those are things that I do bring to the table…just being mindful, being aware, being observant, being humble, being hungry
I try to be very transparent with who I am

I want people to accept me for who I am
I can grow from that
I'm very open to feedback
I want to know because I want to be the best that I can be
I chose to teach young people
I want to make sure that I'm putting my best foot forward
I want to make sure that if I were ever to walk away from this today, nobody could ever say anything negative about me at all
I'm going to be myself regardless of where I go
I'm not going to allow anybody to have anything negative to say about me
I can't control how other people feel about me
I can control me, what I'm doing, how I'm doing it, and making sure that I'm doing it to the best of my capabilities

I just happened to gravitate more towards people that looked like me
I don't feel the tension in terms of race with the people that I'm working with
I am the only Black female in my department though, which is kind of cool
I can say how I feel
I'm still going to be mindful of how I'm saying it
I don't want to be offensive
I don't want anybody offending me on purpose, right…it just goes both ways
I feel comfortable and confident enough to say my concerns
I think that's important

I'm still struggling
I'm teaching
I have two master's degrees why can't I still buy the house that I want to buy when I want to buy it, right
I think that last question really hit something in me
I don't think this whole Black white thing....
I really really really really just, I don't like it
I'm going to leave you with this
I feel like it's deeper than race, it's deeper than economics, it's deeper than a mental, psychological thing
I really think it's spiritual
I'm waiting for God
I'm learning more about just who I am on a spiritual level and it's deeper than color
I will leave you with that

I Poem: Brianna

I really wanted to be an educator
I always found myself ending up in education
I honestly think…because of her
I guess it's something I've always tried to move away from
I kept getting opportunities and jobs
I just couldn't fight it
I'm destined to work in a school
I originally picked this picture because it looked like it was a family migrating
I picked this picture because it looked like a family that moved for a better opportunity
I originally picked that because something about that reminded me of teachers
I picked that one because it just reminded me that the girls watch how the Black teachers hold themselves
I just thought there is a lot that I carry at school knowing we have a lot of students with emotional disorders
I feel like they're impacted by it

I'm happy at my job
I love my job
Sometimes I'm doing it all by myself
I feel the weight is really heavy when you're trying to complete things at school
I thought it would be a positive work environment and supportive but it really wasn't
I just wasn't supported
I felt like, "What's the point of being here?"
I just ended up leaving
I had to do all that on my own
I do believe that

I was unsure of, well, who's here today
I need to know
I need to stay in the classroom and never come out
I had a good record at that school
I couldn't stay there
I was stressed all night
I don't think I slept just thinking of different ways you can angle stuff
I just kept thinking about it in the shower "I'll say it like this" and "I'll do it like this"
I told her the different ways I wanted to use it at the school
I told her how I wanted to stay at the school
I told her about all the things I wanted to do

I don't know if they're authentic
I don't know
I don't even think anything she said was authentic because who knew what person she
was that day
I was so nervous
I saw her do it a lot to other coworkers
I had, which was really sad

I am really bubbly and funny
I'm willing to meet with anyone, talk with anyone and help anyone
I'm not one of those people that are like I need to know you to do certain things
I'm up for doing it
I'll do it
I'll try it
I'm just going to do it
I'm really open that way
I'm not really a closed off person
I can be when I feel like a person is not treating me well or doing something I don't like
I don't volunteer to do anything
Usually I would
I don't do anything
I'll literally do the bare minimum
I just become a clock-in, clock-out worker

I remember one day…I was like 10 years old
I didn't want to work
I started crying
I'm mopping the floor
I'm sitting here mopping the floor, crying, tears on the floor, mopping them up
I realized, no matter what you're feeling, you still got to do your job and do it right
I still had to go back over them floors
I learned it
I get most of my work ethic from…It's from her
I do miss her
I wish she was still here
I think she would be really proud of me

I would describe the experience in that way
I don't feel on edge
I feel like I can weigh in

I feel like other teachers felt that way

I admire the leadership that were open and honest and that genuinely supported me as an employee

I don't admire when they used their control

I would want to be the leader that is open and honest and supportive and willing to listen

I wouldn't use my power to manipulate people

I think that's more hurtful than dealing with a white person who's not supportive of Black people because this is somebody who looks like you, who should be

I think that's the point

When I'm my authentic self, I celebrate myself more

I'm happy to be myself as a Black woman. It'll appear in how I dress and things like that

I like being...there's no other way for me to be

I'm not one of those people that can hide it that well

I think depending on administration it's hard to be who you are

I just really would like for places

I would really enjoy seeing a workplace where people can be their authentic selves

I think people of color have the desire to want to stay but they can't

I don't like to go into stores with a lot of things

I don't put my hands in and out of my pockets…those are things that I think about on a daily basis that I'm sure a white person does not think about

I went shopping in one store

I had a bag

I already bought something

I literally sat…debated

I literally sat there for like an extra 10 minutes debating what I should do

I feel those are the things that I deal with outside work that I have to think about

I'm stealing or doing something wrong automatically because of the color of my skin

I feel like sometimes as Black people, Black women we feel something but we're still pushing and moving on, and that was something that slavery passed on to us

I haven't really talked about it

I may express a little bit, not to this extent

Helpful, I felt like it helped

I Poem: Ciara

I'm feeling healthiest
I'm feeling really grounded or rooted, right?
I picked the tree
I love trees
I'm always going to pick some kind of nature images…that's just me
I also like to be in flow
I picked something also around water

I'm not at my healthiest, right
I was, yeah, you know
I have been there, for sure
I only had two kinds of experiences
I'd never think of myself as having a supervisor, actually
Maybe, I don't know
I have to actually think about first of all who is my supervisor
I'm just going to say people who have some kind of administrative oversight of me

I chose to leave after the year
I just kind of went there
I would say in general that ended up being unhealthy
I chose to leave
I see the brunt of my teaching work is the curriculum and the work with kids
I've always gotten very good evaluations
I haven't personally felt people have come in to "get you," and a "got ya" kind of thing
I just haven't personally felt that
I felt in general a lot of respect

I'm not being told for the most part what to teach
I often feel autonomous
I belong with the group of people I'm doing it with, and competent
I feel well
I didn't think that came necessarily from my supervisor

I say no a lot
I'm one of those teachers that says no a lot to certain things
I'm not as ambitious in that way to be out in the classroom like a leader and everything like that
I say no a lot to stuff

I'm saying no, because I'm saying yes to other things
I have a certain amount of privilege, as a veteran teacher at this point to be like, "No."
I don't check my email on Sunday
I don't check my email over the summer
I feel that could be wrong
I feel like that turns off

I know I felt something about it
I wasn't sure how it was going to play out
I'm realizing we're privileging white people and white ways of being... and this is affecting classes
I adamantly disagreed with the decision
I think this is again, one of those decisions that we are going to regret
If I said yes, that would actually just concede to my whole argument about white privilege having a role in who we're hiring here
If I say yes to this white man
I am actually supporting the status quo
I will not do this
I have this pattern now that I think of it, which is like if you're hiring people, then say you're about hiring Black people within your teaching staff and administration, but every time a position comes open, you hire white people, then mm-mm

I've thrived
I think one of the structures that really helps is the fact that you're on a team
I think that's the foundation that helps
I would actually say
I think it's one of the humanizing forces in life
I actually think that ends up in a way being a dehumanizing piece
I think it can make the total experience less nurturing than it could be
I'll just do what I feel like doing
I've been one of the people most vocal about this for years
I say no a lot
I will not work at a place where my personal mission for teaching is not aligned or supported
I've seen
I left

I think more belonging was definitely there
I chose to leave because they weren't hiring enough people of color
I didn't necessarily want them to be Black people. But it could've been a range, right

I just left
I think it shows up every day
I'm working in a School System, which in itself has a racist history against people of color, and particularly African American people, that whole context means that your work is already going to be politicized in a certain way…right
I joined the team understanding that they were aware of these issues and they were actively working to address them
I wanted to be on that team
I believe unless you just specifically commit to working on this
I feel like that's what we need to do as a community
I think that can help in a lot of situations

I know there are some cultures in which it's like there is that hierarchy in terms of value too in a system
On the one hand, I think this is just like one of those white girl things
I don't know
I could be wrong
I think it's from a position of true understanding
I think it's from a position of white guilt

I show up I think in a more
I think
I think I'm more
I want to say more engaged
I'm more willing to put more energy in certain activities
I'm going to go out of my way
I too think it's important
I know it's not just going to be superficially dealt with
I think that's what it is
I'm more willing to do those kinds of things
I'm going to make that commitment too
I also think I'm a very good creative thinker
I just believe
I believe very few things are impossible
I'm very creative
I'm probably joyful, more joyful in those spaces…definitely more energetic

I wouldn't consider myself charismatic
I'm not
I'm old fashion

I'm not charismatic
I don't know
I show up frank
I don't just kind of play with it
I think that's one part of my reputation
I have a lot of integrity
I'm just going to show up holistic anyway
I know my limits
I'm just going to…you know
I show up

I feel like
I'd have to go back to the beginning
I think if I feel like I wasn't really fulfilling a purpose in that way
I'd already be gone
I'm always going to love my job and love what I do, it's helping me be me
I hope I know when it's time to move on
I've had other teachers who I feel like
I mean, when I was student... they should've moved on

I just felt like, well, in my relationship with supervisors
I actually...let me see
I think there's a way in which my wellness is positively impacted by the work I do
I do just feel we can just create, recreate
I feel our work that we do at this school and then on our team is so valuable not just in academia, but outside
I love that
I hate to keep saying it
I definitely never thought about the supervision part
I didn't connect my experience
I never connected those things
I definitely didn't connect it to my health and wellbeing, right
I often talk to kids about like super structures, right?
I never really thought about supervisors as a superstructure impacting my health, but it did
I never thought about having that particular role
I could use that super structure of supervision to support my health and wellness, right?
I could actually utilize it as something that's very supportive of what I'm doing in my classroom or in my health and wellness
I just haven't taken advantage of it as a resource that could be used that way

I Poem: Deja

I have a lot to talk about
I feel like it reflects who I am, like my most happiest
I feel it's embodied
I feel they're a reflection of me
When I'm doing a really good job it's a very strong reflection
I do feel like a queen, when I do what I'm supposed to do by my kids
I just love the colors and it feels very…it's serenity
I think of peace
I've thought about that with my kids too
I do well with a group of kids
I know I'm passing it on, so yeah

I feel very sure of myself
I was there, they didn't have anybody who looked like me in leadership and places of
power
I had to hold this mask up
I could only take it off around people who looked just like me
I was 100% authentic to the blood that's running through my veins
I would literally have to put on this mask
I felt guilty about that
I should be able to be authentically me
I think of the mornings too, just getting ready for work
I feel like I am putting one on
I noticed that made me uneasy

I started out as an associate teacher
I met my mentor, she was a white woman
I wasn't as keen as I am now
I felt that there's this sense of fall on your face and then you'll be able to pick up the
pieces
I was very easily connected with the students because they are me
I think that was threatening for a lot of people
I could see that it was something that they were trying to work on through this associate
teaching program, which is what they call a pipeline
I don't like that language

I became very resentful

I was told about my attire
I had the opportunity to speak about my experience
I spoke
I wear the same things that people who are white wear
I'm proud of where my ancestors come from
I can't help it

I didn't really listen to the things that she was saying anymore
I had to take everything with a grain of salt
I began to find my footing
I was a staple when it came to my management
I always had people in my classroom
I literally got used to being a fish in a bowl
I didn't like it, but I got used to it
I was able to pay that forward to other mentees
I was on this really positive projectory
I made it very clear even before those years
I wanted to be in leadership
I didn't get the position
I was willing to take a pay cut
I knew this is what I ultimately wanted to do
I was applying for it, again
I went for it
I was very very confident
I didn't get it

I was going for these higher positions of power
I was literally still executing everything I needed to do very nicely
I had been denied the first time
I'm just questioning everything
I just became very angry at this point
I am still doing what I need to do inside the classroom
I feel like I'm being taken advantage of professionally
I'm feeling like, why are they looking outside of this if I've been here
I know the systems
I've expressed my interest in being in this specific position

I felt it was just like manipulation
I still went ahead and came up with a two-week plan
I feel I've held myself up by the bootstraps

I got out of that mentality
I thought for a while that that was the only place
I'm sending you guys my two weeks' notice
I was very professional
I thanked them for everything that I learned
I was excited to keep our relationship going in the future

I call her back
I go ape shit
I've seen things that you wouldn't even imagine in your nightmares
I gave you a plan for two weeks
I hung up
I went to go say goodbye to my kids, it was a set up
I was sitting there looking like an idiot
I can't be myself
I'm literally being villainized by these two white women in front of my kid
I leave, it's weird
I left

I still have this old job tugging at me
I was threatened
I don't want to go into a situation that's new and be completely tainted by this old job
I've learned from it
I would see with colleagues
I would see with the disciplinary system
I noticed a lot of things
I left

I don't know it's just…there's always something
I never had anxiety before
I saw it increase as I worked
I found myself putting a lot of pressure on myself
I always put pressure on myself in a really, really unhealthy way
I definitely became more direct
I was able to see things that I knew were unfair
I became more and more experienced
I would say exactly what was on my mind
I definitely became a good educator
I would be very, very skinny
I would gain tons and tons and tons of weight

I also felt my anxiety with sleep
I know people who have gotten physically sick with the idea of going to work
I think it starts with the top

I know that mentally it's the anxiety piece for me
I didn't have any joy
I was just going through the motions
I always wanted my teammates to do well
I had been there the longest
I'd shut down
I was never the type of person who'd be like
I just wanted you to be okay. But it brought me out of character…dark place…dark place

I just don't like the leaders
I just don't know what those credentials are
I don't know, you don't trust us
I never let them see me sweat
I feel that's part of the culture there too
I feel like there is this never let them see you sweat
I think they use our strength against us
I always stayed calm, cool and collected
I always
I didn't get emotional in front of them
If I did get emotional in front of them it didn't have anything to do with me
I feel maybe that's why I did get emotional
I felt like, "Okay, it's not connected to me so I can show a little bit of vulnerability,"

I love to be active
When I'm not, that's when my anxiety gets really, really high
I don't know
If I knew that my leadership saw the same potential they saw in me when they said yes in
that interview, I would be able to show up every day with that same confidence
I don't know if I'm a good teacher
I know I'm doing a good job
I would be more positive
I would interact with them differently
I would know that they have my best interests at heart
I come to you and I say I eventually want to be in leadership
I would be more confident in going for positions of leadership within the program
Oh, I see what you're doing

I was top-notch all the way to the end
I never wasn't able to grow my kids or show up every day and make sure that I was doing
the best that I could do for them as far as proximity is concerned
I wouldn't let it waiver
I worked even harder
I'm leaving so it's like am I fighting for like a really good lasting impression
I don't know
I would literally walk into work and laugh
I was glad I was going

I was always in the church
I never really knew what was going on
I've gotten older though
I know that there are things I went through
I'm going through right now
I always go through where there is a piece of word that is speaking to whatever it is
I feel like for this last year it has kept me grounded
I always thought like, "Forgive them father for they don't know what they do."
I wouldn't speak on it
I just do a lot of prayer
I would feel like I was being ganged up on or attacked by those in leadership
I would just have to like pray

I Poem: Esther

I'm feeling free and happy
I've got my stuff together
I'm ready to go
I'm happy
I'm like, yes

I'm like, "Help!"
I'm just like, stop the madness
I let them know
I'm going to ignore them, not to disrespect them
I stay in between
I had a student who emailed me and said, "I was just making sure everything was okay, I
hadn't seen you."
So, I feel like, hey, I'm doing my part

I learn people's names
I mean, I wanted to teach
So I'm like, "We need Black and brown professionals."
I said, "You are more than capable."
I start preaching
I said, "Hey", "... it doesn't matter."
I said, "Uh-uh-uh, the pyramids were built in Africa." "Yep."
I'm not trying to hear that foolishness.
I said, "They stole it. Africa, that's why they snatched the nose off." Okay?
I said, "We can do math, it's the system that set you all up."
I said, "You thought you were getting over, but they did you a disservice. That's the
system, that's the set up right there."
I'm telling you
I said, "Look what they did to President Obama. The man went to Harvard."
I said, "Look, look what they did to his wife. Call her ugly and all this stuff."

I really haven't had any bad experiences
I just say what I have to say
I'm straight to the point, and they know that, so
I just came to teach math
I had the degrees
I had the work experience
I was the only one
I had the experience
I was doing IT stuff
I got my license
I did that
Yeah, I did that
I just had to rebuild it

I guess that's why they asked me to do it

I'm not going to let myself get down
I was like, well, this is it right here
I will go ask for help
I have no problems with asking
I said, "Every time we tried to do that, they burned it down."
So I was like, sometimes this self-preservation quote is real, for Black educators

I just tell them straight up
I don't know if you know
I'm for the students
I'm going to voice my opinion
I'm going to do my thing
I'm like, "What are you doing?"
I can't with them
I'm just saying
I don't know
I'm like, the accountability
I can agree to disagree without holding anything, it is what it is
I respect her, whatever mood she's in, that she is the headmaster
I'm glad that she will listen to what I have to say

I'm definitely not cocky
I'm doing it for the students, but it is what it is…it's the truth
I worked
I earned every last piece of mine, so
I'm just
I'm able to just push on
I'm going to do right by these kids
I don't care if they come for me…that's the way I am now
I already know what I have to offer
I'll just get another job

I know how to handle you
I know how you think
I can approach her when I want something, wisely
I'm not going to ever intentionally be rude or anything
I mean, I'm human, I'm not perfect
I would never intentionally be rude
I always intend to stay professional
I say, "Okay, nobody is exempt." You know what I'm saying
I just keep myself licensed and prepared, you know what I'm saying…just in case

I went to teaching
I ended up being sick on a serious level

I'm out of there
I will go somewhere else
I have three educator licenses
I'll just go teach math
I am licensed in IT
I'll start an IT program
I don't care
I was like, "Ma'am? You won't stop me."
I wasn't having it
I blew-up
I was on fire
I went off
I think innately, because both of them are Caucasian
I think innately. I mean, white folk, think they're better than everybody, anyway
So, I think that, yeah, I think race always plays a part

I definitely do my work
I earned it that job done exceptional
I hate lesson planning
I hate it with a passion
I'm getting better at it
I'm thinking if they had more structure in there
I could work with my co-team, sure

I see Black folk getting PhDs and stuff, it blesses my whole entire life
I'm going to see if I can get you some more people. How many people do you need?
I just think we're beautiful
I really do
I would say it was amazing
I picked that one
I loved it

I Poem: Faith

I'm not my best self
I am unheard
I'm in the back, not being heard
I don't get those things out
I overthink
I just think, think, think, think, think
I have to get it out
I sit with a group of teachers or a group of administrators or just a group of educators that
are in alignment with me, that is when I'm at my best self
I'm doing the most thinking
I'm most thoughtful
I'm the most driven
I'm going to hold you accountable
I feel the most powerful

I've had three administrators, three different administrators
I've been at the same school for three different administrators
I've been in a bunch of different schools in different roles
I've always had supervisors not of color the first few years
I think those were the worst experiences for me
I've had different levels of supervision along the way
I know I wanted to be a teacher
I had a master's
I've had work experience
I've worked with communities for a number of years
I had put myself forward
I was turned down for that role
I had to fight to be able to get proficient on my evaluation
I was proficient
I've had to battle that
I've had to be like, "Nope, I don't want you evaluating me alone
I never got needs improvement my first two years
I fought back
I refused to get that
I know I'm proficient
I don't need you telling me
I'm new, this was my first year of teaching...but it's not my first year of living
I started making sure that you're coming in with someone else

I want a person of color
I don't want you coming in
I don't want two white women coming in my room
I want you and someone else, but it has to be a person of color

I have this cultural competency thing down
I also have my academic stuff down
I felt like she let me down
I felt like a woman of color should have support
I felt like that was tough
I am, a woman of color
I do that for other teachers now
I'm not going to set you up the way that I got set up
I'm there early, I leave late
I'm not going to half-ass anything
So, I just started creating space
I feel like I'm empowering others
I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that this doesn't happen to you

I am learning so much from you as a person of color, being able to work your way up
from teaching to administration
I am looking at the way that you're doing things
I think our one-on-one relationship is very different
I ended up in that position after interviews
I became the lead teacher of my school
I have a platform
I have a voice
I could actually move up other teachers of color
I feel like I'm aligned
I feel like we have the same goals
I feel like admin and myself, we're definitely on the same track
I want you to go get it
I can go get it
I mean
I feel like the people that I need to be aligned with, I am
I feel like in the first few years of my career, we took the backseat
Now I feel like we are the change
I'm always going to fight
I'm not scared
I am definitely showing up in a more positive way

I'm exhausted
I'm doing more
I am pushing myself more
I want to be that exemplar
How am I going to do this
How can I support in finding solutions for this
How can I support this teacher in finding solutions for that
I'm there longer
I want to
I have to
I'm showing up longer, there longer
I'm exhausted but it's still positive
I think I try not to focus on those
I think about it as a ship
I'm trying to save the people who are on the edge like, "No, come in!"
I feel good

I think in all of the experiences race has been at the forefront
If I was a white teacher, I would have been feeling that positivity
I would have been recognized for the work that I would do
I would have been valued in a different way
If I were working with a leader of color
I think race is always the most...race is always at the beginning
I can handle it. That's the word, right
I have to prove myself all the time
I always have to do better
I always have to be the best
If I don't do better than the white teachers
I'm just...I'm lost within the space
I'm going to be the model for what I expect others to do
So, I'm doing this
I want to make sure that, whether you're white or Black, you're seeing what excellence is
I was always taught we don't quit
I won't do that

I Poem: Isiah

I just remember how my body felt, when it was at its top peak physical performance loose, strong and free
I'm doing well, whether it be mentally, professionally, in my life personally
I feel like there's nothing that can really hold you down
I was looking for an image that really represented just that open and free feeling where you just feel good
I remember just the way it felt, physically, to be in tip top shape and just being able to soar
I kind of named it unstoppable me

I was trying to decide, when I'm not at my best, is it just a physical thing or is it a depression or is it confusion…a lack of knowledge
I think when I thought about it, when I was trying to figure it out
I kept thinking about when I'm in front of the classroom
I thought about my teaching career and like, "Okay, when did I feel most confident, and what was happening when I didn't feel as confident?"
I think it's when I either had a lack of information and still had to be front-facing my audience
I wasn't prepared, whether it be my fault or whatever the issues are
I didn't feel prepared
I felt hesitant
I was still trying
I wasn't doing my best
I didn't have everything I needed
I think for me, that's what keeps me going is a desire to want to be better
I need to be the one to do it
I try to live by that rule

I started teaching
I was job searching
I didn't get a lot of that training instruction in college
I had to compensate
I had to do a lot of my own preparation, a lot of my own studying
I don't even mean in class
I mean at home in the living room type stuff, going into a bookstore, grabbing books going in the library, just gleaning information from wherever
I hadn't gotten a certification
I was pursuing the teacher's test

I did that, that was done
I had to decide, well, what is it that I really want to teach

I think about the principals and the people who hired me
I just felt like I didn't have direction once I got into the role
I wanted to conquer this
I want to learn how to do this right
I was fixated on it
I know what I wanted to do

I got hired
I came onboard
I was like, all right, all right
I needed to really bring my A-game
I had been contacting publishing companies
I got some books
I had everything, just not enough for everyone
I was trying to figure out what to teach and how to teach it
I was getting coaching
I was given what I needed too late to get started
I was building the airplane while I'm falling out of the sky
I put in a lot
I didn't sleep a lot for the first two years
I lost weight
I was still, you know, trying to figure some things out
I was constantly asking
I was verbally asking for
I had this one question I'd ask all the time
I had asked that question about a hundred times
I was like, man, why is it so hard to just

I'm going to say like that was probably more of a breakthrough moment
I could step back
I'm seeing this work, it's working
I need it more though, you know
I had to do so much to get to that point where it was like, it wasn't sustainable
I was worried
I got to squeeze so hard to get like a drop of juice out of this fruit
I felt like I had to squeeze five or 6 oranges for that one good juice

I had a second breakthrough moment
I had been aiming to reach all those years
I did it
I did a reset
I finally got it
I'll never forget this moment
I was just so proud
I was like, wow, okay
I didn't stop
I felt like I reached a goal that I had set
I felt really confident
I felt good about it

I felt like it was like the business side of the pedagogy
I would spend more time reiterating what I plan to do then putting in that valuable time
into what I actually am going to do
I know it probably was necessary for some other things
I don't know
I'm struggling with it because it's like
I'm struggling with it because it's
I won't say hands off
I was never left alone
I just felt like no one understood really what the struggle was
I felt like I was the sacrificial lamb
I guess, yeah, that sounds so negative, but no, that's it
If I'm going to give feedback and be honest about it, that's where it is
I mean, it's definitely, it is frustrating

I don't know if all of it was all bad
I need to try to figure it out
I don't know, propelling
I think those things are what kept me hungry
I have something to offer even though I have these other weaknesses
I know I have something to offer
I need to work a little harder or seek some more support somewhere else
I feel like a lot of that was also the reason why I grew
I'm definitely going to be a better teacher
I never had any doubt with that

I need some more content help

I don't want to make it sound like a lot of the things that I was being taught was a waste
I was still
I was sacrificing a lot at home and a lot of my own sleep
I just wanted to be able to do what I wanted to do
I was hired to do a job
I really couldn't afford to relax
I think there's a lot of other things connected to that, race and gender and all those things
I don't want to be the only person who seems to be struggling here
I just felt I always had to be careful about how I asked for support
I felt I had to go through A through Z on my own first before I went and asked for help
I don't know, it's a silencing
I was always second guessing, like maybe doubting myself
I get mad with myself with that, speaking up
I felt like I was kind of like the only one
I didn't trust everybody, but you know what I mean, it's just like fear of being judged

I remember this, and this was probably the first time I actually opened my mouth
I had five periods that I was teaching
I had two preps
I would teach in period one, two, three, four and in period six
I ended up teaching their fifth period
I was doing detention
I ended up teaching six periods
I was supposed to go right from detention, right to PD
I remember when I finished detention, PD was running upstairs
I was on my way up the steps
I'm not going
I remember I was on the stairwell
I leaned on the railing
I was like, I'm not going
I turned back
I was doing that, you know
I hadn't said anything
I was like, nah, that was it…but it has to come to that though, you know
I kind of get angry at myself…why do I have to wait
I've been trying to get better at doing that, making sure that when I need something that I speak

I feel much better
I feel much better where I am now than where I was

I feel like if I were to go back with this mindset
I would do a lot of things different
I would definitely have a lot more to say
I think I just didn't always know what needed to be said
I felt like it was not safe all the time to just put it out there…you're always in protect yourself, mode, you know
I worked just harder and harder
I was staying up later
I would over plan, if that's even a thing
I would just have too many things that I thought I needed to do
I was trying to get it all in
I just felt like I had to change the world

I Poem: Harriet

I'm going to start with the negative
I always like to think about teaching, or my purpose in teaching, about being windows and mirrors for my students
I was thinking about this
I was thinking about broken glass but also just thinking about finding the beauty in that, and how broken crayons still color
I just was

I still try to find hope in the pain of the systems that are trying to suppress us
I do really just think that education is so
I don't know, liberating and profound and important
I want them to remember that

I think that my current administrator right now, my principal
I really value her
I had a previous principal who, thinking about this shattered glass
I had a student my first year of teaching at my current school who used to break the glass in my classroom all the time
I have real serious issues with this being the lesson we're teaching our boys of color, that they can get away with all these things in a community where your average life expectancy is 35 years old
I was going home every day crying, and nothing was being done about it
I don't think that she was supportive of me or the students in my classroom
I often get into these dynamics with principals about just babying our students
I was like, "I'm not in a place to talk to you about this right now."
I was like, "No, no, no."
I was like, "This isn't what this is about."
I'm telling you I need space
I'll talk to you tomorrow
So yeah, I think dynamics like that

I always have started off with really good relationships with principals
I think that they tend to see a leader in me
I think that she is definitely a passionate, dedicated leader
I think there's something about she also grew up in the neighborhood and went through neighborhood schools
I think that she connects with me in that way
I think she finds ways to connect with all of the teachers in our building

I don't know what you would call that, but
I don't take things personal when I don't agree with her
I try to see her point of view more than I have in past principals
I ease into conversations in a different way with her because we have this mutual respect
for each other
I just think the trust is there and trust is so important in relationships
I feel like it's okay to be vulnerable and open
I'm not afraid to have a conversation with her
I think that's easier to do when your principal's established respect between you
I think it makes me want to be there

I feel like my first principal in the system
I feel like she could not connect with the culture at all
I could not grow as a person or a leader with her
I don't think that she was present as...she was just very absent
I don't know
I was still stressed
I gained a lot of weight
I actually started drinking when I became a teacher, and I drink less now, so
I also think that I complained more than I tried to be actionable, especially my first few
years
I did end up leaving that first school
I probably would have left this school if the principal didn't leave before me
I guess just this feeling of why
I don't know

I definitely think with my principal right now
I respect her so much
I think that she is such a fantastic person and leader
I don't know which comes first
I do think that community is so important, but having poor leadership can definitely
disrupt community
I think it's really hard to put all that burden on one person
I definitely think so

I'm a Black woman
I had a principal of color who I definitely think
I think that she identified as a person of color
I don't know if she thought it was as important as I do
I run a lot of affinity groups

I'm always trying to bring us together and tell us that we need to support each other

I don't think she thought that

I think that she kind of felt like there was only one seat at the table

I just feel like my struggles in education, I guess, are not necessarily just with admin, but with like central office, or the union

I guess it depends on what, again, type of educator you are

I don't know if I would be as impacted by it if I wasn't highly invested in other things, so maybe that's why my mind is there

I think it just makes our lives harder

I'm not mad at my principal

I'm not mad at myself

I'm mad at the fact that nobody's really servicing your needs

I just think that those systems, and the people making those rules

I think you should be able to walk into every school in the same system, and get the same education

I don't know

I definitely think that bigger systems

I think that they make principals' jobs harder

I have to think about that

I don't think I've thought about the connection that I made about teaching a whole child and also valuing the whole teacher

I think it's always important for me to think

I don't know, to focus on

I'll be in front of them, and not blaming my principal, not necessarily blaming the superintendent, but there's just so many other barriers that we have to fight through and get through if we're going to make it

I Poem: George

I chose two different pictures
I chose that one because, at my best, that's how I feel
I'm just in control of everything
I got things under control, things are good and balanced
I'm not at my healthiest, meaning, like overworked, nonstop
I've been mostly at the healthier side in the beginning
I had less responsibility
I just was supporting people
I felt a lot more calm
I go back and forth between the two, and it's more like a balancing act

I didn't have as many expectations
I remember, in my earlier days
I would just do these very mundane things
I knew that I could do more
I wasn't being challenged enough
I was getting frustrated
I didn't feel like I was growing
I just did my job

I started progressing a little bit more
I was like an assistant director at the after school
I was just expected to do more and manage more
I think that, my manager at the time
I think that he was still new at it too
I felt like when those people started coming in
I felt like things got a little bit more stressful
I think there's always some bigger initiative that's going on
I think, at times, they didn't always have the interest of the people who manage the kids
I thought that at times they were good when they... they had the right intentions but the execution wasn't that great

I got my own classroom
I just had the experience from working in the schools
I just did my best
I think that part of it was that they were just really happy to have somebody that seems solid
I don't know

I felt like people are like, "Is this guy going to be able to do it?"
I know that when it's time to do it, we just got to do the thing
I thought that in terms of management, they were good
I've never had anybody who was able to give me feedback on the content
I don't want to just duck everything
I want you to understand what I'm doing so you can give me authentic feedback
I just started seeking out my own, furthering my own education
I didn't always like that
I spent most of my time in a neutral position
I just lived a lie

I wrote down a bunch of words
I wrote down micromanagement
I wrote type A
I wrote inauthenticity
I wrote disinterested
I think inauthenticity and disinterested go hand in hand sometimes
I've said to myself, is this person really interested in what I'm talking about, or are they just checking the box
I would say it makes you feel not validated, I guess
I'll check my boxes too and we'll see each other in two weeks
I think that sums it up

I think with, in terms of feelings, when it comes to my interactions with my supervisor
I just feel more confident to be able to push and say, "Hey, I actually want to talk about this a little bit more."
I know that I have to be strategic
I don't feel some type of way about it
I've been around for a while
I don't really catch feelings
I'm just
I would imagine if nobody validated you or gave you feedback, after a while, you'd probably just want to quit and be like, "Nobody cares about what I do here."

I think we've been deeply overworked
I think that that is a big stressor for a lot of people
I would just say it's the school system, the system really contributes to you wanting to stay or to leave
I think that the system really contributes to even just me personally wanting to stay

I'd say to myself, "You know what, I think I can probably do the same, the same job somewhere else and feel way less stressed about it."
I wasn't fully aware of the structure of how like the internal workings of school happened
I found that everything was very predictable, and it was very structured
I think that a lot of that has been ingrained
I know that's like bigger picture things but in terms of just the day to day
I think that a supervisor makes a huge difference
I've liked my boss
I've liked my supervisor
I've had a lot of different coaches
I think that the leader makes a huge difference
I think right now the leader that I'm working with
I would continue to work with
I think that they could have a deep impact on the school environment and just the overall health of it
I get that
I think that's the deal that you signed up for

I have a lot of feelings about this
I'm like a go-to person or a token person
I would consider myself like the unicorn
I haven't been my full authentic self or showed up
I'd have to code switch or just be different to talk "the teacher talk" or be this professional person
I'm like, "Are they just in this because I'm the token Black […] teacher here?"
I don't know, it's like this weird conundrum
I always feel like I pulled back
I felt like there are times where I've had to switch a lot

I've never shared that with my coach
I've never had the conversation about the racial piece
I don't know if I would
I don't think my coach would understand
I just got to flip the script to be able to connect with people
If I don't, then I lose out on opportunities
I never had that conversation
I've just
I've been doing it for a while
I don't know
I don't think they will completely get it

I've never talked to them about it

I just don't think they'll get it

I've talked to other Black co-workers about it

I just know that there was only one person on this list of supervisors I'd be able to have that conversation with

I never thought of just being like, "Hey, let's talk about this thing."

I don't know how I feel about that

I don't know if I feel bad or good

I feel like that's a weird thing

If I had a Black supervisor, maybe it'd be a different conversation completely

I could have somebody to guide me along

I know that I can have a conversation with them

I respect that

I see somebody that sounds like me and looks like me

I know their story

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter and Flyer

Hi [Participant Name],
I hope this finds you well! I am reaching out to follow up regarding colleagues you mentioned were interested in participating in my study. I am currently in my 3rd year of doctoral work at Lesley University and am enrolled in the Counseling & Psychology department. My program concentration is in Transformative Leadership, Education, and Applied Research.

Re: participation, I would like to partner with interested colleagues in order to learn more about and explore the experiences of Black educators with direct supervisors in public schools. Please see the attached flyer for further initial details. Note: Each interview will likely take 1-2 hours.

I would greatly appreciate you forwarding this email along with the flyer. All interested participants can reply via email or phone (found at the bottom of the flyer). Thank you again for your support!

Be well,

Myisha R. Rodrigues, LMHC, PhD Candidate
Lesley University

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."
~Audre Lorde

BLACK EDUCATORS MATTER

Exploring Black educators' experiences in public schools

- Interviewing Black educators—teachers, counselors, special educators, nurses, etc. currently working in a public school.

- Any self-identified member of the African Diaspora whose majority career experience has been in the United States.

- All ages and genders welcome.

- Required minimum of 3 years of career experience.

- You will receive a token of appreciation for your time.

- If interested, please contact Myisha Rodrigues, LMHC via phone at 781-333-8915 or via email at myabsolutelife@gmail.com.

Appendix C: Pre-Interview Participant Survey

Name:

Age:

Where are you currently employed?

What is your current role?

How many years of professional work experience do you have to date?

Please list any professional certification(s) or licensure you currently hold. Please spell out all acronyms.

What does being Black mean to you? How do you identify with this racial group/designation?

What is your ethnic identity (i.e., Jamaican, Cape Verdean, Ghanaian, Unknown, etc.)?

What is your self-identified gender identity?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Experiences of Black Educators Impacted by Direct Supervisors in Public Schools

Thank you for agreeing to volunteer to participate in this study exploring aspects of your work experience. Myisha R. Rodrigues, LMHC, a doctoral student at Lesley University, will conduct this interview as part of her dissertation requirements. Peiwei Li, PhD, the dissertation chair, will supervise this study, which Lesley University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved.

Your participation will entail an in-depth interview that will be audio/video recorded, which will last approximately 1-2 hours. You may be asked to participate in a follow-up call to discuss your responses further and to clarify findings. All participants will receive *Real Happiness at Work by* Sharon Salzberg as a token of appreciation for your time.

The results of this research will be published in Myisha Rodrigues' dissertation. Direct quotes from your interview may be used to clarify research conclusions. By signing the consent form, you give the researcher permission to use anonymous statements you make during the interview.

By volunteering to be interviewed, you may develop greater insights about the connections between supervision, systemic structure, sustainability, and racial/ethnic culture. No risks are anticipated with your participation in this study. However, you can stop the interview at any time. You may also withdraw from this study either during or after your participation without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, your data will be eliminated from the study and destroyed.

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. The informed consent form will be kept from the interview data. The interview data will be labeled with a number code, and your name and other identifying information will be changed in the write-up of the assignment to protect your identity. All data and information obtained from the study will be kept either on a password protected computer and/or a locked file cabinet and will be destroyed after 5 years.

There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Chairperson at irb@lesley.edu.

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided to you. Please sign both forms, indicating that you have read, understood, and agree to participate in this research. Return one to the researcher and keep the other for your files.

Name of participant (please print) _____

Signature_____ Date_____

Contact Information

Name and address of researcher: Name and address of supervisor:
Myisha R. Rodrigues, LMHC   *Dr. Peiwei Li*
Mrodri18@lesley.edu   pli3@lesley.edu
(781) 333-8915   (617) 868-8987

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Introduction
- ☐ Begin with a brief pulse check on their day as an informal 5-minute check-in and orient them to the interview space
- ☐ Overview of my research purpose and questions
- ☐ Review how we will spend our time
- ☐ Provide "Real Happiness at Work" by Sharon Salzberg as a token of appreciation for their time

Part A: Review Images
- ☐ Revisit my explanation for requesting the images representing the thriving and challenged self
- ☐ Provide the participant with an opportunity to share the significance and meaning of their pictures. Explain that they may be asked to identify which picture(s) best represents their embodied experience at different points in the interview.

Observation Notes: Intro/Part A--Review Images

Part B: Initial Question w/ Topics
- ☐ **Lead Question:** I would like to learn about an impactful experience you've had with a supervisor/manager/coach?

- ☐ **Impact of Systems & Environment** (i.e., school culture, values/beliefs, norms): How would you describe the systems/structures in which you have thrived or been challenged? How are you generally impacted by environments that have these qualities? In what work environment do you feel you can be your healthiest/best self? The unhealthiest version of yourself? What does this look like?

- ☐ **Impact of supervisor traits, skills, ID, and experience:** From your work experience, what leadership qualities do you or don't you admire in past or current supervisors? What qualities do you feel have impacted that dynamic in a healthy way? Unhealthy way? How would you say the previously mentioned environmental qualities impact the dynamic between you and your supervisor(s)?

- ☐ **Impact of race/ethnicity:** How do feel your race has played a part in the previous or current work relationships you have identified with supervisors?

How has your understanding of your racial identity impacted your experience(s)? Your lens? What role has spirituality played in your experiences and sustainability if any?

☐ **Trends in job satisfaction and sustainability:** How has this impacted your productivity? Job satisfaction? Decision to stay or leave?

Observation Notes: Part B--Initial Question w/ Topics

Part C: Transition to End of Interview
☐ That was really impactful for me to listen to. I'm honored and privileged. Thank you.
☐ Was there anything I didn't ask that you wish I had or that you wish you could have talked more about? Why?
☐ If you had to use descriptive words to identify what this experience was like for you, what would you say?
☐ Has this sparked any action you may want to make moving forward? If so, what? If not, what's influencing that?
☐ **End**--Thank you!

Observation Notes: Part C—Transition to End of Interview

Researcher Memo:

Note: The observation notes were a full page as well as space for the researcher memo.

Appendix F: MAXQDA Codebook: ECA

2 Actions = Fuel Healthy Sense of Self
2.1 Action_BLK educator more open to + super
2.2 Action_ BE saying no to protect boundaries & wellness
2.3 Action_able to bring authentic self to work
2.4 Action_admin recognize/value BE potential
2.5 Action_Agency/choice
2.5.1 Action_chose to leave school
2.6 Action_BE advocacy for equitable decision making
2.7 Action_BE transparency with youth
2.8 Action_BE build community
2.9 Action_BE communicate vision for job growth
2.10 Action_determination
2.11 Action_job satisfaction/impact decision to stay at job
2.12 Action_mindful, observant, cautious
2.13 Action_present self in a positive way
2.14 Action_solutions oriented
2.15 Action_super advocating for educator needs
2.16 Action_super = open, willing to help, takes accountability
2.17 Action_super = ownership, follow through
2.18 Action_super = transparent communication
2.19 Action_super = actively invested in well-being
2.20 Action_using images to guide well-being assessment
2.21 Action_W super defers to BE
3 Actions = Fuel Unhealthy Sense of Self
3.1 Action_super not present in work and supervision
3.2 Action_super = putting up a hopeful front (unhealthy)
3.3 Action = not authentic self = low investment
3.4 Action_admin choosing to maintain whiteness over diversity
3.5 Action_admin ignore BE educators (literally)
3.6 Action_admin lacking directive coaching
3.7 Action_admin overworking - impact boundaries
3.8 Action_avoid unpredictable supervisors
3.9 Action_BE code switching/assimilate to appease white leadership

3.10 Action_cautious behavior with unpredictable super

3.11 Action_creating intentional value for self w/ super

3.12 Action_educator student support persists despite lack

3.13 Action_puts up defenses to prepare for white interactions

3.14 Action_rumenating, lost sleep

3.15 Action_super = exert power inequitably

3.16 Action_super blaming & villainizing BE = educator stress

3.17 Action_BE taking on a lot at once

3.18 Action_unable to bring genuine self to work/leads to shutdown

3.19 Action_white supremacy culture in BE career transitions

4 Beliefs About Job/School

4.1 Leads to Decreased Sustainability

4.1.1 Belief_leaders with greater systemic power > staff voice

4.1.2 Beliefs_poor dynamics w/ system/admin > joy students

4.1.3 Belief_wellness as a focus = deprioritized

4.1.4 Belief_PD needs to directly impact & improve educator skill/SJ

4.1.5 Belief_when culture & system clash = difficult

4.1.6 Beleif_schools lacking arts = dehumanizing

4.1.7 Belief_lack of resources - impacts well-being

4.1.8 Belief_lack of authenticity/autonomy = - impact sustainability

4.2 Family & Community

4.2.1 Belief_inconsistency in school system/culture = broken home

4.2.2 Belief_School is like home...teaching like parenting

4.2.3 Belief_family involvement in student development = important

4.3 Leads to Increased Sustainability

4.3.1 Belief_resources balances out - factors

4.3.2 Belief_space to be valued, recognized, and heard important

4.3.3 Belief_growth & progress is important

4.3.4 Belief_sustainability/longevity is important

4.3.5 Belief_workplace should allow authentic self

4.3.6 Belief_divine intervention influence sustainability

4.3.7 Belief_comradiere = important

4.3.8 Belief_schools should foster well-being

4.3.9 Belief_teaching is dynamic = attunement

4.3.10 Belief_the arts = humanizing force

4.3.11 Belief_being part of a collaborative team = important

4.3.12 Belief_whole person approach = thrive = important

5 Beliefs About Race/Equity/Social Justice

  5.1 General Statement re: Racism/School

  5.1.1 Belief_superficial cultural traditions = not grounded

  5.1.2 Belief_separating family & community from school kills culture

  5.1.3 Belief_school boards should represent the students/families

  5.1.4 Belief_to be an anti-racist school = examine the foundation

  5.1.5 Belief_racism has many layers, requires rigorous PD

  5.1.6 Belief_schools w/ anti-racist mission = ^ staff sustainability

  5.1.7 Belief_school mission aligned w/ social justice = important

  5.1.8 Belief_commitment to anti-racist praxis not = actions

  5.1.9 Belief_well resourced schools are valued across race

  5.1.10 Belief_levels of racism are bound in the spiritual

  5.1.11 Belief_race is a social construct

  5.1.12 Belief_racism will not change

  5.2 Impact on BE/Blackness Centered

  5.2.1 Belief_it's harder for BE than non-Black

  5.2.2 Belief_code switching needed to survive at work

  5.2.3 Belief_darker skin color influences negative perception

  5.2.4 Belief_racist exp impact longevity when school culture -

  5.2.5 Belief_race & culture impact dynamic with supervisor

  5.2.6 Belief_racism in and out of work = unhappy/unhealthy

  5.2.7 Belief_class difference leads to split cultural identity

  5.2.8 Belief_w/in group discord/joy more intense than between group

  5.2.9 Belief_intentional diversified hiring = more BIPOC staff

  5.2.10 Belief_racial dysfunction requires truth speaking

  5.2.11 Belief_Hx of racial injustice = work is politicized

  5.2.12 Belief_BIPOC staff not being promoted as they should

  5.2.13 Belief_school system not set up for BE growth

  5.2.14 Belief_impact trans-Atlantic slave trade US > Africa

  5.3 Impact of Whiteness/Whiteness Centered

  5.3.1 Belief_teacher demographics don't rep student demo + district

  5.3.2 Belief_white educators need to challenge their racism

  5.3.3 Belief_white educators need to equip B&B students for racism

5.3.3.1 Belief_majority white hiring pool = difficult diversify staff

5.3.4 Belief_white educators threatened by within grp dynamics

5.3.5 Belief_supporting whiteness as the status quo = unacceptable

5.3.6 Belief_to be anti-racist admin need to concede power

5.3.7 Belief_priviledging white ways of being = - on education

5.3.8 Belief_white leadership = microaggressions on BE

5.3.9 Belief_choosing whiteness = - outcomes

5.3.10 Belief_class impacts within race dynamics

5.3.11 Belief_white supremacy culture = white > Black

6 Beliefs About Self

6.1 General Beliefs About Self As Educator

6.1.1 Belief_professionalism is important

6.1.2 Belief_respect from supervsior = important

6.1.3 Belief_role as youth worker = relational, authentic

6.1.4 Belief_Black/Brown people = resilient

6.1.5 Belief_double consciousness

6.1.6 Belief_respecting power = important

6.1.7 Belief_shared racial background = student rapport building

6.1.8 Belief_spirituality influences career trajectory

6.1.9 Belief_supporting Black women is important

6.1.10 Belief_veteran teachers have clout/privilege

6.1.11 Belief_students well = strong reflection of self

6.1.12 Belief_aligning action with supervisor qualities = favorable

6.1.13 Belief_authentic self-actualization at work = important

6.1.14 Belief_career passion

6.1.15 Belief_integrity = important

6.1.16 Belief_destined to teach/family tradition

6.1.17 Belief_educator identity = humility important

6.1.18 Belief_educators have agency = important

6.1.19 Belief_giving back is good

6.1.20 Belief_growth, development, and learning is important

6.1.21 Belief_hard work ethic is valued and necessary

6.1.22 Belief_having a good professional record = important

6.2 Belief_Neg Impact on Sustainability

6.2.1 Belief_super lack commit = educator lack commit

7.1.5 Belief_professionalism = boundaried

7.1.6 Belief_super = can be healthy & unhealthy (nonbinary qualities)

7.1.7 Belief_supportive admin/leadership unheard of

7.2 Neg Beliefs About Supervisors

7.2.1 Belief_poor admin has an effect on well-being

7.2.2 Belief_super can't provide support if system won't

7.2.3 Belief_super's ambition can be unhealthy

7.2.4 Belief_super = inauthentic = can't trust good interactions

7.2.5 Belief_super w/ lack of stability = hectic

7.2.6 Belief_admin unsupportive = broken promises

7.2.7 Belief_super - quality = limited/ineffective coaching

7.2.8 Belief_super didn't provide effective coaching

7.2.9 Belief_unhealthy super = inauthentic educator

7.2.10 Belief_super = not taking responsibility unhelpful

7.2.11 Belief_super - quality = sabotage educators

7.2.12 Belief_super define academic success by white standards

7.2.13 Belief_super = taking advantage of BE work ethic

7.2.14 Belief_super = micromanage & lack trust per: implicit bias

7.2.15 Belief_super - attitude = - experience

7.2.16 Belief_binary authoritative/democratic leadership = unhealthy

7.2.17 Belief_super = manipulate, control unhealthy/unhelpful

7.2.18 Belief_super quality - = actions from white guilt

7.2.19 Belief_super - quality = not valuing wellness

7.3 Pos Beliefs About Supervisors

7.3.1 Belief_trust w/ super = important

7.3.2 Belief_supers must provide content specific coaching

7.3.3 Belief_admin actions align w/ words = important

7.3.4 Belief_being held accountable is important

7.3.5 Belief_being transparent is important

7.3.6 Belief_collaboration b/w educators and supers is important

7.3.7 Belief_super = credentialed exp = important

7.3.8 Belief_supers should take whole/person centered approach, empathy

7.3.9 Belief_super ability to relate to teacher = important

7.3.10 Belief_super culturally aware = important

7.3.11 Belief_super support = providing materials/resource

7.3.12 Belief_super value & respect = important

7.3.13 Belief_super decision making supersedes likability

7.3.14 Belief_super + quality = passionate, dedicated

7.3.15 Belief_super + quality = fun, experimental

7.3.16 Belief_supportive admin = pos experience = inc sustainability

7.3.17 Belief_super + quality = advocating for educator needs

7.3.18 Belief_super + quality = strong network/well connected/charisma

7.3.19 Belief_super + quality = fundraising/getting resources

7.3.20 Belief_super + quality = organized

7.3.21 Belief_super + quality = visionary

7.3.22 Beleif_super + quality = be present & genuinely know community

7.3.23 Belief_super = honest, transparent = grounding exp

7.3.24 Belief_super + quality = honest, provide feedback, celebrate

7.3.25 Belief_super + quality = listen

7.3.26 Belief_super + quality = supportive

7.3.27 Belief_super + quality = knowledgeable/teaching experience

7.3.28 Belief_super +quality = critical thinker, mindful

7.3.29 Belief_super + quality = collaborative/value teacher input

8 Feelings = Fuel Healthy Sense of Self

8.1 Feeling_powerful = worthwhile, valuable, successful

8.2 Feeling_peaceful = thankful

8.3 Feeling_joyful = cheerful, energetic, optimistic, hopeful

8.4 Feeling_joyful = hopeful, creative, stimulating, excited

8.5 Feeling_peaceful = content, secure, relaxed

8.6 Feeling_peaceful = secure, content, trusting, thankful

8.7 Feeling_powerful = proud, important, confident, successful

9 Feelings = Fuel Unhealthy Sense of Self

9.1 Feeling_mad = angry, hostile, frustrated

9.2 Feeling_mad = critical, skeptical

9.3 Feeling_mad = angry, hurt, frustrated

9.4 Feeling_mad = hurt, distant

9.5 Feeling_mad = frustrated, irritated

9.6 Feeling_sad = depressed, apathetic, tired

9.7 Feeling_sad = helpless, discouraged, insignificant

9.8 Feeling_sad = lonely, isolated, inferior

9.9 Feeling_Sad = remorseful, guilty
9.10 Feeling_Sad = tired, ashamed, guilty
9.11 Feeling_scared = discouraged
9.12 Feeling_scared = anxious, helpless
9.13 Feeling_scared = rejected, insignificant, insecure, inadequate
9.14 Feeling_scared = anxious, overwhelmed
10 Interview Reflection
10.1 Interviewer reflection_impact of white female leadership
10.2 Interview Reflection_psychopolitical validity
10.3 Interview Reflections_impact of Black researcher on interview
10.4 Interview Reflection_release, eye opening, thoughtful, +
10.5 Interview Reflections_re-activated support son in school
10.6 Interview Reflection_the divine/spiritual in the interview
10.7 Interview Refletion_equip B&B students to combat racism
10.8 Interview Reflection_disrupt white supremacy culture in schools
10.9 Interview Reflection_reframe stereotype of Black Dean
10.10 Interview Reflections_validating, affirming
10.11 Interview Reflections_reflective, therapeutic
10.12 Interview Reflection_super dynamic as superstructure
10.13 Interview Reflection_super impact on well-being = important
10.14 Interview Reflection_relevatory, thought provoking
10.15 Interview Reflection_I needed that
10.16 Interview Reflection_create cathartic space for Black Educators
10.17 Interview Reflection_cathartic = helpful, release
10.18 Interview Reflection_enjoyed
10.19 Interview Reflection_leverage this data toward change
11 Nonverbal = Represent negative energy
11.1 Nonverbal_eye widened, adjusted voice, hand gesture
11.2 Nonverbal_exhale, slouch down
11.3 Nonverbal_looking side to side, crouching torso
11.4 Nonverbal_shoulder shrug
11.5 Nonverbal_inhale, exhale
11.6 Nonverbal_air quotes
11.7 Nonverbal_patted self on the back
11.8 Nonverbal_wringing hands/intertwined fingers

11.9 Nonverbal_shaking head back & forth no

11.10 Nonverbal_face exp shifted from smiling to serious

11.11 Nonverbal_hand chopped forward with force

11.12 Nonverbal_leaned back and wrapped arm around stomach

11.13 Nonverbal_silence looked into camera

11.14 Nonverbal_fists balled in the air as if fighting

11.15 Nonverbal_arms open wide carry weight

11.16 Nonverbal_open hand > fist clenched shaking in air

11.17 Nonverbal_head down, fists facing each other

11.18 Nonverbal_fists > open palms facing each other

11.19 Nonverbal_slapping one hand/fist inside the other

11.20 Nonverbal_slight shrug

11.21 Nonverbal_hands in sleeves opposite arm

11.22 Nonverbal_slight laughter

11.23 Nonverbal_exhaled

11.24 Nonverbal_straight faced expression

11.25 Nonverbal_leaned forward

11.26 Nonverbal_shook head, shrugged shoulders

11.27 Nonverbal_took the pose of herself in distress then laughed

11.28 Nonverbal_fist, slammed fist

11.29 Nonverbal_smirk

11.30 Nonverbal_hands opened, stiffened

11.31 Nonverbal_smiling no teeth

11.32 Nonverbal_frowning, eyes closed, shaking head

11.33 Nonverbal_frown and shrug shoulders

11.34 Nonverbal_calm demeanor

11.35 Nonverbal_looking out of the corner of her eye

11.36 Nonverbal_frown, hand/arm gestures inward

11.37 Nonverbal_pauses in speech and face

11.38 Nonverbal_pointing

11.39 Nonverbal_hand gesture level, unleveled

11.40 Nonverbal_arm pulled downward toward chest

11.41 Nonverbal_arms, shoulders tightened inward

11.42 Nonverbal_facial expression

11.43 Nonverbal_face, neck shake

11.44 Nonverbal_face expression

11.45 Nonverbal_re-enacting being a little girl, crying

11.46 Nonverbal_hand gestures with speech (2)

11.47 Nonverbal_animated mocking

11.48 Nonverbal_rolled eyes

11.49 Nonverbal_neck shaking

11.50 Nonverbal_arms back and forth

11.51 Nonverbal_slapping leg while talking

11.52 Nonverbal_hand raised to frame forehead and face

11.53 Nonverbal_face, neck shake, torso lean

11.54 Nonverbal_full body w/ face = anxious + scared

11.55 Nonverbal_face = scrunched up like the grinch

11.56 Nonverbal_side eye + shoulder shrug (2)

11.57 Nonverbal_facial/hands emphasize impact of trauma

11.58 Nonverbal_deep breath taken when talking about baggage

11.59 Nonverbal_face_slight smile and pulled it back

11.60 Nonverbal_face_squinting and shaking head left/right

11.61 Nonverbal_neck/torso_leaned forward and shook neck

11.62 Nonverbal_neck gesture_shaking head and neck

11.63 Nonverbal_head/hands_shaking no

12 Nonverbal = Represent positive energy

12.1 Nonverbal_squinting eyes

12.2 Nonverbal_gesture and away and toward the body

12.3 Nonverbal_eyes widened

12.4 Nonverbal_frowning

12.5 Nonverbal_strong energy

12.6 Nonverbal_tone of voice

12.7 Nonverbal_shaking head no positive

12.8 Nonverbal_fists separate and shaking w/ smile

12.9 Nonverbal_open, curved hand upward

12.10 Nonverbal_smile

12.11 Nonverbal_moving arms to mimic feeling

12.12 Nonverbal_sitting back in her chair

12.13 Nonverbal_playing with hair

12.14 Nonverbal_sarcastic smiles combined with straight faced

12.15 Nonverbal_head tilted down looked up over glasses for emphasis

12.16 Nonverbal_looked directly at interviewer to emphasize point

12.17 Nonverbal_laughter

12.18 Nonverbal_smilled, stuck tongue out, laughed

12.19 Nonverbal_leaned forward, mmhm

12.20 Nonverbal_clutched her hands together close to chest, smile

12.21 Nonverbal_tapped on the table 3X to emphasize meaning

12.22 Nonverbal_hand/arms gesture balancing

12.23 Nonverbal_mind blown gesture

12.24 Nonverbal_leaning toward the interviewer, sitting back in chair

12.25 Nonverbal_turn in chair to face body toward interview

12.26 Nonverbal_laughter

12.27 Nonverbal_turning head more toward interviewer

12.28 Nonverbal_turned to face interviewer

12.29 Nonverbal_adjusting in chair after interviewer

12.30 Nonverbal_big smile

12.31 Nonvernal_leaning forward

12.32 Nonvebral_eyebrows, eyes

12.33 Nonverbal_titled and shook head, no blink

12.34 Nonverbal_laughter

12.35 Nonverbal_arms and face serious, emphatic

12.36 Nonverbal_hand gestur enad face smile/eyes

12.37 Nonverbal_frown, looking upward to the right

12.38 Nonverbal_stretched

12.39 Nonverbal_arms & hands flow back and forth

12.40 Nonverbal_face, arms, torso lifted and dropped

12.41 Nonverbal_breath, torso shift downward (2)

12.42 Nonverbal_face expression (2)

12.43 Nonverbal_exhaled (2)

12.44 Nonverbal_calm energy (2)

12.45 Nonverbal_face + torso raised

12.46 Nonverbal_raised eyebrows and shrug (2)

12.47 Nonverbal_smirk

12.48 Nonverbal_shoulders/arms/hands quickly back & forth with shrugs

12.49 Nonverbal_face/arm_head hand arm signal end

12.50 Nonverbal_face_slight laugh, shrug shoulders, lean forward

12.51 Nonverbal_face_squinting/reminiscing

12.52 Nonverbal_arm/Hhnd movement_openness & visceral taking in joy

12.53 Nonverbal_face_big smile

12.54 Nonverbal_face_smile

12.55 Nonverbal_face_smile w/ emphasized head tilt

12.56 Nonverbal_face/hand_smile, shake head, hands hold & wipe face

12.57 Nonverbal_torso/hand_shrugged shoulders, leaded forward

12.58 Nonverbal_face/head_lowered head, closed eyes

12.59 Nonverbaltorso/face lifted up, arms firm, directive hand, squint8

12.60 Nonverbal_torso_leaded to the side, extend arms w hand emphasis

12.61 Nonverbal_face/head_smile with head shake

12.61.1 Nonverbal_face/hands_smile, hands moving in targeted directions

12.62 Nonverbal_face/hands_slight smile, rewind hands gesture

12.63 Nonverbal_face/shoulders_smile, head shake, shrug

12.64 Nonverbal_torso/hands_shifted left gestured with hand forward

12.65 Nonverbal_hands_right forward and left sideways on table

13 School Culture

13.1 School Culture_super = can make + impact if system -

13.2 School Culture_super white urgency = racist actions/intentions

13.3 School Culture_work not valued by administration

13.4 School Culture_admin not able create sustainable systems - impact

13.5 School Culture_loopholes create inconsistency in accountability

13.6 School Culture_atiquated rules and paradigms

13.7 School Culture_lacking BIPOC diversity

13.8 School Culture_data driven approach to learning/decision making

13.9 School Cutlure_predominantly white staff & leadership

13.10 School Culture_set boundaries on time

13.11 School Culture_district & admin vet status shape culture

13.12 School Culture_shaped by institutionalized racism

13.13 School Culture_hierarchy = old boys club, unhealthy competition

13.14 School Culture_overworking = valued

13.15 School Cutlure_chaotic, lacking efficiency

13.16 School Culture_whole-person approach, wellbeing valued

13.17 School Culture_toxic & dysfunctional

13.18 School Culture_divided, avoidant, lack of trust due to admin
13.19 School Culture_fun traditions = build community, sustainability
13.20 School Culture_focus on DEI impactful & important
13.21 School Culture_clear school systems and structures +
13.22 School Culture_connectedness among BIPOC staff and BIPOC allies
13.23 School Culture_safety in school environment/trauma informed
13.24 School Culture_teambuilding, affirm/open/collaborative community
14 Quotes
15 Embodied Representation BE = Black educator Super = supervisor SJ = social justice B&B = Black & Brown