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Strength, Beauty, and Resilience: The Impact of Self Reflection & Exploration of Memory on Postmodern Feminist Educators, Inside and Outside the Classroom

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MaryJo Rosania-Harvie

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By MaryJo Rosania-Harvie

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Dr. Kathleen Stanfa, Committee Chair

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Strength, Beauty, and Resilience: The Impact of Critical Self Reflection & Exploration of Memory on

Postmodern, Feminist Educators, Inside and Outside of the Classroom

By

MaryJo Rosania-Harvie

Kutztown University of PA, 2022

Kutztown, Pennsylvania

Directed by Dr. Kathleen Stanfa

This study utilizes an autoethnographic methodology, informed by narrative inquiry, to explore the impact of memories on feminist educators. The participants in the study included two of the researcher's former colleagues and one former student. The study's goal was to examine how the relationships between researcher and participant and the memories they shared impacted them as educators; in the process, the concept of authenticity in educators was examined in relation to the research and the participants' feminist and postmodern approach. The researcher collected qualitative data through interviews, personal journals, timelining, and an epistolary writing exercise to define authenticity and explore the characteristics of feminist and postmodern educators. The data highlighted the most important traits found in these educators and the researcher's characteristics to examine how these traits developed through a lifetime of educational experiences. Rooted in a feminist leadership theoretical framework and framed by postmodernism and educator critical reflection, the study highlights how critical reflection of memories is meaningful for educators; it enables them to make deeper connections with students and colleagues.

Keywords: feminist educator, feminist leadership, postmodernism, postmodern educator, educator authenticity, educator memory, K-12 educational leadership, narrative inquiry, autoethnography

Signature of the Investigator: _____*Mary Jo Rosania-Harvie*_____ 5/4/2022

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my partner in life, Daniel, his support, kindness, and ability to help me sift

through the messy contents of my brain have been essential to this journey.

To Henry, my child, and my heart. I do this work so that you and all young people like you, can

experience more supportive and patient schools and communities, where you can feel love and safety to

develop a love of learning. I am excited about the future because I know you are in it.

To my dearest Cohort Three, we did this together! We grew and transformed even amid a global

pandemic, and I am so honored to know each of you. May we continue to take on the world together.

My mother, for asking the important questions when I was in school and for showing me that it doesn't

always have to be the way it has always been. Thank you for being a brave risk-taker later in life and

making me laugh even when we talk about hard things.

My dissertation Chairperson, Dr. Kathleen Stanfa,

Thank you for your support in this process and for helping me sort out the complexity of this study.

You kept me grounded. Through your enthusiasm, you gave me the confidence to finish this project.

I could not have done this study without my participants and all the beautiful, strong, and resilient

women I have known in my life, including my friends, sisters, and colleagues. Keep being your authentic

selves; the world needs you now more than ever.

Lastly, this work is dedicated to all people who refuse to be satisfied with the status quo.

Artists and all people who are willing to rethink long-held "truths" in all areas of learning - history, art, learning, emotions, and leadership, just to name a few. I am moved and inspired by your ambition, and I am honored to add something meaningful to this conversation.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the Kutztown University faculty who guided me through this Ed.D. program, especially my dissertation committee. During this time, we watched and experienced the world change. Through the most uncertain times in education that we have likely ever experienced, we were in it together, and I will be forever grateful for your guidance, patience, and support.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I: Leadership Context and Purpose of the Action

The Leadership Paradox

Many books exist to help people in positions of authority improve their interpersonal and leadership skills. Most of these manuals give authority figures the tools to "get inside the minds" of those they lead rather than encourage self-reflection to improve relationships. As a teacher and administrator, I have worked with various superintendents, principals, and teachers and noticed a difference between critically reflective educators and those merely doing a job. Critical reflection aligns a person's morals and ethics with their actions, allowing them to become more authentic in their decisions and interactions (Larrivee, 2000). Research on critical reflection asks, what are the benefits for students and schools when educators have a critically reflective practice? Critical reflection is a process by which an educator looks at situations as opportunities for self-reflection, change, and growth. Research on critically reflective *leadership* is less prevalent in the literature than research on critically reflective *teaching.* I believe that reflection is a vital element to move from being a person of authority to a true leader (Linsky, 2020), both in the classroom and as a school leader. For instance, in the typical educational leadership courses, students learn the mechanics of school law, budgetary management, and school change. As a student in these programs, I was rarely encouraged to examine my leadership philosophy and what motivated me to seek a leadership position. Barbara Larrivee's article "Transforming Teaching Practice: Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher" (2000) sets the stage for *teachers* to look at experiences in the classroom as a way to examine personal "beliefs about teaching, learning, and development" (p. 293). This reflective, transformative work can and should apply to school leaders. For this paper, I will define the term "leader" or "school leader" as one who has a position of authority in a setting, either a classroom, school, or family; this includes teachers working with students in their classrooms. To develop their authentic selves, school leaders must take the time and opportunity to reflect on their experience and biases, both positive and negative, to determine what

inspires their desire to make a meaningful change and support their school community as a leader. I will refer to a feminist leadership framework to ground this study. Feminist leaders are described as more emotionally intelligent (Palastini 2013) and lead from the head *and* the heart. Feminist leaders are self-aware and aware of the individuality of those they lead; they consider the community while also supporting the organization's needs (Palastini, 2013). I am interested in how these leadership characteristics develop throughout one's education trajectory and the level of critical reflection enacted by feminist leaders. Critical self-examination will lead an individual to realize that positive and negative experiences leave a lasting impression, whether perceived or actual. Inevitably, past experiences in school form our biases as educators. This study includes autoethnographic research intertwined with the experiences of my participants. Most of the memories that inspired this research may sound negative on the surface to the reader. Still, I have learned through my participants' stories that transformative leaders can reframe negative experiences to make a positive change or enact positive reappraisal (Garland, 2008, Nagoski, E, et al., 2019). As an administrator, I noticed my biases even more when working with students in some of the most intense situations in a school community. Concerning the development of Multiple Intelligences, Thomas Armstrong (2009) explains that these experiences can be "crystallizing" or "paralyzing" (Armstrong, 2009, p. 23), meaning that they can either ignite a spark of interest or squelch the flame of inspiration like a drop of water on a match. The stories of my educational journey contribute to whom I have become as an educator and school leader. Memories shape the teacher and leader I am today. The study includes women in authority positions in the classroom or school where I worked as a supervisor, teacher, or teammate. The participant's stories will communicate the positive and negative experiences and biases that inform their practice.

Consequently, since my participants and I have crossed paths in meaningful ways and are a part of each other's stories, their reflections will inform my reflection. As a colleague or teacher, I contributed to their experiences, and they contributed to mine. In the study, I mapped out three

feminist educators' educational trajectories through timelining and reflective writing to examine where our stories intersected. I also reflected on my own educational experiences. I created an interactive visual timeline by placing events chronologically to visualize the overlaps; this also allowed me to see the events in sequence, which became a powerful way to experience another person's education. The timeline revealed the intersections and divergent moments in our lives. For instance, one participant and I worked at the same school for six years, while another was a student in that school. Our experiences do intersect, and the visual enabled me to dive deeper into how memories shape who we become as educators. The intended outcome was to understand better what experiences influence authenticity and develop these traits in future educators and leaders. The data also supported the importance of educator reflection for personal growth and job satisfaction. Ultimately, students benefit from genuine educators that feel comfortable being themselves in the classroom. Educators choose to stay in the profession when they think they can be their authentic selves (Kelchermans, 2017). Feelings of authenticity can occur through daily critical reflection and a closer examination of the past to acknowledge these events, resulting in more emotionally intelligent educators, leaders, and safer schools for all.

This autoethnographic study began with my specific career-defining memories. One year into my first teaching position, I saw the power of relationships. I started to feel frustrated and disconnected and more concerned with final products and grades, the antithesis of why I became an art teacher. It was not authentic to me, and I felt it physically and mentally. I was losing myself as I conformed to the negative aspects of the school culture, which unfortunately included a strong emphasis on grades, achievements, and standardized test scores over creativity. I clearly remember the day that I made a conscious effort to connect with each student and staff member I interacted with. This process reminded me of the power in individual student voices, the artistic process, and how art can communicate and inspire questions. The gesture may seem simple now, but I did this by mindfully

looking at each student's face and into their eyes every day. Over twenty years later, this remains a defining moment in my career. It started to connect with each student and a reminder to emphasize the creative process and personal expression through the arts and has grown into meaningful conversations with students and teachers, sometimes about profoundly unique and challenging topics. My first school's emphasis on "academic" achievement could have paralyzed me, but rather, it became a crystallizing moment in my career (Armstrong, 2009) and made me the educator I am today. There have been similar moments along the way to spark critical self-reflection and recalibrate my thinking so that I can remain true to myself. I reflected on these events in a writing exercise that I carried over into this study. As a student in the course *Transformational Learning Styles and Instructional Design*, taught by Dr. Amy Pfeiler-Wunder at Kutztown University (2020), I crafted a letter to my past self, regarding education. The memories I write about here are included in this letter.

I adapted the writing exercise and asked participants to construct a timeline and a letter to their past self, based on the events. The defining moments, or memories, contributed to my identity formation. Understanding how I viewed and experienced education throughout my lifetime largely contributes to my interest in critical reflection and feminist leadership.

The following is an example of a significant memory from my letter:

> *In fourth grade, I struggled to retain information in math; this was also the first time I was assigned a seat in the back of the classroom. Trying to problem-solve the situation, my mother asked the teacher to move my seat to the front of the classroom to see if this would help. I can vividly recall handing my teacher a handwritten note from my mother. When she read the note, my teacher responded - verbally to me - "if you are bad at math, it doesn't matter where you sit."*

This moment is burned into my memory in a way that has been quite paralyzing for most of my life. As a result, when I became a teacher, I formed my vision of students based on their strengths and not what others saw as limitations. As an art teacher, I created a classroom that gave each student agency and voice in their work and celebrated, acknowledged, and met them at the entry point to guide them toward a goal. The negative experience in fourth grade heightened my awareness that each student is an individual. Therefore, this research explores the impact of memories of the participant's educational trajectory, focusing on crystallizing and paralyzing moments (Armstrong, 2009). The participants I chose for this study strive to build a rapport with those around them. In my experience of them, I know that they are self-reflective. These are characteristics akin to *feminist leadership*. This study will address the parallels between feminist leadership and postmodern educators. I will dive deeper into each educator's past to discover and unpack the experiences shaping who they are today. In addition to the central research puzzles:

- How does a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of school, contribute to their authentic and feminist leadership style?
- How does being an authentic educator affect who we are in our personal and professional lives?

I also sought to answer these secondary questions:

- In what ways was the ability to build rapport gained through life experience?
- How do experiences make an impact?
- How does the educator's life experience influence her development?

There was a time that I did not understand the effect my memories of school had on my work as an educator. It was through critical self-reflection that I realized how experiences evolve into philosophy. I gathered the stories of three feminist educators I know and have interacted with at

different stages in their careers. Initially, the goal was to highlight and learn from my influence on them; as the research progressed, I realized they also significantly impacted me. Using the timeline, I saw common threads in our experiences. The timeline also demonstrated the differences in our paths. I sought to understand myself as a teacher and leader and how a person's educational trajectory plays a role in their critical reflection and the development of educator authenticity. The study is unique because the participants and I have been a part of each other's stories, and they were purposely selected because of this. I reflected on the moments where each participant impacted me and their impact through data collection and analysis. I found that *crystallizing* and *paralyzing* (Armstrong, 2009) moments in our past contribute to who we have become as educators.

Through the participant's stories, I will seek to define the meaning of *authenticity* to an educator.

As an artist, I am interested in how others shape and perceive identity. My work has explored and questioned how society defines or perceives the "feminine." People's stories shape their identities and teach us about ourselves. The data included each participant's unique journey and the layers that contributed to who they are today. The study engages three feminist educators through story and memory to discover what education means to them, how experiences contribute to this meaning, and how a feminist educator/leader defines "authenticity." Rooted in feminist leadership theory, I did this research to enable current and future educators, particularly feminist leaders, to feel authentic from the beginning of their careers. My goal is to foster the diverse identities, connections, emotional awareness, and community-oriented spirit of feminist leadership. Students benefit from teachers and school leaders who acknowledge bias and value and recognize each student as a complex, multifaceted, unique being capable of anything. Teachers and leaders who model this for their students create safe classrooms and schools. I aim to encourage critical reflection for educators to shift how we define leaders, away from the authoritative, transactional, and charismatic character to one who leads - unafraid of vulnerability

and emotion. Authentic, transformative educators will change the institutional systems and cultures to make them safer and more inclusive.

Researcher Positionality

The positionality statement in this section was developed in the reflective letter to self that was adapted as a data collection tool in this study (Appendix E).

I grew up in suburban New Jersey as a white, cisgender, heterosexual woman born in the 1970s. The town where I was raised and went to school was a predominately white, middle-class community. I am the youngest of four children born to blue-collar parents, both born in the 1940s, and raised in a city in New Jersey. The city where they lived experienced race riots and gentrification over the past fifty to sixty years, and my family lived there from the time my parents were married until 1972, two years before my birth. My parents were educated, my mom attended a catholic high school, and my father attended a public high school; both graduated from high school and did not attend college. My mother did return to school when I was in high school, first to become a nurse, later changing to early childhood. She then became a preschool teacher. My father went from law enforcement to working in the family business, then back to law enforcement until retirement. He passed away January, 2021 from COVID-19.

My parents started a family when they were in their early 20s, and I am the youngest of four children born between 1963 and 1974. My parents placed importance on my siblings and me getting an education over everything else. However, they struggled to support this value, and I felt mainly on my own with the school, except for my mom intervening in middle school when I had a questionable social studies teacher; she came to the school and observed the class to advocate for a schedule change. She was also involved in the PTA and attended school events and field trips. As a teenager, I was confused by their emphasis on school and the minimal guidance. This paradox gave me the impression that I had to be self-sufficient, and when I couldn't be, it meant I was not a good student.

In 1972, when my parents and siblings moved from the city to the suburbs, we all attended a tiny suburban school district that consisted of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. I graduated with 146 classmates, some of whom I went to school with for twelve years and others for seven. Two of my siblings fit into society's intelligence norms. Both earned good grades and scored well on standardized tests. My oldest sister and I were average students and more artistically inclined. I struggled to find a niche in school where I could be successful, except when given hands-on projects and experiments. In the 1980s and 90s, when I was in school, these areas were less valued, although I had a few teachers who encouraged creativity, and when they did, I had a compelling and affirming experience with them.

One instance was in a middle school science class. My classmates and I were assigned to create a presentation poster. I decided to draw the entire alphabet in sign language for the assignment. I carefully studied my hand to draw each letter. I remember feeling proud of my work, and my teacher was equally complementary and supportive. As a child, the biggest compliment was when a teacher asked to keep a project as an example, and my science teacher requested to keep my poster. It was one of those moments when I thought, "*this could not possibly be for a grade*," but it was. Eventually, my sister and I both pursued the arts, she studied dance, and I studied visual arts, and later we both became educators. My sister left her dance program to pursue early childhood and elementary education, and I studied art and later art education. I have many vivid memories of school like the one recounted above, both positive and negative, or *crystallizing and paralyzing* (Armstrong, 2009), that shape who I am as a student, educator, and leader. As the fourth child in a small school system, I experienced teacher-imposed expectations that were casually mentioned to me each year by teachers. I had to work harder than my siblings before me, and I struggled with school academics. It was not until I became the mother of a child with ADHD that I saw parallels between the two of us. My son's school experiences, although different, mirrored some of my own, and at 46, I sought my ADHD diagnosis. Being a parent changed my

life for so many reasons, and interestingly my son came of school age the same year I became a school administrator. His journey was tremendously influential to my leadership style and vital in my story as an educator. My son helped me discover that I had a reason for my struggle in school, but I also began to see students and colleagues differently. It caused me to reflect on my past experiences to be a better advocate for students and their families.

As an art teacher, I had a strong desire to focus on the individual to hear each student's unique voice. Early on in my career, I made a conscious effort to acknowledge the individuals in my classroom and meet each student at that moment. Still, my son's experiences in concert with my moving from teacher and supervisor to dean of students, assistant principal, and principal, and eventually leaving public education, significantly influenced my empathy for students and their families. At the start of this study, I was the artistic leader and principal at an audition-based regional public charter school for the arts. Before going to this school, I was a teacher and the supervisor of fine and performing arts and electives at a public high school in a different state. My study participants represent individuals I worked with during the past twenty years in education. One participant was a colleague when I was a supervisor, and I also evaluated her as her supervisor. The second was a former student who is now a teacher, and the third was a colleague at my last district. I was not this individual's direct supervisor, but I was her instructional leader. She is now in a leadership position, and I am no longer at the school. I will elaborate more on the participants in Chapter III.

My path to educational leadership was neither direct nor traditional. As a new teacher, I earned my Master's Degree in Fine Arts, and after completing four leadership courses, I was certified as a supervisor. I was in my seventh year of teaching art in a large suburban school district at a job I loved when an art supervisor position opened at a neighboring school. I applied, not planning to leave my current teaching position. It was impossible to say no when I was offered the position with a significant salary increase because the position offered me financial stability. I took the new job, which included

teaching art and supervising four art teachers, completing teacher evaluations, and updating the art

curriculum. Over the ten years I was there, the position evolved to include supervising and evaluating

over twenty-five teachers in five departments in two schools, all while teaching art classes. No matter

how hard I tried, it was near impossible to maintain connections with students or colleagues or

collaborate with anyone in this position. The district leadership at the school was top-down, and the arts

and electives were undervalued. To graduate, students were required to earn five credits of fine,

performing, or practical arts, which could easily happen in one year. The position made me question if I

belonged in leadership because my work did not feel valued. I continued to work hard to maintain

connections with the teachers I supervised and the students I taught, but I felt divided between two

roles. Therefore, the innovation and creativity I loved as a teacher fell second to checking tasks off a list;

this made me feel disconnected and unhappy. The thing that kept me going was my team's praising me

for supporting them. They said that I set high but clear expectations as a leader. I knew that we needed

to uphold high standards if we were going to be respected as artists and teachers. Although I questioned

my decision to go into leadership back then, I still felt drawn to it. I felt obligated to do things differently

from the teachers and I ever experienced. As a leader, it can be challenging to make personal and

meaningful connections with colleagues in the process.

Authenticity

I have always struggled when I do not feel I can be my authentic self. Questioning my authenticity has

made it challenging to find my voice as a leader. At the start of this study, I was a school principal, but I

have always felt most comfortable with students because I built pedagogical strategies based on the

students in the room. As a leader, I anticipated a similar experience - I could strategize and connect with

members of the school community. In recent years as a school administrator, I let my guard down

because I felt safe with my team. Still, collaboration became challenging during the COVID-19 shut down

in March of 2020 when we were leading a school remotely through email and virtual meetings.

10

By the end of this study, I left school administration to explore new paths in education.

Strategic thinking is possible when there is time for the leader to pause sit down with stakeholders to collaborate. In my first leadership position as supervisor, I experienced the limiting effects of a toxic administration. Checking items off a list and never making any genuine innovations affected my authenticity. The administration in this district was masculinized, with a top-down achievement-based approach from the district level administrators to the building and department leaders. I became curious if gender played a part in leadership or was leadership style not defined by gender but by philosophy. As a leader, I continually thought back to the defining moment that occurred early in my career, when I decided to be more present with my students to show them my authentic self. I transferred this philosophy to my leadership roles. I vowed to treat each educator I worked with as an individual and allow for vulnerability and compassion in these vital roles. It was not easy because I worked alongside leadership counterparts who had the same job title but did not share my philosophy. As a supervisor, I often felt paralyzed by this; the antidote was being myself with my colleagues and with my students because I was still teaching as a supervisor. I looked for opportunities to feel authentic. When I left this school to take on a full-time administrator role on a team that was mainly female, I was eager to see if there was a difference in leadership style. The environment where I was principal was extremely fast paced, with very little time for reflection. Connections became time-consuming in an environment where time was scarce and taking the time to brainstorm and connect meant something else did not get done.

In my MFA work, I studied feminist art practices and have always considered myself a feminist, so when I learned about feminist leadership, I instantly related to the defining characteristics of this style. The overarching principles of feminist leadership are collaboration, transformation, relationship building, and emotional intelligence (Palastini, 2013). Authors will use different words to describe similar characteristics, and during this study, I will also use a variety of terms to define feminist

leaders/educators. The study participants exhibit these characteristics and have experienced me as a

leader, a teacher, and a school administrator. I chose the participants specifically for these

characteristics and their willingness to be critically reflective practitioners. They were also purposely

selected as individuals that I have interacted with within an educational setting so that they can critically

reflect on my leadership. Authenticity is at the heart of this study. This study aims to connect educator

authenticity and feminist leadership because it is challenging to be collaborative transformational, build

relationships, and demonstrate emotional intelligence if one does not feel like they can be themselves.

Research Puzzles and Hypothesis

Through autoethnographic methods and narrative inquiry, I sought to explore the following research

puzzles (Clandinin, 2013):

- How does a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of

  school, contribute to their authentic and feminist leadership style?

- How does being an authentic educator affect who we are in our personal and professional lives?

I began by defining the participants' understanding and experience of "authenticity" as educators

through personal journal writing to explore these puzzles. Participants reflected on what authenticity

looks and feels like for them. Their reflections defined "authenticity" and discussed how it could be

threatened or cultivated. Participants also created a timeline of defining moments in their education

(Appendix F) and used the timeline to write a Letter to Self (Appendix D) reflecting on their educational

experiences. Using the timelines and letters, I created an interactive timeline (Appendix H) to visualize

the educators' trajectories. I also added my own experiences to the interactive timeline to see where

our paths intersect and examine the data for similarities and differences.

Through this research, I sought to determine if there are indeed impactful moments in a

person's educational journey that are *crystallizing* and *paralyzing* (Armstrong, 2009) and how authentic

educators process, act, and identify due to these memories. I analyzed the data for patterns and

commonalities between me and the participant's stories to determine how critical reflection can help us capitalize on these moments, acknowledge our biases, and grow as educators. I explored how their educational experiences, both positive and negative, inform their career choice and contribute to the collaborative, creative, and emotionally intelligent educators they become.

Research Purpose

Early in my teaching career, I understood the power of relationships and started connecting with students and colleagues to build a healthy classroom and school culture. I always built rapport with students naturally, not because it was prescribed or taught in school. It was not until later I learned about the theory to support this as a valuable practice. Rather than solely studying relational teaching, I attempted to dive deeper into educator memories to discover if experiences make this type of educator and which past experiences shape the educator they become. I am curious why and how this style comes more naturally to some. As I reflected on my stories, I learned that some experiences are essential to my identity.

I listened to the accounts of three other women: a former teaching colleague that I supervised, a former student who is now an educator, and a current school leader and a teacher. The purpose was to examine their educational journeys to discover what shaped who they are today and how I contributed to their stories as educators and leaders. I learned about myself as a teacher and leader as I time lined our experiences, highlighting defining moments in all our positive and negative experiences that shaped the educators we are today.

Rationale & Summary

As an artist and educator, I am interested in identity, people, their stories, where they come from, and how the layers of their lives contribute to who they are in the present. This study allowed me to engage with three educators to discover how they arrived at the place they are today. In the process, I defined authenticity in education. I learned what moments are key along the path of a person's educational

trajectory, because, consciously, they led to the type of educator they became. This research was

framed by feminist leadership theory, critically reflective teaching, and postmodern theoretical thought.

I am doing this research to help future, and current educators and leaders embrace their authenticity

and feel comfortable being their authentic selves from the beginning of their careers, benefitting

educators and the communities they serve.

Terminology

Authenticity - having meaningful relationships, being yourself. "Maintaining coherence between what

you say and what you do" (Ibarra, 2015) but also being flexible, realistic, and honest.

Authentic leadership **-** Authentic leaders lead with their hearts and are open to feedback from those

they lead. They see leadership as action-oriented, put the organization's goals over their gains, and

focus on its long-term mission and vision (Kruse, 2013).

Creativity **-** Use of originality, having original ideas. Having or fostering a creative classroom or school

environment means allowing students to express their views without fear of embarrassment or that

ideas will be "wrong."

Critical reflection **-** a practice that asks people in all fields, in this case, education, to take a step back

from their work and look at every aspect of it from multiple points of view (for instance, in the case of a

teacher, viewing a situation or experience from the perspective of a student, other teachers,

administration, and parents) using various *lenses of perception*.

Crystallizing & paralyzing experiences **-** experiences that, as explained in Armstrong (2017), activate, or

deactivate young people's intelligence(s). These experiences either allow one or more of the Multiple

Intelligence(s) to flourish or shut the intelligence down and stifle its growth.

Multiple intelligences - a theory developed in 1983 at Harvard University by Dr. Howard Gardner. The

theory suggests that "the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing is far too limited"

(Armstrong, n.d.). Dr. Gardner proposed a more comprehensive yet more specific range of criteria for

"intelligences" to "account for the broader range of human potential in children and adults" (Armstrong, n.d.). Intelligences include linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist.

Constructivism - a teaching methodology where the teacher facilitates learning and is not the "all-knowing" being in the room. Students discover as they learn, and a teacher is present as the learning guide or facilitator.

Feminist leadership - is hallmarked by flexibility, modeling by the leader (Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007), emphasizing the individuals within the organization, and less on the power structures. Feminist leadership shares common traits with *Transformational Leadership*.

Transformational Leadership - Transformational leaders work *with* colleagues to build teams for collaborative decision-making. Transformational leaders emphasize the needs of the individual and the good of the organization. They are inspirational, optimistic, and model what they value (Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007).

Transactional Leadership – Where transformational leaders work with or side by side with colleagues to motivate and inspire, transactional leadership is marked by a punishment and reward system. Transactional leaders use positive or negative reinforcement to manage (Chin, 2007).

Postmodernism - although the definition of postmodernism can be complex, for this paper, I will refer to Slattery's (2013) descriptors and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2005/2015) definitions. These definitions align; they acknowledge the merging of genres to no longer delineate between the sciences and the arts but rather highlight the value of creativity in all areas. The ability to embrace disequilibrium (Slattery, 2013) and uncomfortability as catalysts for growth are essential to both definitions.

Chapter II: Review of Supporting Scholarship

This study was framed by feminist leadership theory, with a focus on educator critical reflection, postmodernism, and the role of memory. The study aims to define and discover how these ideologies inform educator practice for the researcher and participants and inform the researcher through the data provided by participants. The analysis required the inclusion and comparison of multiple areas of scholarship because, like the participants of this study, one informs the other, and none can be looked at in isolation. This chapter relates the theories that underpin the research purpose, chosen methodologies, and data analysis process.

Theoretical Frameworks & Supporting Scholarship

Feminist Leadership

Personal reflection and a thoughtful examination of relationships, community, and goals for everyone inside an organization are some of the defining characteristics of feminist leadership theory. Theorists determined that feminist leaders have a higher level of emotional intelligence, are focused on culture and the people within the organization, are trust-builders, creative decision-makers, and problem-solvers (Palastini, 2013, Chin, 2007, Cliffe, 2011). Individuals in positions of authority, those who lead in classrooms and offices within a school, learn more about themselves throughout their career if they are open to reflection as a part of their job. It is essential to be reflective before and after making decisions, working with students and fellow educators to move forward. Critical self-reflection has made me the educator I am today; therefore, I chose to explore my education trajectory through my participants' stories who identify as female. Our past professional relationships qualified them to speak to my leadership and their growth and development. As anticipated, the participants demonstrated the characteristics of a feminist leader, and the study helped me gain further insight into this development.

I have had the unique opportunity to work in masculinized environments and on an all-female administrative team. I observed and experienced the differences between the people, but not

necessarily the settings. Differences in processing include team values, operations, communication, and reflection. While there were a lot of contrasts between the groups, which is what initially sparked my interest in this research, the environments did not show drastic differences. Since starting this study, I left administration, shedding a different light on leadership. I learned that it is "not that simple'' (Chin, 2007). Leadership is not necessarily a gendered, binary practice because one does not need to identify as female to be a feminist, and not all women are feminists. Statistically, educational leadership may be male-dominated, and classroom teachers remain primarily female. Still, leadership within a school is not limited to administration, and all school community members have the potential to lead. In the article, *White Males Dominate Educational Leadership*, Dr. Stephen Whitehead explains,

> While the data varies from country to country, globally, it appears that no more than 35% of women occupy secondary school headships, rising to 75% for primary school headships. Across OECD countries, 68% of lower secondary teachers are women, but 55% of these schools are headed by men (2020).

Educational leadership continues to be a field that more men enter, but that could be more related to context over the desire to lead (Chin et al., 2007). Over time educational administration has developed into a masculinized aspect of a school, and this scholarship aims to explore the reasons and remedies for this development.

Although there are various names for leadership "styles," the discussion will focus on transactional versus transformational leadership. This study aims to discuss educator authenticity in relation to these leadership styles. In both settings, I felt moments of inauthenticity, the oppressive nature of transactional leadership, and the effect it had on my life. It took many years to reverse the effects this had on my confidence, and still, I feel pulled to this field to disrupt the oppressive nature of authoritative leadership. This way of leading is limiting and reduces the potential for schools to be spaces for growth, learning, and meaningful dialogue. Noting the difference between a top-down,

transactional approach versus a community-oriented, emotionally intelligent one led me to ask, what

makes us the leaders (and educators) we are? Do stories and experiences of our past, history, and

gender differences lead to educator authenticity and the desire to reflect on our practice critically. For

feminist leaders, these elements are not mutually exclusive. I aimed to capture three educators'

trajectories to define the moments that impacted them as educators. I, too, reflected on my

development as a leader in the process.

Feminist leadership is rooted in examining the differences related to dependence and

interdependence. Gender differences have created distinct characteristics in leadership styles. Still, as

Jean Lau Chin asserts, feminist leadership is not solely the work of women. In feminist literature, there is

an essential distinction between "being female" and being a feminist (Chin et al., p. 357). In the article

Are There "His" and "Hers" Types of Interdependence? The Implications of Gender Differences in

Collective Versus Relational Interdependence for Affect, Behavior, and Cognition (1999), Gabriel and

Gardner refer to Cross and Madson (1997), they argued that "American culture encourages the

development of a more interdependent focus in women and a more independent focus in men."

(Gabriel & Gardner 1999). The interdependence can be seen in their behavior, which is also congruent

with the principles of a transformational leadership style, "inclusion, collaboration, and social advocacy"

(Chin, 2007, p. 7). Cross and Madson (1999) explain that the differences in dependence and

interdependence may stem from how males and females are socialized from infancy forward (p. 642).

Parents emphasize sensitivity to the feelings of others more with girls than with boys (Dunn,

Bremerton, & Munn, 1987; Fivush, 1992 in Cross and Madson, 1999). Girls' social interactions

are characterized more by cooperation, intimate friendships, and efforts to maintain

interpersonal harmony, whereas boys' interactions are more likely to be marked by

demonstrations of dominance and competitiveness (Maccoby, 1990 in Cross and Madson,

1999). Finally, girls are more likely to form pair bonds and report intimacy as an important factor

18

in forming relationships (Broderick & Beltz, 1996; Clark & Bittle, 1992; Jones & Costin, 1995 in

Cross & Madson, 1999). In sum, girls and boys are socialized differently and often separately;

girls are encouraged to emphasize close relationships to a greater extent than boys. (Cross &

Madson, 1999)

Gabriel and Gardner further explain that it is not that men lack interdependence because social

isolation is not healthy for any individual and may lead to concerns with mental health and suicidal

ideation (p.644); rather, males may fulfill their interdependency needs differently than women. Brewer

and Gardner (1996) refer to three aspects of self-construal

1. *Personal* - how one relates to oneself (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, Cross & Madson 1997 in

    Gabriel & Gardner, 1999)

2. *Relational* - how one relates to others (Brewer & Gardner, 1996)

3. *Collective* - how one relates to groups (Brewer & Gardner, 1996)

Gabriel and Gardner (1999) explain that all humans, both male and female, may have the same

need for interdependence, but the need may be expressed and fulfilled differently based on gender

expression (Baumeister & Sommer in Gabriel & Gardner, 1999, p. 644), "whereas women tend to invest

in a number of close, often dyadic relationships, men tend toward investing in a larger sphere of social

relationships" (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999).

Cross and Madson (1997) in Gabriel and Gardner (1999) argued that whereas males are

relatively more independent or may express their interdependence *collectively* through group

associations rather than *relationally.* The difference highlights how individuals see themselves when

interacting with others, either as independent (or separate from) or connected to other people (Markus

& Kitayama, 1991 in Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). Interdependency can affect working styles, particularly in

teamwork and collaboration positions. When in leadership positions, women tend to work *with* their

colleagues and those they supervise and exercise a higher level of emotional intelligence in the

workplace (Palastini, 2013, Chin, 2007, Cliffe, 2011). Rather than compare leaders' working styles based

on gender stereotypes, it is more appropriate to consider the context in which a leader works.

Contextual Leadership (Chin, 2007) considers that behavior exists "in context" and is influenced by that

context and the "power relationships among participants" (Chin, 2007). Chin further explains that one

must look at the organizational culture to understand leadership style. Leaders of any gender expression

must adapt to the culture when leading in masculinized contexts. The leader's job is to manage the

purpose and goals of the organization (Chin, 2007).

Feminist leaders of any gender expression may be perceived as less effective in masculinized

contexts. Therefore, this would also be true for a *less* feminist leadership style in a more feminized

context. Chin refers to "leadership characteristics" to examine how gender and leadership relate to each

other; she reviews the "Great Man" theory, a trait approach (p. 5), the "Competencies of leadership"

skills approach (p.5), and the "Leadership styles" process approach (p.6). The trait approach asserts that

individuals are born with innate leadership characteristics. Often regarded traits are charisma,

confidence, and intelligence, traits associated with masculinity (Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986 in Chin et

al., 2007). A skills approach focuses on the skills related to good leadership. Chin refers to Northouse

(2004) and Bennis (1984) when outlining the skills associated with effective leadership: problem-solving,

social judgment, and knowledge (Northouse, 2004) and management of attention (giving the message),

management of meaning (developing a vision), management of trust (interpersonal connectedness), and

management of self (knowledge of one's skills) (Bennis, 1994 in Chin et al., 2007). According to Chin and

the contributors of the book *Women and Leadership, Transforming Visions and Diverse Voices* (2007),

women are more collaborative; therefore, the traits associated with a skills-based approach may favor

women in leadership and contribute to a feminist leadership approach (p. 6). The Process approach

20

focuses on what leaders do and how they act (Chin, 2007). John Quincy Adams said, "If your actions

inspire others to dream more, learn more, and do more, you are a leader," this is a process approach to

leadership. A process approach inspires others to achieve a common goal through action (Northouse,

2004 in Chin, 2007). In this case, leadership is a behavior, not an action that one performs. Chin refers to

a meta-analysis of the leadership styles of men and women. It was found that there was no difference in

interpersonal and task-oriented types (Eagly & Johnson 1990 in Chin et al., 2007), but that in general,

the women in the studies were more democratic and participatory and less autocratic and direct (p.7).

Chin acknowledges that leadership is not gendered, and feminist leadership is not solely a women's style

of leadership; she refers to Joyce Fletcher (2002, 2003), who differentiates between "feminist

attributes" and "feminist goals" (Fletcher, 2002, 2003 in Chin, et al., 2007). Fletcher advises that

organizations focus more on challenging power structures to create "more egalitarian environments,"

and to do so, organizational leaders must acknowledge the framework they are working within. Fletcher

asserts that "without recognition, the rhetoric will sound feminist, but the goal is not there to make it

feminist" (p. 9). Therefore, feminism is a process based on values and goals, not a leadership style, per

se.

Feminist leaders focus on organizational values and vision and are simultaneously aware of the

needs in the room and the whole of the organization. Feminist leaders are committed, determined, and

resilient despite criticism (Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007). This study examined leadership through a

feminist lens and attempted to situate leadership as less hierarchical and more about framing the

problem, critical thought, and action - as a cycle. Porter and Henderson Daniel describe transformational

feminist and multi-cultural leadership as *transformational leadership* and assert that this type of

leadership is "in the daily details'' (2007, p. 248). They describe leadership as "(leadership that has)

historically (been) considered the province of men operating in stereotypically masculine, even heroic,

fashion as primarily hierarchical and patriarchal structures'' (p. 248). This view of leadership and the

shift away from the hierarchical view is innately feminist. Feminism is transformational (hooks, 1981 in

Porter & Henderson Daniel, p. 249). Porter and Henderson Daniel include the four components of a

transformational leader (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003):

- *Inspirational motivation* - communicating a vision with enthusiasm and optimism

- *Idealized influence* - modeling behaviors that place the good of the group over individual needs

- *Consideration for the individual* - through support, encouragement, and coaching.

- *Intellectual stimulation* - collaborating and problem-solving with constituents (Kark et al., 2003

  in Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007)

Feminist leaders are self-reflective and supportive; some may use the term *authentic* to describe

this form of leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). It is characteristic of transformational leaders to

practice critical self-reflection to maintain their focus and identity as they refine the technical aspects of

leadership. To continually transform, educators must look back on what shaped their views and how

memories affect our classrooms (Larrivee, 2000). This reflection will surface the biases that one holds

and may project on their students or colleagues (Chin, 2007). Telling your story and hearing the stories

of others can lead to critical self-reflection and help develop and shift a leader's values.

Transformational leadership relies on examining context, bias, perceptions, and values to be

effective (Chin, 2007). This idea originated with Paolo Freire's *Transformational Ideology,* emphasizing

dialogue as central to transformational change (1970).

Freire (1970) said, "dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and

people . . . Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself" (p. 89). "Dialogical

love" is characterized by humility, faith in the people, hope, critical thinking, and, ultimately, solidarity

(Freire, 1970). The characteristics of feminist leadership include the ideologies of collaboration,

creativity, dialogue, community, and vital emotional intelligence. Feminist leadership comprises

transformational, constructivist, and postmodern leadership styles. Lambert et al. (in Bennett &

Anderson, eds. 2003) describe Constructivist leadership as a collaboration between the leader and "the

followers working together." This leadership style is in opposition to the traditional, transactional

leadership (p.19). One can compare transformational leadership, feminist leadership, and

Constructivism, all of which consider the ever-changing landscape of community and leadership and rely

on dialogue and interaction to flourish. Chin et al. (2007) conclude that feminist leadership is not a style

but a goal. Feminist leadership focuses on equality in organizational leadership to allow for a multiplicity

of styles in all contexts to achieve an equitable balance (p.358).

Critically Reflective Feminist Educators & Feminist Practices

Educator self-reflection was an essential aspect of this study, not only because the participants

were asked to critically self-reflect, but reflection is also an attribute of a feminist leader. Less literature

about critical reflection for school leaders exists, as most literature on critical reflection focuses on

teachers. Fortunately, the literature on teachers can be applied across the field. In this study, I used the

principles of reflective teachers to school leadership, and defined leadership as encompassing a larger

group that includes all educators, administrators, and teachers. This study looked at educational leaders

through the lens of feminist leadership and aligned this theory with postmodernism as a cultural

paradigm. The goal was to critically reflect on feminist leaders' past experiences and memories and

situate feminist leadership goals in the leadership canon. I translated the findings into data visualizations

for the reader to *see* the intersections between each participants' experiences and to present the data

with clarity. Engaging in a feminist practice of critical analysis adds further transparency to the data and

focuses on differentiating representational strategies to offer data in multiple modalities (D'Ignazio &

Klein, 2016). Data visualization is a critically reflective process because it examines data from multiple

perspectives, with a critical eye on how the participants viewed their school memories to provide insight

into how feminist attitudes and values are developed and manifest in educators. This study used

autoethnographic methods informed by narrative inquiry. Still, it is not a self-study, because the

participants' narratives were considered and informed the autoethnographic methods. This form of data collection is an inherently feminist process because the participants' stories had equal importance to my own.

D'Ignazio and Kline (2016) assert that as a feminist practice, "the creation of knowledge is, after all, always a shared endeavor."

Job Embedded Critical Reflection

Individuals who decide to move into educational leadership must obtain further certifications. They must also have teaching experience; although the number of years varies from state to state, the average in most states is 3-5 years (Education, 2018). To obtain a Level II administrator certification in Pennsylvania, school leaders must attend approved PIL programs within two years of receiving their first administrative position, the series offered by the National Institute of School Leaders (NISL) is eligible to fulfill this requirement (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.). Educational leadership programs typically include courses in school law, curriculum, budgets, and school management. The NISL program addresses systems thinking, ethics, values, vision, and essential elements to effective leadership (National Center on Education and the Economy (NISL, n.d.). By completing a NISL program, school leaders can add a layer of critical thought to the school management skills they acquire on the job, if the leader values the practice and is not simply fulfilling a certification requirement.

A variety of leadership models exist, often presented in a compartmentalized style. Rarely, if ever, referring to each other or describing a hybrid of multiple types. Most troubling is that the models rarely discuss an individual's past experiences in school and what led them to educational leadership. In this study, I was interested in how the past informed the present, and specific past experiences shaped their philosophies. All educators can better understand themselves and have more authentic interactions if they know why they are reacting or responding in a certain way. I was amazed by the literature's focus on teacher critical self-reflection and the lack of literature on educational leaders' self-

reflection. As a job requirement, teachers continually refine, reflect, and are held accountable for their work in the form of objectives, lesson plans, outcomes, mentorship, pre and post observations, and evaluations; this is not asked of school leaders. In 2019, 78% of states in the US used teacher evaluation models, with most using Danielson's Framework for Teaching and the Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model (Close et al., 2019). In a 2015 dissertation research study, E.d.D. candidate Jonathan Moss examined teacher perceptions of the Danielson Framework for teaching and "whether they perceive that their professional practices are changing and improving from their experiences with the evaluation process and feedback given to them" (Moss, 2015). In his study of fifteen educators, he found that the educators felt the evaluation model created an effective groundwork for dialogues focused on teaching and learning (p.119).

By contrast, one of Moss' participants reflected on his observations of the administrators' responsibilities tied to the observation process,

> Not to be too negative about this, but it is very clear to me and others, administrators are overwhelmed with the amount that they have to do. It feels very rushed, and there isn't a lot of dialogue. They are just trying to get them done, and it seems like compliance (p. 121).

This comment highlights the imbalance in prioritizing critical reflection for school stakeholders. Critical reflection is a job-embedded practice for teachers; they are required to assess their performance and engage in meaningful dialogue with their supervisor or evaluator. When one moves into educational leadership, as early as three to five years into their career, they are less likely to have the time, nor are they required to critically reflect on their practice as educators, teaching, or learning.

In a 2018 meta-analysis of leadership styles, Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, and Dongyan examine the various types of leadership and note:

While scholars have noted the conceptual overlap between transformational leadership and these newer leadership forms, there has been an inadequate investigation of the empirical relationships with transformational leadership and the ability (or lack thereof) of these leadership forms to explain incremental variance beyond transformational leadership (p. 501).

Transformational leaders are described in the literature as "a catalyst of change" (Avolio, 1994 in Chin, et al., 2007, p.6) and visionary (Tichy & Devanna, 1986 in Chin, et al., p.6). To be transformational, one must critically reflect on their actions and intentions. Transformational leaders look at the organization as a whole and "how the organization should look when meeting its stated goals'' (Chin, 2007). Transformational leadership can be compared with feminist leadership, and critical reflection is a key component. Barbara Larrivee emphasizes the teacher's need to be self-aware, curious, and reflective to become authentic in the classroom (2000). When imagining the future possibilities for schools, Maxine Greene said, "clearly, the creation of communities in classrooms may be one of the most difficult and yet the essential undertakings in the schools of the future" (Greene, 2000, p. 273). Both require reflection and time to examine what is and is not essential to teaching, learning, and growth.

Critical reflection provides time and space for the teacher-leader to address biases and "move beyond a knowledge base of discrete skills to a stage where they integrate and modify skills to fit a specific context" (Larrivee, p.294). Critical reflection and self-awareness are essential for all school community members and should be encouraged. Maxine Greene refers to John Dewey and Paolo Freire and the process of schools *becoming* and the humanization of school. Greene describes this as "moving beyond where you thought you were fated to be." (Greene, 2007). To paraphrase Greene, if we are not examining our lives and not critically thinking about how we approach teaching and learning, how can we be aware and conscious? Greene asserts that consciousness comes by being "*alive, awake, curious, and often furiou*s."

Critical reflection will help to reveal the biases we hold as educators. Peter Senge refers to the biases and deeply ingrained assumptions as "*mental models*" (2006). When a leader is truly critically reflective and takes the time to understand their reactions to situations and circumstances, or their mental models, they can question their assumptions and biases to be more confident in their decisions, to be more present with the people they serve, and lead with authenticity, to address inequality and inspire more inclusive schools. Teachers and leaders who are crucially reflective and conscious have the potential to focus on the humanity within the school. Freire called this the cultivation of the critical consciousness (*Shih*, 2018)*,* he asserted that this cultivation "happens through dialogue between teachers and students in the teaching setting. In particular, the dialogue between teachers and students can enlighten their subjectivity" (Shih, 2018). Feminist leaders can reflect based on the feedback from individuals with which they work and consider the perspective of each stakeholder to create democratic and participatory leadership goals (Mertz & McNeely, 1997 in Chin, 2007).

Authentic Leadership

Relational transparency is a facet of *Authentic Leadership*, in relational transparency, "thoughts and feelings are consistent with actions" (Kempster et al., p. 320). My participants reflected on the concept of authenticity (or lack of) in various moments of their lives, with the understanding that taking a mindful approach to feelings of authenticity is congruent with critical reflection and decision-making. Leadership programs do not typically address critical reflection, and if they do it presents a paradox between felt emotions and actions. In the study, *Authenticity in Leadership, Reframing Relational Transparency Through Emotional Labour*, Kempster, Iszatt-White, and Brown (2019) examined how people in management roles act authentically when faced with experiences that limit the congruence between emotions felt and emotions exhibited (2019). Avolio and Gardner (2005) identified authentic leadership qualities as positive moral perspective, self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, positive psychological capital, and authentic behavior.

Additionally, authentic leadership focuses on the leader's moral developments and authenticity in their followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005 in Hoch, J.E. et al., 2017, p. 505). Developing emotional intelligence in leaders is also valuable and is a crucial characteristic of feminist leadership. Salovey and Mayer first invented the term "emotional intelligence," described as

> a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions (Cliffe, 2011, p.206).

 In a study of the emotional intelligence of female secondary school teachers, Joanne Cliffe concluded that when a school leader is aware of how they feel about a situation, they can think more creatively. They are more grounded and calmer in their decision-making (Cliffe, 2011, p.210).

There is little built-in time for accountability or self-reflection when one becomes a leader. Although mentoring can potentially be successful, there are very few mentorship programs for school leaders. A Wallace Foundation Study performed at the Southern Regional School District in Atlanta, Georgia, found quality school principals require quality mentoring. Their findings report, "states, universities and school districts do not invest adequate finances, staff and time in quality mentoring" (Southern Regional Education Board, n.d., p. 13). They also reported that mentoring is focused on the "wrong things,"

> The concern for programmatic issues such as clock time, task checklists, and reporting is greater than the concern for specific learning experiences that develop mastery of the competencies for leading school improvement. More mentors (61 percent) indicated that their responsibility was to help interns complete a list of tasks determined by the university rather than to help them implement a project focusing on school improvement (53 percent) or develop

and implement a professional growth plan for mastering leadership competencies (33 percent)

(Southern Regional Education Board, n.d., p. 14).

There is often competition over leadership positions and, therefore, less camaraderie in

educational leadership than in teaching due to fewer positions and the evaluation responsibilities of

leaders. Critical reflection enables and fosters authenticity in teachers and authentic leadership. Ilies et

al. (2005) explain that leaders are less likely to be perceived as authentic by those they lead when they

show fewer emotional responses and exhibit higher "self-monitoring" (Ilies et al., 2005, in Kempster,

2019). Authenticity is typically studied in relation to teaching, so a leader's needs concerning

authenticity are less understood (Kemper et al., 2019). Emotional labor, or the exploration of feelings

and attitudes, is commonly seen with teachers, nurses, social workers, counselors, and other helping

professionals (p. 323). Still, it is not always the case for school leaders (or leaders of any kind). In their

study, Kempster et al. (2019) explore emotional labor with managers to develop a theoretical

understanding of authenticity in leadership.

Kempster, Iszatt-White, and Brown (2019) report in their findings a connection between

emotions and authenticity. Leadership differs from teaching because the competitive nature of

achieving a leadership position in schools, amongst other aspects, can be isolating. I addressed the

"leader" in a broad sense, both in and outside the classroom, and I included teachers who take on

leadership roles based on their personal characteristics. In the study *Explaining the gender gap in school

principalship: A tale of two sides* Miryam Martinez Martinez, Manuel M. Molina-Lopez and Ruth Mateos

de Cabo examined females in school leadership and the reasons why there are less females in these

roles. The study looks at organizational versus individual models of management related to female

leaders. One reason for the gender gap has to do with feelings of preparedness. They refer to the Hoff

and Mitchell (2008) study of school administrators in Maine:

(The study) showed that 61.14% of women waited until they met all of the educational

requirements compared to only 5.21% of men – a result attributed to the tendency of women

wanting to be 'super-prepared' before applying (Martinez, Molina, Lopez, & Mateos de Cabo,

2021, p. 864).

The hierarchical leadership structure is founded on a middle-class view of achievement; power

and prestige are markers of success, and the higher up you go, it is assumed you are better at what you

do than those who do not have the same level of power (Keller & Zavalloni, 1964). It is possible to

deconstruct this myth by examining leadership as an action, *enacting leadership,* rather than simply a

person of authority. Former Massachusetts State Representative and professor at the Harvard

University Kennedy School of Government, Martin Linsky reaffirmed the need for a new paradigm of

leadership in his keynote address for the *Arts Schools Network Conference*, Fall of 2020 (Linsky, 2020).

Linsky proposed that those with authority over others are not leaders, rather, *leadership* is an *act*, not a

title. Any individual in a school or organization can act as a leader. During the COVID-19 pandemic, and

amid the uncertainty that prevailed, Linsky spoke of a new type of leader, a leader with compassion and

vulnerability in the face of uncertainty (2020). Linsky's definition speaks to the authenticity and

transformation that can be enacted by those in authority if they are encouraged to be critically

reflective, emotionally intelligent, and collaborative.

Again, these are the critical characteristics of the feminist leader and the postmodern thinker.

Bergquist (1993) in Hawkins and Tolzin (2002), asserted that *conversation* is the glue that binds together

members of a postmodern organization. The leader is the one with the power to influence the

conversations and collaborations that take place among the community. This ideology harkens back to

Freire's notion of transformation and the idea *no dialogue can exist without love* (1979). Witherspoon

(1997) in Hawkins and Tolzin (2002), argued that a successful postmodern organizational leader will

accept chaos and uncertainty as natural processes, and not fear or shy away from them. The leader will be adaptive, follower-focused, and concentrate on community development through communication and collaboration within the organization (Hawkins & Tolzin, 2002, p.103).

This study attempts to pulls these ideas together - to define authenticity, discover how it develops for feminist educators, and finally, how teacher-leaders perceive authenticity in themselves and how I enacted it through my leadership. Through the act of writing, I attempted to determine how these qualities develop in a teacher-leader with a goal to shift the paradigm from isolation and hierarchy to a compassionate collaborative community based on a foundation of critical reflection.

Postmodernism & Feminism

Slattery's descriptors of postmodernism, found in *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era* (2013, p. 6-8) can be aligned with the characteristics of a feminist leader as outlined by Kark, Shamir, and Chen, 2003 in the chapter *Developing Transformational Leaders* (Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007 in Chin, et al., 2007). Applying this description considers the whole person and the totality of the organization and how they work in concert with each other rather than bifurcating the person or organization's departments, or other segments. Slattery's descriptors were derived from Jacques Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction. Deconstruction, originally seen in the 1960s, has "nothing to do with destruction" (Derrida, 1972 in Slattery, 2013). Rather, Derrida describes deconstruction as "a question of being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentation of the language we use - and that is not destruction" (1972). Deconstruction can be used to problematize, challenge, and question almost any notion presented (Slattery, 2013). Deconstruction attempts to dispel the repressive bifurcations in society, it is seen as an ethical practice that attempts to counteract the dangers of binary constructs (Taylor, 2004 in Slattery, 2013). Taylor concluded:

(Derrida) taught us that the alternative to blind belief is not simple unbelief, but a *different* kind of belief - one that embraces uncertainty and enables us to respect others whom we do not

31

understand. In a complex world, wisdom is knowing what we don't know so that we can keep

the future open (Taylor, 2004 in Slattery, 2013).

When reflecting on the terms he developed to describe postmodernism, Slattery concludes that

"postmodernism eludes definition" (p. 6). He explains that many find postmodernism as pessimistic and

hopeless while others (Rorty, 1997, in Slattery, 2013, p. 6) see postmodernism as playful, and provides

the following terms (although he notes that the terms are also "elusive and contested") (Slattery, 2013,

p. 6-8): *Eclectic, Dis(equilibrium), Environmental, Evocative, Energetic, Aesthetic, Eschatological,*

Engaging, Existential, Expressive, Evolving, Experimental, Anti-entropy, and Entertaining. Full definitions

for these terms are included in Appendix G of this paper. The terms describe a postmodern attitude,

they served as a means by which to analyze the data in this study to reveal if the participants held

postmodern attitudes, and to align postmodernism with feminist leadership and authenticity.

Memory & Experience

> *There is something vitally important to education in the idea that the consciousness of growing,*
>
> *becoming different, can be tied to some memory of feelings of wonder, of recognition, that can*
>
> *counteract the feelings of futility, Warnock (1978) speaks of feelings that so often block any*
>
> *intention to learn (Greene, 2000, p. 273).*

As educators, we cannot avoid being shaped and influenced by a lifetime of school experiences.

Education includes all the experiences surrounding learning that happen to us, this includes the

influence of our caregiver's views of education. School experiences can consist of positive models that

inspire or confuse or negative experiences that motivate or tear down. Referring to Multiple

Intelligences, the education theory developed in the 1970s and 80s by Dr. Howard Gardner provides a

pluralistic view of intelligence, as opposed to there being one singular way to *be* "intelligent", Thomas

Armstrong (2018) describes positive and negative experiences that affect the development of the

intelligences as *activators and deactivators* of intelligence. The intelligences include verbal–linguistic,

logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily–kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic

(Gardner, 2006). In *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* (2018), Armstrong explains that *crystallizing*

and paralyzing experiences include minor events that activate or deactivate a learner's intelligences (p.

28-31). Armstrong adds that access to specific situations and mentors rely on geography, family, and

background, these can absolutely influence the formation of multiple intelligences (p. 25). This was

valuable when seeking to understand how experiences shape educators. Actions may not *intend* to

damage or encourage, still through critical reflection an educator can become more aware of the effect

of memories and can reflect on the influence of these experiences on their actions. It becomes essential

to understand how our actions, as educators affect students, or how a leader's actions affect those they

lead.

> We teach to change the world. The hope that undergirds our efforts to help students learn is
>
> that doing this will help them act towards each other, and to their environment, with
>
> compassion, understanding, and fairness. But our attempts to increase the amount of love and
>
> justice in the world are never simple, never ambiguous. What we think are democratic,
>
> respectful ways of treating people can be experienced by them as oppressive and constraining.
>
> One of the hardest things teachers learn is that the sincerity of their intentions does not
>
> guarantee the purity of their practice. The cultural, psychological, and political complexities of
>
> learning and how power complicates all human relationships [including those between students
>
> and teachers] means that teaching can never be innocent (Brookfield, 1995, p.1, in Cunningham,
>
> 2010)*.*

Along that same thread, additional studies in teacher authenticity conclude that students and colleagues

perceive authenticity based on their own biases. De Bruyckere and Kirschner (2016) determined that

"starting from the premise that authenticity is important for the relation between students and teachers (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006 as cited in De Bruyckere and Kirschner, 2016), knowing how the authenticity is perceived is considered to be important" (p. 2). Biases are constructed based on experience, and after an experience is over, all we have is the memory it has left us with. The hippocampus, the same region of the brain responsible for recording episodic memories, is also responsible for planning for the future (Biderman, Bakkour, & Shohamy, 2020). Therefore, neuroscience plays a role in the formation and processing of memories. Biderman, Bakkour, and Shohamy (2020) also explain that "learning is essential for adaptive behavior, allowing past experiences to improve the decisions we make in the future" (p. 542). They also reflect on the fact that we must make decisions without prior experience or memories to refer to at all. These decisions rely on flexible memories, and three concepts, generalization, inference, and deliberation, all which rely on the hippocampus (Biderman, et al., 2020). Reflecting on and learning from experiences can aid in future decision making.

By mapping my educational trajectory and the path of three women who ultimately felt the pull to become educators, I was able to reflect on what contributed to their decision to become educators, and how they perceive authenticity based on the memories that inform and shape their futures. I conducted this research at an unprecedented time in history. Many teachers are leaving the profession, and the literature supports the notion that teachers must be intrinsically motivated to stay in the classroom, and that extrinsic factors are not always enough. There is quite a bit of research on teacher retention related to identity. In the study "*Should I Stay, or Should I Go*?" (2017), Kelchermans explains:

> ...the need for social recognition and acknowledgment is a clear instance of this vulnerability. It constitutes a crucial condition for motivation, satisfaction, and overall well-being as a teacher, yet it is something that can only be given one can't claim it or make it happen, but it necessarily remains a gift to be received from others" (2017, p. 970).

I explored the educators' past experiences to determine how their identities contributed to their perceived authenticity. In the article *Dressing Up: Exploring the Fictions and Frictions of Professional Identity in Art Educational Settings* (2017), Dr. Amy Pfeiler-Wunder described the act of personal and professional identity exploration with future art educators:

> At one point, several students tried to argue that childhood was sweet and innocent when another student chimed in: "My mother was an alcoholic and could be abusive…my childhood sucked." The friction between an imagined landscape was quickly transformed into a vista that offered another perspective and possibility for how one sees their childhood and thus the childhood of the learners in their classrooms (p. 32).

From childhood through their present, educators' journeys inform their practice. It is essential to acknowledge this phenomenon to be authentic, comfortable in the role of a teacher even when there is chaos and uncertainty, as we have seen since March of 2020. Critical self-reflection is a necessary tool for all educators. In Pfeiler-Wunder's 2017 study, pre-service art educators explored the multiplicity of their identities by creating paper dolls. They discussed how personal layers inform their interactions in the classroom. Pfeifer-Wunder noted that

> other students used their dolls to reveal challenges with perceived body types and sexual identity. As part of their pasts, they were working to reconcile concerns that could potentially be read negatively in future classrooms (p.35).

We all have experiences and memories of education; therefore, we have biases that we bring to our classrooms and schools. Exploring identity, deconstructing, and reflecting on our memories is critical for all school personnel, including teachers and leaders.

Chapter III: Research Design

This study sought to determine how a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of school, contributes to their authentic, feminist leadership style. Using autoethnographic methods to focus on my experiences, and narrative inquiry to explore my participants' trajectories, I explored the specific moments and memories that influenced our future classrooms. I also wanted to determine if my participants embody the traits of a feminist and postmodern educator, how they define authenticity, and what how memories of education shaped who they are today. Data was collected in the form of writing samples and interviews. Participants provided journals, epistolary (letter) writing, a timeline, and interviews related to their careers, education, and our interactions in the school setting. Participants discussed their perceptions of authenticity, and I defined *authenticity* based on their reflections. Finally, as I situated this study in feminist leadership and postmodern education, I examined how being a feminist and postmodern educator influence and informs the participant's journey.

Research Design

This study is autoethnographic and is informed by narrative inquiry. I tell and reflect on my own stories to determine how my memories shape my practice as a feminist leader and educator. I also worked with three participants, who I have interacted with in previous schools, and collected and reflected on their stories to determine what traits of feminist leadership postmodern educators they most possessed, but also what events in their lives were most impactful in their career. Data was collected through an epistolary writing exercise, personal journal, timelining, and interviews. I analyzed the data using two sets of a priori codes, Slattery's descriptors of postmodernism (2013) and descriptors of feminist leaders (Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007). I chose these frameworks because of the parallels between feminist leadership and postmodernist thought. Looking at the data through this lens strengthened the importance and power of feminist leadership and places more value on compassion, conversation,

emotional intelligence, and authenticity in schools. Saldaña (2021) explains that "pre-established codes

that relate to attributes (gender, age, ethnicity, etc.), culture, values, attitudes, and beliefs, for example,

are most likely essential to studies about identity." Additionally, I reviewed the data for common

themes, and based on those themes and patterns in the data, I developed a set of common themes

based on in vivo coding of the participants' writing and interviews (Saldaña, 2021). A sampling of the

data was reviewed by three doctoral students for interrater reliability. In this process ten common

themes derived from in vivo coding and 14 a priori codes (descriptors of postmodernism) were

reviewed. The reviewers agreed on at least 9/10 themes based on the common themes and agreed that

they saw all the 14 a priori codes in the data sample. When this was done, one reviewer suggested code

frequencies and diagramming (Saldaña, 2021) to make sense of the data, and both tools became an

important part of my data analysis. In Saldaña (2021), Bernard (2018) states that analysis is," the search

for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place" (p.8).

To highlight the importance of each code set, I performed a content analysis to "quantify the

qualitative" data (Saldaña, 2021). I performed a frequency count for each data set for each participant,

then interpreted the data in the form of a graph to visually represent the characteristics of feminist and

postmodern educators and common themes found in the data.

As part of the data collection, my participants also compiled a timeline of defining memories

from their educational trajectory. Using the events and dates provided and Northwestern University,

McCormick School of Engineering, Knightlabs TimelineJS open-source tool (Appendix H) I created an

interactive timeline to visualize the lifetimes of the participants. I also looked for overlaps and

intersections in mine and the participants' educational trajectories. This qualitative tool paired with

content analysis enabled me to determine if my participants fit the description of feminist and

postmodern, which characteristics are most prominent, and aided in answering the research question -

how do memories impact educators?

In the following sections, I explained the data collection plan and provided a more in-depth description of the participants.

Autoethnographic Methods

To engage in this study, I relied on the participant's narrative writings to inform my autoethnography methodology. I began the process hoping to explore my values and the impact I had on the people and culture in classrooms, departments, and schools. As Clandinin explains, "as narrative inquirers, we must start with our Personal Justifications" (p.36) in order to determine how we see ourselves and who we hope to become through the inquiry. As I collected data, I also discovered how the participants impacted me. This is a reciprocal process, we can learn about ourselves through the stories of others, Chang (2008) asserts, "internal factors inform our personal memories, and the internal is defined through memories and relationships." I could see how my influence affected my participants, but this was not divorced from my memories of the participants, as it was equally important. Chang (2008) points out that it is through narrative and other people's stories that we can discover ourselves (p. 100). In the article An *Autoethnography of a (Reluctant) Teacher Leader* (2016), Melinda C. Knapp uses auto-ethnographic methods to "communicate details about how (she) came to "know" teaching leadership over the course of one school year (p.255). Knapp's study included personal memories as well as her colleague's stories. She took this approach to "move inquiry and knowledge further along," which Knapp cites from Clandinin and Connelly (1994). The voices and stories of her colleagues added an additional layer to her autoethnographic research and helped to construct the narrative. As a researcher, she learned from them, and I did the same in this study.

Narrative Inquiry

Our experiences and stories create who we are. Every individual has impactful and defining stories from their time in school because we all experience education in one way or another. Two students can be in the same class, with the same teacher and course content, and have entirely different experiences.

When a person decides to enter the education field as a teacher or school leader, their experiences inevitably shape how they function in the job. In my career I taught in two states, four schools, including a regional public charter high school specializing in the arts, and three relatively typical suburban public high schools, as well as in alternative education settings as a virtual teacher and content director. I experienced the various levels of critical self and situational reflection from the individuals in these institutions. I experienced the effect of critical self-reflection as a teacher, a department supervisor, a dean of students, assistant principal, principal, and content director. I am interested in the reasons that some educators reflect on their practice, and if the reflection alters the perception of those around them, can students and colleagues say that they are reflective? Before this study, I hypothesized that critically reflective educators are perceived as more "authentic," therefore it was essential to explore the educators' self-perception related to *feelings* of authenticity (or lack of) and how this affects them. As an autoethnographic study informed my narrative inquiry, I aimed to explore a research puzzle that came to be based on my experiences with the participants and my experiences as an educator. Through stories about my participant's and my own education, I questioned how memories of past experiences inform the present for critically reflective feminist leaders to determine if a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences in and outside school, contributes to their authentic leadership style. I highlighted moments and memories in our collective journeys that influenced all of us. This inquiry stemmed from my own experiences in the early part of my career and my experiences as a school leader. It was important to me to account for the experiences of my participants based on our relationships, but also through their own trajectories in education. This allowed me to understand their relationships with students, parents, and administrators in order to determine how the importance of and authenticity in educators, and the impact it has on school communities. This Practical Justification for inquiry, according to Clandinin is one way to "(make) visible how teachers, and administrators, might attend differently to school curriculum making if their starting points were the lives of children, families,

and teachers" (p.37). This is the reason that I asked my participants to reflect on childhood memories as an influence on who they are as educators and how memories affected their perceptions of education. Participants reflected on authenticity by defining what *authenticity* is, and what it feels like both physically and mentally. The participants reflected on how authenticity affects a classroom and how their careers were affected by our interactions.

To understand how this study can impact learning environments it was essential to include not only personal and practical justifications but also Social Justifications (Clandinin, 2013). Social justifications include how the research affects the larger political context and how the results may impact school, district, state, or national polices. (Clandinin, 2013). In this study, I sought to understand the teacher and the school leader's trajectory related to their experiences of authenticity, and the impact this has on teacher retention and therefore, the learning environment. The findings from this study attempt to improve the life of the educator by highlighting where improvements may be made to increase teacher retention rates, particularly because this study took place during the Covid-19 pandemic school shutdowns, and the subsequent months.

Participants

This exploration of mine and my participants' *storied professional knowledge landscape*s (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) stems from my experiences inside and outside of the classroom, as a student, teacher, parent, and administrator. It was impossible to explore this area of inquiry without first understanding who I am in relationship with my participants. Clandinin notes this as essential to narrative inquiry because as a researcher, I needed to construct an understanding of my own position and identity in concert with my participants, based on our mutual experiences while also capturing the narrative of their experiences. Clandinin describes this as the "narrative inquiry commonplaces" (p.39). The simultaneous construction of my autobiography alongside those of my participants is an example of the temporality commonplace as Clandinin notes, it "points toward the past, present, and future of people,

places, things and events under study" (p. 39). My educational journey is marked by moments that caused both inspiration and self-doubt. At the beginning of this study, I was a school principal in a regional public charter school, and I was there for five years. Initially, I was dean of students and assistant principal. Before I was a full-time administrator, I was a supervisor of fine, performing, and practical arts in a large suburban high school district for ten years; in this position, I continued to teach classes. For seven years before that, I taught art in a neighboring large, suburban high school. This study aimed to explore the experiences in all settings, but also the internal changes I underwent based on my trajectory, this was also true for my participants. This is explained by Clandinin as the "sociality commonplace" (p. 39). The "feelings, hopes, and desires, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions" (p.39) were important to recognize and explore with each of the participants as well as myself. The social conditions were at times the same and at other times different, but the overlapping experiences were vital to the study, but it also highlighted how our common experiences influenced us beyond our working relationship. These interconnections or, the "place commonplace" (Clandinin, p. 41), explains how the place one is in shapes the experience as it is happening, and we as participants in the space are as much a part of the space as the space itself. This is very true in the classroom. The teacher (and student) creates the classroom culture as much as the classroom atmosphere itself, and both are also impacted by the classroom culture as they experience it. This study aimed to explore this relationship through the experiences of three participants who were chosen based on our previous professional relationships. The participants demonstrated traits of feminist leadership, and I was interested in exploring this further. Their names have been changed to protect their anonymity and pseudonyms have been used. Wendy, Alice, and Dorothy possess the characteristics of a feminist leader/educator, evidenced by their interest in people, connections, self-reflection, and self-improvement.

Wendy was a member of a department that I supervised in a previous school district, where she taught Family and Consumer Sciences and Business Education. She has since left that district for a

position as a middle school technology educator. I was her supervisor for over ten years. Wendy is a Korean American/multiracial female born to Korean and white parents. The school where she currently teaches has a more diverse population, while the district where we worked together was very heterogeneous, and Wendy was one of the only people of color in the building where we taught. She went to school for educational leadership and has certifications in family and consumer sciences, business education, educational supervision, and a Master's Degree in Educational Administration. Due to COVID-19, her school was using a hybrid schedule at the time of this study, therefore she was teaching students remotely and in the classroom.

Out of the three participants, *Alice* is the newest to teaching. She has three years of experience. When she was in high school, Alice was my student in the same district where I was Wendy's supervisor. Alice's trajectory mirrors my own in many ways. Following high school, she went on to the art education program at the same university where I studied art and art education. Alice was placed in the same school where I student taught and following graduation she went on to a position in the same school where she was my student a few years before. She taught in the same classroom where I taught her and as her former teachers became her colleagues. She has since left that position to teach art in a more rural high school setting. At the time of this study Alice's district switched between remote and hybrid learning several times due to COVID-19.

Dorothy is a newly appointed school leader. We worked together at the last school where I was employed as an administrator. She is perceived as an "authentic" educator by her colleagues, and when she was appointed coordinator of special education in the school, the staff was supportive and excited for this change. Three years ago, Dorothy came to teach in the special education department of the public charter school where I was an administrator. Although I was never her direct supervisor, I was considered her superior in the existing administrative structure before I left. At the start of this study, and at the time of the data collection, Dorothy was the special education coordinator and therefore I did

not evaluate her performance. Dorothy has a bachelor's degree in education and a Master's Degree in

Special Education. She is currently in a second master's program for educational leadership to obtain a

K12 administrator certification. Dorothy is a working single mom with two children under the age of 6,

and at the time of this study, she was mainly working from home due to COVID-19. During the study, she

transitioned back to in-person learning.

I chose the study's participants based on our professional relationships. Over the last ten years, I

was either their supervisor, colleague, or teacher. I deliberately chose these three participants because

they demonstrate the characteristics of feminist leaders and educators and therefore this makes them

appear authentic in their style and demeanor. I was curious to dive further into the idea that the

experiences as feminist leaders and educators align with their feelings of authenticity in their

professional lives. Since I also participated in this study, it was essential to look for commonalities and

intersections between myself and my participants. Our experiences overlap and therefore, I highlighted

our trajectories through an interactive timeline and visually represented the qualitative data for the

reader.

Data Collection Methods and Plan

Data collection began with an initial information-gathering interview questionnaire and consent form

(Appendices A and B). Participants responded to the questionnaire in writing to provide the freedom for

honest and forthright answers in the most comfortable way possible. Question centered on their status

as an educator, comfort level in the classroom, and questions around critical self-reflection. The below is

a sample of the questions asked, a full list of question can be found in Appendix B.

- What made you decide to become a teacher/educator? Was there a specific moment that you

  realized this was the career for you?

- How would you define your relationship with the researcher (now and/or in the past)?

Are you planning to stay in this position? What are your career aspirations? What influenced

these decisions?

- How would you describe your current relationship with your school leadership? Do you trust

them? Why or why not?

- Can you describe a moment you felt uncomfortable as an educator? What was the moment, and

what was your reaction to that?

- Do you have any specific memories from our time together in the classroom or workplace?

What is the first thing you think of when you think about our interactions together?

- Has our connection in the past contributed to anything that you have done in the classroom or

at school? If so, what, and how? Was it positive or negative?

- What has been the impact of your past education (in or outside of school) on your current

teaching career and identity as a teacher? Is the influence positive or negative?

- In your interactions with the researcher in the educational setting, what do you think they

considered most important in the workplace/classroom?

- Describe the role of social justice in your life and teaching? What or who has influenced these

choices?

- How important are the arts to your teaching and the integration of multiple intelligences in your

education and teaching? What or who has influenced these choices?

- Have you ever planned a cross-curricular lesson, project, or event with other members of your

school community? What or who has influenced these choices?

Following the questionnaire, I provided participants with personal journal prompts (Appendix C),

a form to timeline important memories from their education (Appendix D), and an epistolary writing

exercise (Appendix E), to complete. Each educator completed three journal entries, in the first I asked

them to define authenticity as they perceive it. The second two journals required participants to reflect

on a memory or experience where they felt authentic and inauthentic in a professional setting (or

another setting if applicable). I also kept a journal to record the same information. The prompts are

below and can be found in Appendix C.

- Who do you see as an authentic educator?

- How can you say that an educator is being their authentic self? Provide an example.

Try to write at least one entry for a time you could not be your authentic self and one for a time you

could.

- Describe the experience

Reflect on the experience, answer the following:

- What do feelings and thoughts of authenticity or lack of authenticity feel like in the body

  or the mind? Describe these feelings.

- What or who led to these feelings? Was it an external influence or an internal influence?

- How do these feelings affect you, your students, and your teaching?

- What is the result of feeling this way in the moment and upon reflection?

- Did this experience remind you of any other experiences you have had in your life?

- If so, what experiences, if not why?

The goal of the journals was to allow the educator to define "authenticity" and to determine if

moments of multiplicity, (dis)equilibrium, environment, interest, energy, beauty and creativity, future

possibilities, engagement, questioning, expression, evolving, experimenting, creative thinking, and fun

played a role in feelings of authenticity for feminist educators, based on the descriptors of postmodern

educators (Slattery, 2013) and feminist leaders (Kark et al., 2003 in Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007).

Through the writing exercises and interviews, participants reflected on the meaning educators

derive from their past experiences and how experiences, both crystallizing and paralyzing (Armstrong,

2009), contribute to feelings of authenticity. Following the personal journal writing, I collected

additional data through the timeline creation, the epistolary writing exercise, a letter to their past self-

based on their educational journey, inside or outside of school (Appendix E), and a closing interview

(Appendix F). For the letter writing, I provided participants with prompts and sentence stems to

facilitate their writing. The prompts were based on a writing exercise from the *Transformational*

Learning Styles, and Instructional Design taught by Dr. Pfeiler-Wunder (2020). A sample of the prompts

has been provided below; the exercise can be seen in its entirety in Appendix E.

- Consider highlighting defining experiences from your past and moments that you feel inform

  your ideas around education and teaching.

- Include the time that we worked together, as student/teacher or colleagues in your memory

  and reflection

- Begin with a story of how you "see" and perceive your education from early childhood to

  present

- What resonates with you throughout your experiences?

- Was being educated a part of family life/expectations/culture, schooling, religion/spirituality?

- Who influenced your education the most? The least?

- What are the most important things for an individual to learn? At home? In your formal

  educational settings? In both settings?

- How should or do people learn? Why?

- How have your past experiences influenced how you think about education today in your family,

  in the communities/organizations/institutions in which you work, in curriculum development,

  and understanding?

 Following the data collection, I developed an interview protocol to ask any additional questions

to support the research. These questions are below and included in Appendix F.

- Tell me about the process of: defining authenticity? Reflection and journaling?

- ○ Was this impactful to you? How?

- Do you feel your past educational experiences ultimately influence who you are in our current role? If yes, how, if not why?

- Do you see *value* in this type of reflection?

- How do you see the role of intuition in your life, professional and personally - in the day to day?

- Do you feel intuition can be measured? Explained?

- As an empathetic leader/teacher/educator, what do you need to feel supported?

I met with each participant individually in a Zoom meeting to conduct and record the interview, and participant responses were coded using the same system as all previous data, see Appendix K, L, and M). After data was collected, I refined the coding structure to include a content analysis as described above.

I provided participants with a general timeframe in which to complete the writing tasks. Following the initial questionnaire, participants began their journal during the last month of the 2020-2021 school year. I provided them with a structure and document to record directly on and submit upon completion. In July 2021, participants completed an educational timeline (Appendices D and H) to prepare to write their letter to self. In the timelines and letters, participants highlighted critical moments in their personal histories. I provided each participant with prompts and directions to complete the timeline and letter. Two of the participants wrote their letter as a narrative rather than a letter, which meant that they did not address it to themselves, rather, they wrote a personal narrative. After reviewing the writing, I determined that it included all the necessary information, and I did not feel it was necessary to revise the documents.

Data analysis

When analyzing the data, I considered the following sub questions based on the primary research puzzles. Primary research puzzles are listed in bold, secondary, or sub questions are italicized, these

secondary questioned helped to deepen the search for experience, and to dissect how the participants and I experienced our realities as they were happening, or our "experience of experience" (Clandinin, 2013, p.43) as an essential element of narrative inquiry.

- **How does a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of school, contribute to their authentic and feminist leadership style?**

  - *Are there specific moments and memories that influenced the future?*

  - *How do past experiences in education create more authentic teachers or leaders?*

  - *What is the effect of critical reflection on the past? How does that shape the current reality for educators?*

  - *What is the role of intuition in the daily practice for feminist, postmodern educators?*

- **How does being an authentic educator affect who we are in our personal and professional lives?**

  - *What is authenticity in an educator, and how does feminist leadership inform or affect authenticity or vice versa?*

  - *How does an authentic educator make an impact on those around them?*

Data was collected and analyzed to reveal in vivo patterns, and then themes were derived from the in vivo coding (Tables 3 and 4). The data was also coded using a priori codes developed based on descriptors of postmodernism (Slattery, 2013) (Table 1) and descriptors of a feminist leader (Kark, et al., 2007) (Table 2) and postmodernism, to ultimately explore and expand upon the research puzzles. When exploring the research puzzles, I sought to understand how specific moments and memories influenced their future as an educator. The experiences may be positive or negative, but the importance lies in the impact they had on the educator.

The data coding structure included three data coding sets including themes derived from in vivo coding, and two a priori codes based on descriptors of postmodernism and descriptors of a feminist

SELF REFLECTION AND EXPLORATION OF MEMORY

leader. Descriptors of a postmodernism (Slattery, 2013) are listed below accompanied by a brief

explanation of each, full definitions are included in Appendix G. Slattery uses these terms to frame a

discussion of curriculum and curriculum development in schools. When applied to this study, these

attributes describe an educator who is postmodern in their attitude and outlook in the classroom.

Table 1

Slattery's descriptors of a postmodernism (2013) with a brief explanation for each. See Appendix G for

full definitions.

Eclectic - *includes multiple styles and rejects bifurcations and encourages all voices to be heard*	**Eschatological** - *"Every present is conditioned by the past, and every present is pregnant with future possibilities. The "already" and the "not yet" create a world of possibilities"*
(Dis)equilibrium - *understands that uncertainty and uncomfortability can be catalysts for growth*	**Engaging -** *the participant (or viewer), shapes the outcome of the project or study. "Like Maxine Greene (1978, 1995, 2001, as cited in Slattery, 2013), postmodernists believe that the arts are brought to life when human beings engage them imaginatively."*
Environmental - *is active in multiple environments such as the inside and outside, on multiple levels, uniting environments*	**Existential -** *seeks learning that is grounded in existence over essence, to be awake and aware and responsible for ourselves.*

Evocative- *presents multiple views without avoiding the "essential tension" that comes with the discussion of difficult topics.*	**Expressive -** *Creates opportunities for expressive encounters and these encounters bring about transformation.*
Energetic - *understands the world is constantly moving and changing, therefore "new perspectives constantly emerge and deconstruct the status quo that leads to the surging chaos of the unexpressed."*	**Evolving -** *continuous dialogue between divergent concepts to examine assumptions*
Aesthetic- *The arts and cultures (including resistant cultures and indigenous cultures) move us "toward social justice."*	**Experimental-** *willingness to try new styles and approaches.*
Anti-entropy- *open system that encourages collaboration and communication without boundaries*	**Entertaining-** *Postmodernism is playful, ironic, kaleidoscopic, self-critical, and sensitive to the subtleties of difference.*

Overall, looking at these descriptors, one can say that a postmodern educator can see the multiplicity in their lives and are not only comfortable with uncertainty, but are willing to embrace it, to engage in the experience, examine assumptions, and be transformed by the removal of boundaries.

Table 2 represents the descriptors of a feminist leader (Kark, et al., 2007) also accompanied by a definition of each. All writing samples and interview transcripts were coded based on these descriptors.

Table 2 - *descriptors of a feminist leader* (Kark et al., 2003 in Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007)

Inspirational motivation	*communicating a vision with enthusiasm and optimism*
Idealized influence	*modeling behaviors that place the group's good over individual needs*
Consideration for the individual	*through support, encouragement, and coaching*
Idealized influence	*modeling behaviors that place the group's good over individual needs*

Based on the descriptors of a feminist leader, one can say that a feminist leader and educator model the behaviors they appreciate in stakeholders. They are collaborative, creative, and enthusiastic and enjoy collaborative problem-solving.

The data was also analyzed for in vivo codes and then common themes were derived from the in vivo coding process. Table 3 lists the in vivo codes and the common themes derived from them. Table 4 reports the final common themes used to code each data sample.

Table 3 - *Initial themes and codes that emerged from the data*

In vivo codes from data sources	Themes
Positive Interactions with adults/superiors/teachers	relationships/school culture
encouragement	
relationships matter	
relationships matter - participant recognizes her strength	
relationships matter - being the student's trusted person	
respect for in authority/teacher	

belonging and appreciation	
ostracized	
positive working relationship	
women colleagues respect and admiration	
frustration	emotional intelligence/resilience
turned negative into positive - positive reappraisal (Garland, E. et al., 2009, Nagoski, A. & Nagoski, E. 2019)	
changed view of teachers and teaching	
Listen, Empathize, Align, and Plan	
challenging emotions/colleague support	
patience and even keeled ness	
patience and willingness to help - listen	flexible/open-minded
continued learning and growth	continued learning and growth
focus on the whole student and classroom environment	relationships/ emotional intelligence
impact of social justice on her life	community/Influence
impact of the arts	the arts
forming the authentic self, based on experiences (+ or -)	authenticity
family member influenced the decision to in ed	influence

Table 4 - *Final Common Themes derived from in vivo coding*

Encouragement
Frustration
Belonging & appreciation (or lack of)
Positive reappraisal
Changed view of education/ teachers/leaders (Loss of respect for authority figure - or opposite)
Formation and communication of true self (authentic self) - or loss of true self
Emotional intelligence/resilience
Flexibility/ open-mindedness
Continued learning & growth
The Arts
De-siloing education/education outside of school

Data analysis began with a content analysis based on all codes, inductive and deductive, for each data sample: questionnaire, journal, timeline, letter, and interviews. The content analysis was performed by taking a frequency count for each set of codes for all five pieces of data. After counting the frequency of each code, I developed a rating scale based on the frequency that each code appeared by converting the number of times the code was mentioned in the data to a 0-3 rating, then each piece was given a 0-3 rating. The highest score a data sample could be given was fifteen and the lowest was zero, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5 - *Converted rating scale for all data samples*

Scale of 0-3	
0	no mention
1	mentioned 1-2 times
2	mentioned at least 3-5 times
3	mentioned 6 or more times

Content analysis allowed me to quantify the qualitative data (Saldaña, 2021) to translate it into a visual format, the results can be seen in Chapter IV. The purpose of data visualization is to make the data more readable and accessible for a wider audience. I analyzed the data in this way to determine if my participants fit the description of a feminist and postmodern educator.

Timelining

Additionally, I transferred the participant's timeline data to an interactive timeline to visualize the events and overlaps in our trajectories. The timeline can be seen in Appendix H using a link to the Northwestern University, McCormick School of Engineering, Knightlab Timeline JS interactive timeline generator (Knightlab, n.d.). Timelining was used to overlap the participant's experiences with mine and to visualize the events as they transpire over an educator's lifetime. Through timeline creation I was able to visualize a lifetime and the similarities and differences for the two generations included in the study, based on when they started school.

Data Collection and Analysis Summary

The purpose of the data collection and analysis was multifaceted, to define authenticity in the minds and hearts of the participant, to determine if participants perceive themselves as authentic with their students and colleagues, and to identify the most vital qualities of feminist and postmodern educators, ultimately to determine if participants fit the descriptors.

As explained, to record how many times the themes were present; I developed a code frequency count and content analysis. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate through visuals to demonstrate how the codes revealed parallels between the participants' traits and how our trajectories overlapped and influenced each other. The goals were to correlate authenticity with postmodern and feminist thought, determine how educators view authenticity, and discover if the events from the past inform the present for three feminist educators.

Chapter IV: Data & Findings

Common Threads

Study participants engaged in critical self-reflection through the act of writing. They reflected on their

memories of education-related experiences and considered how they are affected as educators in the

classroom. Participants also reflected authenticity as professionals and in their lives in general.

Participants reflected in the form of an introductory written questionnaire, journals, timelines, a letter

to self, and lastly, an in-person interview based on the writings submitted. The study's goal was to

reflect on, and ultimately answer, the following questions:

- How does a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of

   school, contribute to their authentic and feminist leadership style?

- How does being an authentic educator affect who we are in our personal and professional lives?

I aligned the data sources with each research puzzle, allowing triangulation of data sources based on the

three coding systems. Triangulation allows multiple data sources to increase the confidence in the

findings (Patton, 1999 in Carter N, et al., 2014). Table 6 shows the alignment of the data source with the

research puzzles.

Table 6 - *Data sources aligned with research puzzles*

	Research Puzzle #1: How does a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of school, contribute to their authentic and feminist leadership style?	Research Puzzle #2: How does being an authentic educator affect who we are in our personal and professional lives?
Data Source #1 Interview questionnaire (Appendix B)	Information gathering, as well as reflection on relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. Questionnaire also included reflection on past experiences and how they applied to teaching and started to reflect on authenticity through discussion of comfort and discomfort, and how that affected them professionally.	
Data Source #2 Personal journal (Appendix C)	Helped to define authenticity and asked the participants to reflect on moments of authenticity and Inauthenticity in an open, journal writing style - prompts were provided.	
Data Source #3 Timeline of education experiences (Appendix D)	Participants identified impactful moments in their education trajectory and put them in a linear order.	Moments on the timeline evoked memories of comfort and discomfort in school. These memories can form the ability of being authentic in a school setting.
Data Source #4 Letter to Self (Appendix E)	Allow the participant to further reflect on their education, and how events impacted them in a personalized style. Prompts and sentence stems were provided)	
Data Source #5 Closing Interview (Appendix F)	Semi structured interview, with questions developed from the previous data. Questions centered around the process of critical reflection on past educational memories, authenticity, and intuition.	

I examined each piece of data independently and looked at the data holistically to find patterns

and common themes between each participant, and between me and the participants. looked trends

for everyone since the participants come from three different age groups and backgrounds. To

demonstrate the importance of each aspect by participants and, I created a visual for each data set. I

also developed an interactive timeline based on mine and the experiences of the participants as

reported in the educator timeline (Appendix D). The purpose was to visualize the overlaps and

deviations in a linear and interactive format (Appendix H). I represented this data visually to give the

reader a more precise picture in addition to the written interpretation. According to Auraria Research

Guides, "timelining is especially valuable in situations in which you need to track how a program,

initiative, or campaign unfolds over time" (Auraria, 2021). The interactive timeline represents the

participant's significant school experiences, as they indicated through timelining. Although I did not

examine a "program, initiative, or campaign," the timeline demonstrates how a person's life "unfolds

over time" and how identity is formed by experiences and based on situations and interactions.

All the data, the questionnaire, timeline, journals, letter to self, and closing interviews were

reviewed and coded with identical coding schemes and the content analysis numbering system included

in this section. Table 7 represents the final themes derived from an in vivo coding process.

Table 7 - *Final Common Themes derived from in vivo coding (refer to Table 2 for in vivo codes aligned*

with themes)

Frustration
Belonging & appreciation (or lack of)
Positive reappraisal
Changed view of education/ teachers/leaders (Loss of respect for authority figure - or opposite)
Formation and communication of true self (authentic self) - or loss of true self
Emotional intelligence/resilience
Flexibility/ open-mindedness
Continued learning & growth
The Arts
De-siloing education/education outside of school

Table 8 aligns the descriptors of postmodernism terms (Table 1) with the common themes derived from

the in vivo coding (Table 7). This was done by reviewing the definitions of postmodernism and the

common themes side by side to make connections. As seen in Table 1, the postmodern educator can see

the multiplicity in environments and experiences, and are not only comfortable with uncertainty, but are willing to embrace it, to engage in the experience, examine assumptions, and be transformed by the removal of boundaries. In the below chart common themes such as flexibility and open mindedness were seen in the data as well. The participants discussed the arts as being important to their educational trajectories, and in this they mentioned how outside influences were also important to their memories of education, for instance, anti-entropy encourages open systems of collaboration and communication without boundaries. Although all common themes were not included in this alignment, a case could be made to align each theme, such as the theme *Emotional intelligence/resilience.* To be open minded and embrace change, one must display a high level of emotional intelligence, so this theme can be seen as universal.

Table 8 - *Descriptors of a postmodernism (Slattery, 2013, p. 6-7) aligned with Common Themes*

Slattery descriptors of postmodernism	Common Themes
Eclectic	de-silo education
(Dis)equilibrium	flexible/open-minded
Environmental	relationships/school culture
Evocative	flexible/open-minded
Energetic	flexible/open-minded
Aesthetic	the arts
Eschatological	flexible/open-minded
Engaging	culture flexible/open-minded
Existential	de-silo education
Expressive	the arts
Evolving	flexible/open-minded
Experimental	flexible/open-minded
Anti-entropy	de-silo education
Entertaining	flexible/open-minded

Data was also reviewed and coded for instances where the participant's thoughts or actions aligned with

Kark's (in Porter, and Henderson Daniel, 2007) descriptors of a feminist leader. Table 9 below aligns

feminist leadership characteristics with themes found in the data.

Table 9 - *Alignment of descriptors of a feminist leader*

(Kark et al., 2003, as cited in Porter and Henderson Daniel, 2007) aligned with common themes

Descriptors of a feminist leader	Common Themes
Inspirational motivation	culture/relationships
Idealized influence	flexible/open-minded
Consideration for the individual	culture/relationships/de-siloing education
Intellectual stimulation	de-silo education/flexible/open-minded

Inspirational Motivation can be described as a leader who communicates their vision with

enthusiasm and optimism (Gogoi, 2006 in Chin, et al., 2007). A leader who does this also contributes to a

positive culture and builds relationships with stakeholders. *Idealized influence* is defined as a leader who

models behaviors that place the good of the group over individual needs *(Kark et al., 2003, as cited in*

Porter and Henderson Daniel, 2007). This leader is open minded to the ideas of their constituents and

demonstrates flexibility in decision making. According to Kark (2007), the feminist leader *considers the*

individual and the organization simultaneously, with an understanding that through support,

encouragement, and coaching individuals make the organization stronger. Understanding the strength

of individual attention and coaching builds stronger cultures and relationships. As a result, the leader

understands where the strengths are in their organization and can think strategically about ways to

remove barriers by placing the best people in the best roles and encouraging collaboration. Finally, the

feminist leader values *intellectual stimulation* through collaboration and problem-solving with

constituents, not simply for them. Like considering the individual, being curious about people helps the

leader to support their organization and those who make it run. Encouraging and modeling intellectual

curiosity also models flexibility, open-mindedness, and will allow for the de-siloing of public education as

we know it now. This would mean more collaboration between the humanities and sciences and more

cross curricular understandings for teachers and students.

The following section further explains the use of data visualization and the content analysis that

was performed based on the coding systems previously described.

Data Visualizations

Data visualization "is anything that converts data or statistics into a visual representation" (Auraria,

2021). Data visualization helps the audience understand the subtleties of data and makes hidden or hard

to understand aspects of data more apparent to the reader. Data visualization is inherently a feminist

practice because data visualization aims to be truthful, collaborative, and communicative and to make

data more available to a broader audience (Fragapane, 2021). Data visualization is feminist because it

focuses on the author of the data, and takes their viewpoint into account, the interpreter of the data's

position is considered and, according to D'Ignazio and Kline (2016), "a focus on the designer's own

subject position can help to expose the decisions, both implicit and explicit, that contribute to the

creation of any particular visual display." Feminism and postmodernism embrace a pluralistic approach

to leadership and analysis, data visualization acknowledges the author of the data, and the choices they

made to remove the "view from nowhere" so often seen in data analysis (D'Ignazio & Kline, 2016).

Feminist data representation takes the concepts of data and adds a layer of *thought and responsibility*

to a process that acknowledges what is missing and what is included (Kanarinka, 2015). There are

immediately apparent points to address in the interpretation of this data. The data and the study, leaves

out feminists who identify as male, non-binary, or transgender. It is essential to acknowledge what or

who is *not represented*, with the understanding that goal of this study was to examine how the

memories of feminist educators *who identify and appear female)* affect their practices as educators. And for me, as a participant and researcher, to explore and expand upon the research puzzles based on actual interactions with the participants in the study and to model feminist practices in the process through data visualization and interpretation of the qualitative data using multiple modalities.

I developed the visualizations in this section to clarify and highlight aspects in each data set, and provide structure to the qualitative emotions, thoughts, feelings, and memories presented in the data. I developed a system for content analysis that began with frequency counts for each common thread found in the data, Slattery's descriptors, and feminist leadership qualities found in each participant's writing samples. After counting the frequency, I used the system represented in Table 6 to quantify the number of instances and measure the importance of each element for each participant individually and as a group.

Table 10 represents the frequency counts for the descriptors of a feminist leader, frequency count tables for the descriptors of postmodernism and the common themes can be found in Appendices K and L). I completed this process for each data set, and the data visualizations that appear later in this chapter were based on this data.

When analyzing and making sense of the collected qualitative data, I decided to "quantitize the qualitative" (Saldaña, 2021, p.28) through content analysis. The data was presented through interviews, journaling, timelining, and epistolary writing. The participants reflected on their emotions and physical sensations based on memories of education.

Table 10 - *Converted frequency count for feminist leadership descriptor - Data for additional code sets is represented in Appendices K and L*

A Priori codes Feminist Leadership Descriptors *(Kark et al., 2003 as cited in Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007)*	Data Sources	Inspirational motivation	Idealized influence	Consideration for the individual	Intellectual stimulation
Overall TOTALS		41	38	44	41
Wendy	Interview #1	1	1	3	3
	journals	1	2	3	2
	timeline	3	2	3	3
	letter to self	3	2	2	3
	Interview #2	3	3	3	0
Wendy TOTAL		**11**	**10**	**14**	**11**
Alice	Interview #1	3	3	3	3
	journals	3	3	3	3
	timeline	3	3	3	3
	letter to self	3	3	3	3
	Interview #2	3	3	3	3
Alice TOTAL		**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**
Dorothy	Interview #1	3	1	3	3
	journals	3	3	3	3
	timeline	3	3	3	3
	letter to self	3	3	3	3
	Interview #2	3	3	3	3
Dorothy TOTAL		15	13	15	15

Summary of coding systems

These coding systems allowed me to quantify and visualize the priorities for each participant to shape

the characteristics and assets that are important to feminist educators. An explanation accompanies

each diagram below. This work aims to highlight the strength of postmodern feminist educators;

therefore, visualizing the data speaks to the power and importance of these characteristics in leadership

(Puri et al., 2019).

Educator Stories in the Data

Before discussing the participant responses, it is essential to revisit each educator's positionality. Their

position, age, and career stage are relevant when reviewing their reflections and visualizations.

   Wendy is an experienced teacher with multiple certifications; she is in her 50s and has had

many life experiences, as seen in the data. Wendy moved to a new state almost every year of

elementary school, ultimately attending schools in seven different states. Her family experiences

included residing in a kitchenette motel and attending schools of various sizes. She is Korean American

and has experienced discrimination and racism throughout her life, which she discusses in the data. I

was Wendy's supervisor in a previous district where we worked together for seven years.

   Alice is a third-year teacher in her early 20s. I was her teacher in the same district where Wendy

and I worked simultaneously. Alice identifies as a white woman and is an art educator who started her

teaching career in the same classroom where she was my student; she taught there when I was no

longer with the district. She grew up in a family that valued education, and she was one of the first to

attend college and achieve a higher level of education than their parents, which she also shares with

Wendy. Alice referred to her high school experiences as the most influential to her as an educator.

Currently, she is teaching in a conservative district, and most of her teaching experience has been post-

Covid.

Dorothy identifies as a white woman, and is an administrator in her 30s; her mother was also in the education field, which highly influenced her decision to enter the field and pursue educational leadership. She started in early education and moved to special education like her mother. We were employed together in the school where I was an administrator, and therefore I indirectly supervised her in this district. While employed there, I did not complete her formal evaluation, and I am no longer with the organization. During this study, Dorothy was employed by the public charter school as an administrator.

Researcher

At the start of this study, I was a school administrator in a regional public charter school. I was principal and oversaw the school's arts programs; before this, I was an assistant principal. I came to this job after ten years as a supervisor of elective programs and art teacher in a public high school district and seven years before that as an art teacher in a large public high school.

Defining Authenticity

To begin exploring the research puzzles, it was imperative to define the term "authenticity" as the participants experience it. The first journal entry (Appendix C) asked the participants to define authenticity and explore the impact of school experiences on feminist teacher leaders. The participants needed to understand this term. Ultimately, the characteristics found in postmodern and feminist educators/leaders aligned with my participant's view of authenticity. For instance, experiences, both positive and negative tend to activate or deactivate feelings of authenticity. Alice, the youngest participant and the newest to teaching, defined an authentic educator.

> (S)omeone who practices and believes what they teach. By that, I mean someone who is
> not a hypocrite and uses the "oh, well I'm the teacher" excuse as the reason that their
> classroom management plan does not pertain to them. Someone who is an authentic educator
> shows their students their "real" personalities and likes/dislikes. I never understood why some

teachers always felt like they could not disclose their hobbies and interests to their students. If you are passionate about something outside the classroom, you should express that to your students and show them that you are more of a person outside of the classroom. An example of that is my high school chemistry teacher. He was super into soccer and biking, and he made it known to the students that he does more outside of the classroom than chemistry. He also allowed us to use our phones during downtime in the class but would be strict about not having it out during instructional time. He would practice that same concept by keeping his phone away during important classroom discussions, but then he would take it out when it was free time. As a student, you can tell an educator is being their authentic self when the educator is more relaxed. When I think of teachers who are not authentic, I think of the ones who are always yelling or saying, "that's inappropriate," when a student asks them what their weekend plans are.

I feel like authentic teachers are the ones that would answer that question with "yeah, I'm planning on taking my dog camping" or "binge-watching Netflix this weekend" and having a more relaxed classroom environment

Wendy, the most experienced participant, said,

I see an authentic educator as someone who truly cares about their content, and it shows in their teaching and their connection with the students. I have seen many teachers throughout my career who truly connected with their content and believed in what they taught. These teachers are so good at what they do they make it look like fun or don't look like they are working when they are clearly working. I have found that in myself only a few times. When I taught financial literacy, I believed I was my authentic self at PHS because the students I taught came from similar backgrounds as me and I could teach them about finance and how to pave a

path for themselves the way I did with grit. When I moved to (a different school), I didn't feel

the same way because I truly didn't identify with the kids. Only when I started to teach gourmet

and international foods or start the Asian culture club did I feel authentic as an educator there. I

think that to truly be an authentic educator you must believe in what you are teaching. I know

that I am currently teaching something I believe in, however, there is another part of

authenticity I don't think I have addressed and that is confidence in your curriculum. This is

something I still struggle with in my current position. I think not only do teachers have to feel a

connection and love for what they teach but they need to have confidence in the content only

then can they be 100% authentic if I was going to rate my authenticity in my current teaching, I

would say I was at a strong 80% which is better than many teachers I have observed in my

career. I see many teachers at 50% or even lower because they aren't there to teach, they aren't

there to make connections, they are there to collect a paycheck. It is funny because as much as I

didn't appreciate her teaching style or like her as a person MG was authentic in her teaching.

The students identified with her because she had a passion for her content, and she had

confidence in her curriculum. I think she was authentic for the students who saw her as an

authority in the curriculum that she taught. She hated teaching financial literacy and therefore

in that content she wasn't authentic. I think that schools need to consider whether a teacher is

truly authentic in what they are teaching but they don't I think they look at what they are

qualified to teach what skills they acquired in school to become qualified but for some that is

several different areas of content and instead of giving teachers the opportunities to be

authentic in their content options an administrator or a computer chooses for them what

classes they will teach. For some, they are lucky enough to get to do what they are passionate

about, and the authenticity is there, but for others, it is not.

Lastly, Dorothy, the current administrator, said,

I really view an authentic leader as someone who is not afraid to show their true colors, strengths, deficits, things that scare them, their own shortcomings, and their own anxieties with their own staff. Someone who is not afraid to ask questions or admit that they are struggling. So many times, I feel like leaders are viewed as robots, who only consider themselves when they make decisions. When I see someone that is authentic, I usually think that they are people that are unabashedly unafraid to be themselves. These people are true to themselves, true to their students or team members and true to the causes that are important to them as people. They don't just view education as a job, in a way, it becomes part of their identity. They are naturally helpers and problem solvers in their lives inside and outside of the school building. For the sake of being flippant, an authentic leader or educator is just a person who is themselves in the sincerest way.

The example that comes to mind off the top of my head is an educator who I had the pleasure of being next to when I was in the classroom. Watching M teach is like watching a teacher in a movie. M's love for her content area, students, and peers is nothing short of awe inspiring. I remember an instance last year, when we were doing hybrid learning, where half of our students were in the building and half were at home doing synchronous learning, and what I saw in M's classroom was a spectacle that you had to see to believe. M was utilizing two computers, an IPAD and her Chromecast to keep all her students engaged, inside of the classroom and at home. M spent hours preparing, writing, perfecting, and caring for each student. In fact, I can name at least three students that would have not received their diplomas if it weren't for the compassion, empathy and understanding that M showed to them. She is constantly trying to make connections with her students inside and outside of her classroom. Her compassion, care and empathy are so authentically her.

So, how do we know if an educator is being authentic? If an educator is authentically good, and

authentically genuinely interested in education, their students, their content, and their school,

then you know it because you can feel it when they talk to you, and you can see it with their

students and the people around them. I suppose you can tell if an educator is authentically

uninterested and authentically just interested in (it for) a paycheck. But the ones that are

authentically interested in their profession, students, and people, you just know. In addition to

the engagement of their students, you can see it when educators reach out to ask questions,

have frequent communication with administration about student support and they are willing to

put love and energy into their everyday practice.

All three participants focused on relationships and passion that can be seen and felt in the environment.

Their journal reflections aligned with my view of authenticity. In this chapter I also included my own

journal data to align my responses with those of the participants, three educators who I have experience

working with. My definition of authenticity as it was recorded in my person journal:

The ability to stick to my values even when they are challenged, or it is not the popular opinion. It

also is the ability to feel like I am trusted to be myself and to rely on my intuition to move

forward. The things that make me feel most authentic are true personal connections,

relationships, and the safety to be vulnerable and curious.

It was essential to understand the outside factors contributing to authentic interactions and

experiences. I asked Wendy, Alice, and Dorothy to describe memories of a time, or times, that they felt

authentic or inauthentic, and how this felt both physically and mentally. Wendy reflected on the

relatability of the students in the room and other members of the faculty.

I felt the external influences of the students' culture on my own internal feelings of belonging

with a mostly white staff of teachers and administrators. I felt a kindred spirit with my students

of color. It made me live authentically. I was able to converse with students at a level that they

found authentic and therefore they responded to me in kind. I had students meet me in the

middle where other teachers struggled with those same students because those other teachers

didn't understand their struggles the way I did or didn't come across authentic enough for the

kids to feel they could trust those teachers. Upon reflection, I find that I was happiest as a

teacher there (in a school with more diverse racial demographics), and I am only starting to

realize how far I have traveled away from my authentic self over the past couple of years. Since I

started to work at (her current district) and become friends with teachers and staff that look

more like me. It was also more refreshing to be around students who shared more of my

experiences as a person of color. I feel my most authentic when I can identify with both sides of

my race and embrace my history as a person of color. I felt more respected and confident in my

teaching then and now. I really believe when you feel your most authentic you are better at

everything you do.

Wendy and I worked together in a racially homogenous school and experienced her struggles firsthand.

Wendy's description gives life to feelings of inauthenticity.

I was making myself smaller and smaller the longer I was there. When I first started there, I was

loud and fun and enjoyed my job, but I found that over the years, I began to move away from

those aspects of myself. Many times, I didn't feel respected by my peers, definitely my

administrators, and at times the parents. I felt like I was bullied and told to be even less, and I

really hated it. It was at that point that I started to rethink who I was and begin to realize how

toxic my life had become. Working on a diversity committee also shined a light on my life, and I

began to understand why I was so unhappy. Many times, I felt like they wanted me to be the

token diverse person in the building but not too diverse. I will never forget the day (name

redacted) said to me that kids of ethnic backgrounds missed more school, and she didn't

understand why, was it the way they were raised or the parents? It was disheartening when she

said that because up until then I had always respected her and found her to be an inspiration. I

never looked at her the same after that. I will never forget when we got this great idea of an

ethnic food fair and how these white students who had southern cuisine put a confederate flag

on their booth. I was afraid to say anything and remember (...) my coworkers saying something

to me about it, but they didn't understand why I didn't feel like I could say anything. I was

assimilating to make everyone else feel comfortable with me. I hardly ever talked to my co-

workers or at lunch with them because we really didn't have anything in common. I didn't find

our conversations fun or interesting, and many times I struggled to make conversation.

Wendy describes feeling oppressed in day-to-day interactions.

 I moved around the building and switched classrooms more frequently than any other teacher

in the building because I didn't want to rock the boat. I took what they gave me. I complained

sometimes but when I did I was made to feel petty and immature. I missed the person I was the

loud, funny, and exciting person I used to be. I had strayed from that person, and I had become

bitter and angry. I am still finding myself and hope that I can someday start to heal.

As a new teacher, Alice was already considering ways to stay true to herself and to build the essential

relationships to stay true to her identity and find enjoyment in the profession,

A time that I could be my authentic self in the classroom was one of the first days of school and I

was playing music in my classroom. Most of my colleagues do not play music and if they do, they

only play classical or instrumental music. When I originally told my students that I play music in

class, most thought that meant another teacher with another boring playlist. When they came

in and I was setting up their first project while playing clean versions of today's hits, a lot of

them were shocked. I explained to them that I would not work in a studio environment listening

to classical music at a low volume. It was not who I am as an artist, and it is not who I am as a

teacher. I told them that I would play whatever music they needed to hear in order to be

creative and work diligently. A lot of the students later told me they did not expect a teacher to

be cool with playing rap or pop music in class and that it really allowed them to get comfortable

in my class quicker.

The idea of me playing boring music or no music at all feels very restrictive. Now if it is

what my students want, then I have no problem with it. But trying to mask my studio habits with

a stiff precedent of professionalism makes me uneasy. After years of being in quiet and musical

studios, I've learned that those feelings of uneasiness come from the quiet classrooms. These

feelings of uneasiness and not being authentic affect my students and myself negatively. It is

just overall a bad time for everyone. It is like there is an unspoken haze clouding my classroom,

and I am not a fan. That is why I try to be my most authentic self every day in my classroom to

alleviate any stress or restrictiveness that I or my students may feel.

When she was in high school, Alice was my student. I felt strongly that a positive studio experience was

vital to student learning when teaching. I aimed to make the classroom where students want to be. I

spent a lot of time curating playlists for my classroom and still have stacks of mixed CDs students made

for me in return. Music became an essential element of my classroom management. I even did a project

that involved song lyrics and made students a CD of the music from the project as a token of gratitude. It

was incredible to hear that I was able to pass down the importance of a positive classroom atmosphere

to Alice.

As a new teacher, Alice has felt the pain of inauthenticity. She began teaching before the COVID

pandemic during the 2020 presidential election. Her current teaching position is in a conservative,

primarily white school district in a rural community. I remember reaching out to her during this time

72

because I was concerned that the pandemic and remote teaching would be difficult for her as a new teacher. I knew she might experience situations that would test her resilience and ability to stay in the profession. Alice reflected on this in her journal.

A time that I could not be my authentic self was during the most recent election. Being in a very conservative area, most of my students were loudly rooting for one individual to win the election. It made me uncomfortable to hear their reasons why when I knew they were uneducated or misinformed about the subject. Every fiber of my being wanted to say something and have a discussion with my students, but I knew it would have been a major risk professionally. If a parent or a conservative colleague heard my discussion, I would have gotten in massive trouble. There were days leading up to the election where I would get headaches or stomach cramps from not being able to discuss these issues with my students and literally swallow a huge part of my identity. The external influence was my school board. They made it very clear prior to this time of the year that we, as teachers, were not allowed to discuss anything with the students regarding politics regardless of what side we were on. Many of them even took to Facebook on their personal pages saying that a certain group of teachers had their jobs on the line for "pushing" a liberal agenda. I just kept my mouth shut regarding those issues and silently rooted for my students who argued back with their peers about the misinformation they were spreading. Some of my students confided in me that they felt like they had no one to turn to politically since teachers could not say anything and their parents were most likely against their beliefs. It broke my heart that my students could not hear my side and feel like they had a confidant. As a result, I have re-decorated my classroom to subtly (but also not so subtly) let my community know what my beliefs are and where I stand as a professional. Some of my students have criticized it and said things like "what's with all the rainbows? Are you against straight people?" and my go response is "what do you mean? I'm an art teacher, of

COURSE I love rainbows!" This throws them off but still allows the students to see a teacher-

supporter. I have since learned to not care what my school board says or what some of my

students may think, as long as I reach one student, I will continue to be my authentic self.

At the time of the study, Dorothy was transitioning from the classroom to a position in leadership.

Having gone through this myself, I am aware that this can test an educator's authenticity, mainly when

the classroom experience was a truly authentic one. Dorothy reflected on this in her journal.

Ok this one is a hard one. I remember a time last year, when I was starting to become a school

leader and there was a really terrible interaction between myself, a teacher, a student, and their

parents. It was a meeting to help a student access their accommodations in someone's class.

The day prior to the meeting, I had a pre-meeting with the teacher to game plan. During the

meeting with the student, the teacher and I just could not see eye to eye…in front of the

student. This meeting was held virtually, and unbeknownst to me, the parent was listening. The

whole interaction turned negative really quickly and I was deeply embarrassed. I had lost my

composure in front of a student, and their mother, that I had really cared about. I was distraught

for about three days- having trouble eating, sleeping and was highly anxious. What bothered me

the most, is that I thought I was being authentic, I thought I was doing a good job listening and

being understanding, but instead I was listening to respond and not listening to understand,

which is exactly what the other teacher was doing. We were at a stalemate, and I felt helpless. I

wanted to problem-solve right then and there, and that just could not happen. It was horrible

for me. I asked for help from my supervisor and that teacher's department chair, and we still

could not come up with a solution. Honestly, it was one of the lowest moments of my career. I

felt like I just could not do my job well- I wasn't advocating for my student or the teacher, and I

had completely lost trust with the teacher, which is the exact opposite of what I wanted to do.

In fact, we still have a strained relationship, which I am working on re-building.

The external influence during this instance was distance learning because of the pandemic. I was not able to read body language well, take a break from the situation or listen to hear. Being behind the computer put up a wall between all participants that we involved and did not allow me to be authentic, compassionate, and empathetic. I would also say that the pandemic was an internal influence. Constantly worrying about the safety of myself and my sons weighed very heavily on all decisions. Making last year. It felt like there was an endless rain cloud that was surrounding me, and it was terrible.

These feelings affected the relationship I had with the people involved and myself. I lost trust with my decision-making and coping skills. It certainly impacted my decision-making with other teachers and students. It led to a lot of second-guessing and nervousness. It still does, especially when I have to interact with this teacher. As a result, I am much more cautious around this person, and I am not able to be authentic around them. I feel like I am on guard and watching everything that comes out of my mouth in a way that I am not used to.

Upon reflection, I feel like I need to give myself a little more grace and empathy. These are things that I am working on and will continue to work on in my new role.

Exploring the way these feelings develop and how they physically feel for the person experiencing them brings up a lot of emotions and visceral sensations. Dorothy describes how she uses her past experiences to be a better, more authentic educator.

I really value being able to take learning experiences from the past, whether they are in my personal or professional life and use them to my advantage. For instance, when I was younger and growing up, I was put into circumstances that led to some lifelong trauma. I have used the coping skills from this trauma to realize who I was as a person. An example of this is the following; when I was younger, I was put in circumstances that made me uncomfortable, and a

75

valuable resource I learned was communicating with people that I might have a hard time getting along with. Now that I am an adult professional, I use these experiences in two ways. One, I know how to talk to people, and two, I know that behind everyone is a story. I know that people deserve a connection, no matter how difficult the situation is.

So, lately, I have been able to channel these lessons into my most authentic self. I have grown and learned that people, all people, deserve a chance to communicate and express themselves even if I do not agree with them. In my new role as assistant principal, I have to talk to a lot of people, some of them who do not like what I have to say, and some of them who don't like me just because of my title. Because of the lessons I learned in my youth, I try to be as authentic as possible with these people. Sometimes, a person just wants to know that you're struggling also. And this is what makes me authentic in my leadership. I try to give empathy and compassion to everyone I meet and communicate with, regardless of how I know that they feel about me. Trauma and resilience have taught me how to be compassionate and empathetic. In turn, people have learned that they can trust me and that I have integrity. My authentic self is about creating connections with people, even the most challenging of people.

In my body, when I am feeling authentic, I feel like I can breathe easier. Truly, it feels like my lungs get filled with air, and I feel very light, as opposed to when I am feeling inauthentic when my heart is pounding and my breathing is shallow. When I connect with people, I feel the same feelings, at peace.

In my journal, as I reflected on the concept of authenticity, I described my experience of either inauthenticity or authenticity stemming from feelings of belonging, safety, and being heard. After a "hard day" in which I did not feel I was being my authentic self, I drew this diagram in my journal:

I reflected on these feelings,

> *Yesterday was a hard day because I had a lot of moments that challenged my feelings of safety -*
>
> *not being listened to, lack of connection, and trust - authenticity is sharing meaning and your*
>
> *most important parts, hearing in return, and acknowledging the pain and hurt, joy, etc.*

Developing Identity

Data collection involved the personal journal writing, quoted in the previous section, and the following

elements: an initial written questionnaire to gather information, a timeline of significant events in the

participant's education, a letter written to their past self (based on the timeline events), and a final

interview. All items were coded for common themes (Tables 3 and 4, p. 52 and 53) and codes sets based

on feminist leadership and postmodernism descriptors (Tables 8 and 9, p. 59). I quantified the codes to

create data visualizations for each data set using content analysis, visualizations were created for each

participant and for all three participants. The visualizations and their explanatory text are included in

this section. I did not include my data in the content analysis because I could not be impartial when

analyzing memories that I experienced. Although, I noted the commonalities between my participants

and my experiences and drew some parallels that are addressed in the Chapter V discussion.

The themes, or *Common Themes* as I have called them here, were derived from the participants'

answers to their journal prompts and the experiences they wrote about in their timelines and letters.

The goal was to explore and expand upon the research puzzles:

- How does a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of

    school, contribute to their authentic and feminist leadership style?

- How do educators become authentic, and how does this affect who we are in our personal and

    professional lives?

As a reminder, the following common themes were seen in the participants' memories of past (and

present) experiences in and outside of school.

Table 7 - *Final Common Themes derived from in vivo coding (refer to Table 3 for initial codes and themes*

that emerged from the data, p. 52)

Frustration
Belonging & appreciation (or lack of)
Positive reappraisal
Changed view of education/ teachers/leaders (Loss of respect for authority figure - or opposite)
Formation and communication of true self (authentic self) - or loss of true self
Emotional intelligence/resilience
Flexibility/ open-mindedness
Continued learning & growth
The Arts
De-siloing education/education outside of school

Figure 1 demonstrates the importance of each *Common Theme* (listed above) for each participant. The

frequency number is based on five pieces of collected data and utilizes the 0-3 scale represented in

Table 5 (p. 54) the converted rating scale for all data sets; this rating scale is also included with each data

visualization for reference.

Figure 1 - *Common Theme derived from in vivo codes counted per participant*
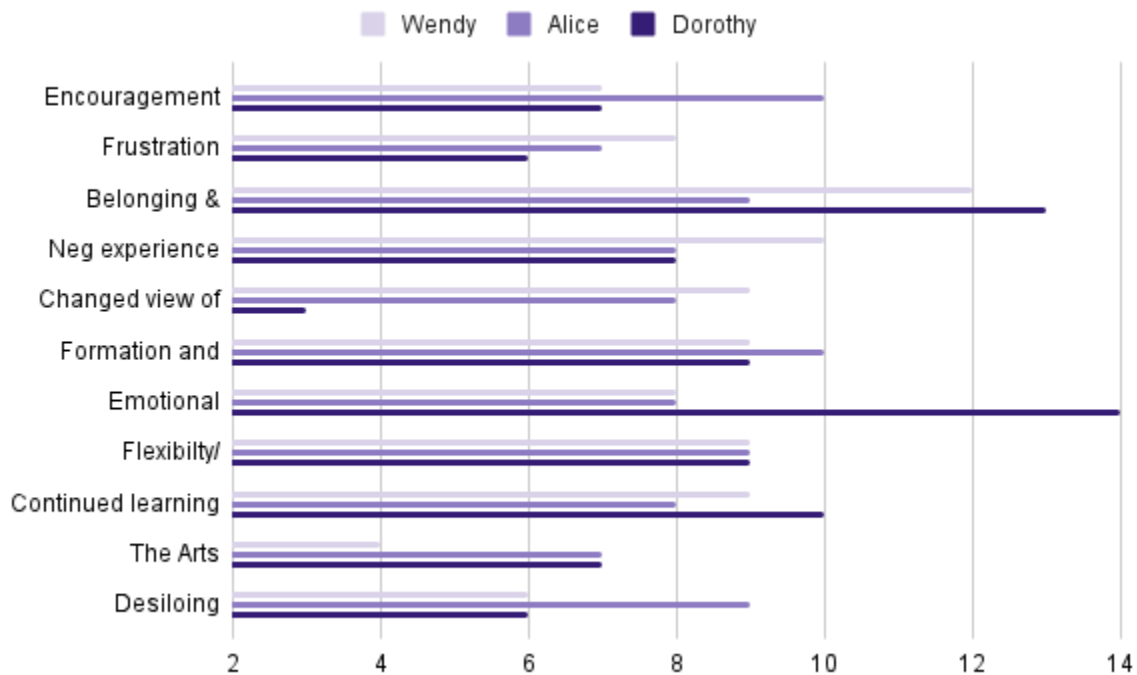
Scale of 0-3	
0	no mention
1	mentioned 1-2 times
2	mentioned at least 3-5 times
3	mentioned 6 or more times

Figure 1 demonstrates how frequently the common themes emerged in the data for each participant

and presents a comparison between the three participants' responses. Overall, all characteristics were

important in varying degrees, and some apparent differences emerged between participants. The most

experienced teacher, Wendy, emphasized *Belonging and Appreciation* as the essential aspect when

responding to the journal prompts, timeline, letters, and interviews. She highlighted moments in her education where situations tested her sense of belonging, and one specific event positively impacted her.

> I also remember having a project where we were supposed to bring food in from a different country, and my mom made Korean BBQ. It had a strong garlic aroma, and the kids all said it stunk, but then once they tasted it, they loved it. I felt embarrassed at first but then happy that the other kids loved it once they tried it.

While growing up, Wendy changed schools eleven times throughout her education and lived in almost as many states spanning from kindergarten to high school graduation (Appendix H). As a result, there was a significant separation between school and home.

> There were so many things that happened in this one school year. My parents separated briefly, and I went with my father to Oklahoma. After they reconciled, we moved to TN, and this was a great time for me. I was doing really well in school. I was in chemistry class and got to do experiments. I was taking algebra (found my love for math) and had made it onto the basketball team's dance squad. Then my grandmother died, and we had to go back to Oklahoma. Instead of going back to the Junior high, I had attended earlier in the year I was forced to attend the other High school (district geographics).

> There were highlights like I was in the school play and enjoyed drama. But I was put into a boring earth science class and pre-algebra which I didn't do well in I believe I got a D. I remember going to the school to register and the math teacher fighting that I couldn't be in algebra and gave me a verbal test on the spot and not passing to her satisfaction. It was the moment I said screw you. (When it came to math, I was pissed)

> The great thing about the fact that I had attended both junior highs is that when I went to the high school, I knew way more people because both junior highs feed into the high school.

I remember hating that I was placed into an algebra for dummies class, but otherwise, I was

popular, was in the pep club, dated a football player, had planned to be a cheerleader the next

year. I competed in drama and debate. It was so cool.

I remember the piece I did for prose was about the death penalty. Anton Chekov, the

bet, and Sirhan Sirhan will forever be a part of me. It woke up a part of me that would once

again be destroyed when we moved again.

For her last school placement, Wendy moved to a large state and attended an extremely large school. In

this environment, she describes feeling like "a number."

The school was so big it was like a college campus. I had 800 plus students in my grade. I

remember having an amazing government teacher who sang to us. I remember taking functional

geometry, which was the lower geometry class, because of my low math grades from Oklahoma.

I excelled, however, got 100's, and they put me in a regular Algebra II class my senior year. I also

remember liking my gym class because you got to specialize, and I took tennis as my gym class.

Athletes didn't have to take gym classes they would credit out with their sport.

Wendy felt that teachers in this school showed her learning could be fun and that learning does not

always require seriousness to be effective. The change in perception led to a change in her teaching;

Wendy sees educators and education as a whole and highlights the importance of teachers paying

attention to their students' strengths when the student cannot see them for themselves.

I graduated from high school in 1988. In high school, I don't remember if it was Junior and

Senior year, but I took computer programming 1 and 2. In programming 1 there were a few

other girls and I found that I was good at this, so I took programming 2. I was the only girl, and I

remember debugging code we were all working on, and I was the only one who found the error

and fixed the code. But never did anyone say you should look into computers as a career, no one

ever took me aside and say you know that this is a male-dominated field, and being a woman of

color, you would probably have a lot of doors available to you. It is my one real regret or missed

opportunity in life.

Just imagine I could have been Bill Gates or Steve Jobs. LOL!

All participants referred to members of their families when considering the role of continued learning

and growth in their lives. Wendy discussed how her mother and father contributed to her drive and

resilience toward self-improvement.

As a child of an immigrant mother and American father, my childhood was full of contradictions.

My father was educated, did well in high school, went to community college; his family was

wealthy then he was drafted during Vietnam. He was sweet and loving but not a hard worker.

My mom was the opposite in every way. She was a poor, uneducated woman from what

was back then a third-world country. Korea today is much more like the US, but in the '60s and

70s, it was in many ways still a third-world country, especially for the poor and uneducated like

my mother. The one thing my mother has always had is grit. I have never known a woman who

worked and still works as hard as my mother. She was street smart and a survivor.

My parents were truly two sides of a coin. I never had much help at home when it came

to school. My dad, while educated, didn't feel he was the one who should be helping me with

schoolwork and my mom didn't have the ability to help so it was me on my own most of the

time.

I think both my parents saw the value of education but didn't know how to create a

homelife where it was given value. The only time I remember ever being given any kind of

acknowledgment of my educational value was the day I graduated from high school. To this day,

I can hear my father say "outstanding job" to me. Of course, when I moved on and got my

degree in college, he was much more vocal about how proud he was of me. But I really don't

recall a lot of praise as a teen or child.

According to the data, Alice highlighted encouragement and formation of the authentic self as most

important in her reflections. Alice displayed these attributes through stories where teachers either

encouraged or acknowledged her performance or when they discouraged or ignored her. Alice used

these experiences to move forward through applying positive reappraisal (Garland, E. et al., 2009,

Nagoski, 2020) to reframe and influence the future.

> My art teacher was a super artsy abstract person (which looking back, I can't believe he taught
>
> elementary art for as long as he did). I did an extra credit assignment and drew a realistic
>
> colored pencil drawing of the house across the street from mine and he showed absolutely no
>
> interest in it. I was super proud of it and thought it was my best piece ever but he just dismissed
>
> it. It really turned me away from drawing as an artist and reminds me to always show
>
> enthusiasm when my students show me extra work they do.

For Dorothy, an aspiring administrator and special education teacher, belonging and acceptance were

also important, but emotional resilience became a prevalent theme in her data; she attributes it to her

past and upbringing when speaking about resilience.

> Lately, I have felt like my most authentic self, inside and outside of the field of education. I really
>
> value being able to take learning experiences from the past, whether they are in my personal or
>
> professional life and use them to my advantage. For instance, when I was younger and growing
>
> up, I was put into circumstances that led to some lifelong trauma. I have used the coping skills
>
> from this trauma to realize who I was as a person. An example of this is the following; when I
>
> was younger, I was put in circumstances that made me uncomfortable, and a valuable resource I
>
> learned was communicating with people that I might have a hard time getting along with. Now
>
> that I am an adult professional, I use these experiences in two ways. One, I know how to talk to

people, and two, I know that behind everyone is a story. I know that people deserve a

connection, no matter how difficult the situation is.

So, lately, I have been able to channel these lessons into my most authentic self. I have

grown and learned that people, all people, deserve a chance to communicate and express

themselves even if I do not agree with them. In my new role as assistant principal, I have to talk

to a lot of people, some of them who do not like what I have to say and some of them who don't

like me just because of my title. Because of the lessons I learned in my youth, I try to be as

authentic as possible with these people. Sometimes, a person just wants to know that you're

struggling also. And this is what makes me authentic in my leadership. I try to give empathy and

compassion to everyone I meet and communicate with, regardless of how I know that they feel

about me. Trauma and resilience have taught me how to be compassionate and empathetic. In

turn, people have learned that they can trust me and that I have integrity. My authentic self is

about creating connections with people, even the most challenging of people.

Postmodern Educators

Figure 2 in this section represents the importance of each of Slattery's descriptors of postmodernism for

each participant, as seen in the data sources. A content analysis was completed foreach writing sample

and then counted the frequency for each element. I then converted the counts using the system

included below the figure. The overall data did not reveal drastic discrepancies for any one descriptor.

Still, it does demonstrate that all descriptors share an almost equal importance in the formation of a

postmodernist attitude, which informs an educator's identity. Rather than discuss individual data points

for each participant, Figure 2 illustrates the impact of these descriptors for all participants.

Figure 2 - *Descriptors of postmodernism (Slattery, 2013) - overall counts for all three participants*
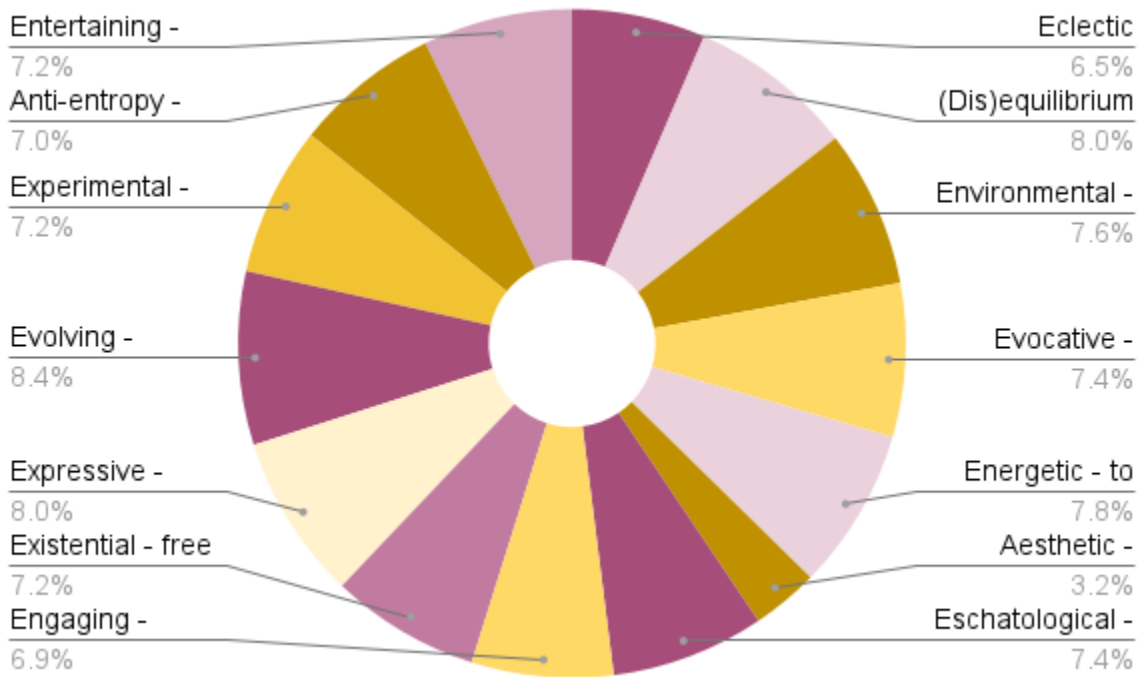
As mentioned, I coded the data for the characteristics represented in Table 8, p. 59. Figure 2 illustrates

the frequency of each descriptor. Evolving - *Reinventing and Growing* was seen most frequently at 8.4%,

and *Aesthetic - beauty* was the least important at 3.2%. All other areas shared a close relationship

between 8.0% and 6.5% frequency.

Feminist Leadership

The last set of criteria used to code the participant's data came from feminist leadership theory and

characteristics of feminist leaders. An overlap can be seen between feminist leadership characteristics,

postmodern educator descriptors, and the patterns in the data, as illustrated in Tables 7, 8, and 9, pgs.

58 and 59. The converted rating scale for all data sets is included for reference.

Figure 3 - *Characteristics of Feminist leaders by Participant*
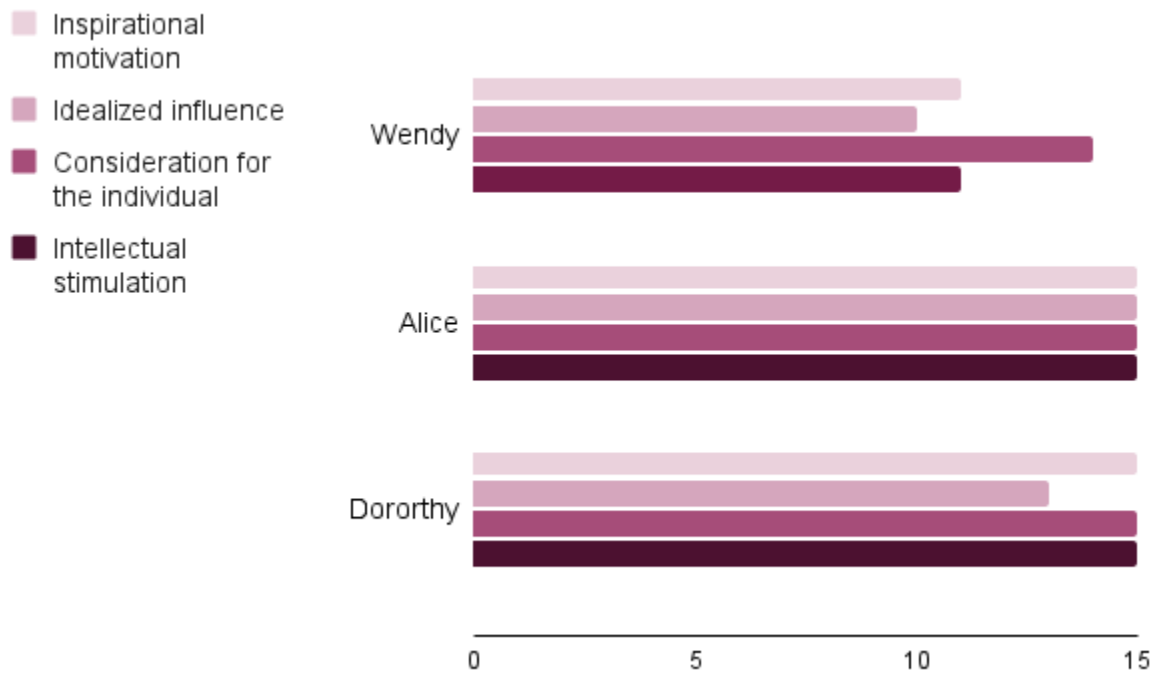
Scale of 0-3	
0	no mention
1	mentioned 1-2 times
2	mentioned at least 3-5 times
3	mentioned 6 or more times

Figure 3 demonstrates an even distribution of qualities of feminist leaders, especially

Consideration of the Individual, which was very strong in all three participants. Alice and Dorothy's

responses aligned closely; they both emphasize *Inspirational motivation* and *Intellectual stimulation* in

leadership. *Inspirational motivation* includes communicating a vision with enthusiasm and optimism.

Intellectual *stimulation* involves collaborating and problem-solving with constituents (Kark et al., 2003,

cited in Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007).

Influence

In addition to understanding the characteristics that define authentic, feminist, and postmodern educators and how their memories contribute to who they become, this study also explores educators' influence on each other as feminist colleagues.

To make a visual comparison, I created an interactive timeline of mine and the participants' educational experiences to examine the timespan of the experiences in relationship to each other. The timeline is included in Appendix H and also (hyperlinked here). Timelining is considered useful because it can, "...look beyond aggregated views of their data to see specific events, how they unfolded, and how they were connected" (Disney, 2020). By timelining the data, I was able to see where we entered each other's lives and how many influential events happened before we even set foot in a classroom or decided to become educators. Although this is a small sample, it indicates the significant role our experiences play in our interactions with students and colleagues.

Most striking was seeing, in this format, the number of years between when Wendy and I started school and when Dorothy and Alice started school. The age difference does not seem as significant until you see it in the timeline format. Wendy and I are from a generation that experienced education prior to the internet and social media. The timeline format demonstrates the generational differences that may have affected our school experiences. Alice, the youngest of the participants displayed high levels of emotional resiliency and open mindedness, and although she is younger, she seemed to understand the impact teachers make on students much earlier and more easily. Dorothy demonstrated the most consistently high levels of the four characteristics of a feminist leader. Her mother was a school leader, and as she reported in the data, a big influence on her career path. The timeline also demonstrates how the instability participants experienced growing up was influential to their memories of school and contributed to their desire to be authentic in all aspects of life, including their career.

Chapter V: Discussion

The participant's stories and reflections reveal that memories of past experiences influence authenticity and thoughtful interactions for feminist educators. Wendy, Alice, and Dorothy told stories about their neighborhood schools, moving between schools, teacher interactions with students, and how teachers, mentors, and administrators treated them. They reflected on authenticity (or lack of) in various moments of their lives, with the understanding that taking a mindful approach to feelings of authenticity leads to critical reflection and decision-making. Leadership programs do not typically address this, and if they do, it presents a paradox between felt emotions and actions. Their stories communicated those memories influenced them today as educators, students, and in some cases, as parents. A person who values authenticity in all aspects of life also needs acceptance. All three women demonstrated the characteristics of feminist leadership and how experiences in their lives encouraged them to value authenticity. Wendy, Alice, and Dorothy indicated that, as educators, there is never enough time for true critical reflection, although critical reflection is essential to growth. Alice discussed her experience as a teacher in a school with a superintendent who values the time it takes for reflection.

I mean, coincidentally enough, one of our professional development days, our superintendent kind of had us answer this question. So, we were in like small groups with people that we wouldn't usually be with, so I was with a behavioral specialist, librarian, and like a history teacher, and we all kind of talked about how we had those teachers, particularly in high school that like wrecked our days, and how we like actively to try too not be like that. And even though this person made whatever class that was horrible. Like, it kind of motivates all of us to not be like that or if we are you know having like an off day, then like the next day we come back we're like, you know what, that wasn't how I should have behaved as your teacher like I'm sorry like being more apologetics and how past educators might have been especially like.

When leaders value social-emotional growth over and above test scores and content mastery, they allow students and staff to reflect on their past educational experiences and to make improvements. Ultimately, this will have a positive effect on student achievement as well. Reflection is the first step to acknowledging the biases we carry into our careers. Bias affects how teachers interact with students, particularly when setting expectations for students. Past experiences create biases, and they also inspire educators to do things either the same as or very different from their experience. I would argue that there is value in prioritizing time for educators to critically self-reflect on past educational experiences. The practice of reflection should be continuous and job-embedded for educators and educational institutions.

Interestingly, all study participants are lifelong learners, recently graduating from or in graduate programs. Self-reflection is encouraged in higher education and based on the data; all participants seek this type of reflection and growth. Based on the data, Wendy, Alice, and Dorothy are authentic, feminist, and postmodern educators who value critical self-reflection and rely on memories of educational experiences to form their identity as educators.

Authenticity & Memories

In this section, I will reflect on each research question by relating the collected data and analysis with the goal of the question. In addition to my participants' data, I will also include my data to critically reflect on my educational experiences and interactions alongside those of the participants.

Research Puzzle #1

How does a feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences in and outside of school, contribute to their authentic and feminist leadership style?

I decided to focus on authenticity and the effect authenticity has on an educator's everyday life based on my experience as a teacher and school administrator. It was important to me to look at this through feminist leadership theory. When I learned about this theoretical framework, I immediately felt

this described my leadership values and my experience with the participants. I reflected on this in my journal.

> As a teacher and leader, I continually refer to my experiences with teachers. My second-grade teacher was kind and accepting of me. I also had a third-grade teacher who I felt recognized me for who I was - she even knew that I liked animals, so she brought me a rabbit from her farm to keep as a pet. I felt safe with, seen, and valued by these teachers.

I referred to my positive and negative experiences when developing relationships with students. The kindness my second and third-grade teachers showed me has always meant a lot and is something I think about all the time when working with students and colleagues. These two teachers made me feel seen and gave me a sense of belonging that had little to do with academics but had a positive effect on my work in the classroom as well.

In the Ed.D. coursework, I became familiar with Patrick Slattery's descriptors of postmodernism related to curriculum development. This work resonated with me as an artist and an educator because my MFA studies focused on discussions of feminist identity and post-modern deconstruction of personal narratives. As a teacher and leader, I rely on authenticity in myself and my stakeholders for success because meaningful connections with my students and colleagues are essential to trust building and teamwork. Wendy described our interactions when I was her supervisor.

> Respect and empathy. I always felt like I got both respect and empathy from you as my supervisor as well as a teacher. Further, I have always admired your ability to handle stressful situations with grace. I will never forget the one time at a faculty meeting another teacher was being aggressive and attacked the administration. You didn't react angrily back at them or about the situation. You just ended the conversation and said that you would talk with them privately and then moved on I thought, "Wow! I don't know she does that and if I could have done that" You just have this zen and patience about you.

As a leader, when I was feeling authentic, I could exhibit the characteristics Wendy observed; moments of inauthenticity created physical stress for me, which led to headaches and fatigue. When I remain grounded in my authentic self and aligned with my values, I have more clarity and am healthier. I reflected on this in my journal.

> *I felt confident in my abilities for a while now because the co-principal model that we were in allowed me to focus on things that I'm strong in. I think of myself as a strong leader and an advocate for the arts and in a school like mine the principal should be those things, but now with half of that whole principal team out and I'm sure if either I'm not confident in my abilities to focus on everything or other people aren't confident in me. It just makes me feel like I have in the past where I am uncomfortable unless I'm able to be creative, hands-on, and aligned with my values and strengths. And when I don't feel confident that's why my stress level rises, and I don't feel authentic. I want to note that this feels like emotional overload stress in my body, it results in sleep loss, fatigue, and headaches.*

I was in a leadership position when I interacted professionally with Dorothy. When reflecting on our interactions, she explained,

> I do know if I have any specific memories, they're more general, but when I think of our interactions, I remember that you are one of the kindest, most authentic, and genuine educators/leaders I have ever met. I have never seen you in a bad mood; it seems like you meet challenges with a smile and compassion. I have often looked up to you in the way you communicate and interact with students, teachers, and parents. I have always admired your patience and even-keeled-ness when combatting a challenging situation. These are things that you have inadvertently taught me.

This study allowed me to understand the importance of authenticity as a leader. The ability to remain calm in the face of pressure, communicate clearly, and help the community feel safe were qualities that

I worked to cultivate. It is validating to know that my colleagues recognized this. When I no longer felt

that I could be this way, I became concerned and wanted to cultivate this in other leaders.

Alice provided a slightly different perspective of our interactions because she was my student.

> I reflect a lot on the things you did in the classroom when I present myself in my room. I
>
> remember you were working on your principal's cert (I think) and making art for the
>
> coffeehouse jazz show t-shirt logo things during our studio times. I always thought it was cool to
>
> see a teacher still doing art and taking classes instead of telling us to work quietly and playing on
>
> Facebook. I do that now with my students, and it helps make a connection with them. They see
>
> me working on my grad classes and wedding centerpieces, and they get really into what I'm
>
> doing. They ask questions and help me out, or they sit next to me and talk to me while they
>
> work on their stuff. It's been a weird but effective classroom management tool.

My goals as a teacher were to connect first and be myself with my students, including being an

artist, a student, and a teacher. My need to stay connected with myself happened due to frustration and

disconnection that I felt during my first year of teaching shortly after entering the classroom. I was able

to step back and examine what felt "off" to me and reconnect with the reason I started teaching in the

first place. A new teacher juggles many responsibilities that student relationships can fall low on the

priority list. This study emphasizes the need for a priority shift in teacher education and mentoring to

encourage new teachers to focus on three things: curriculum, student relationships, and critical self-

reflection.

New teachers and leaders would benefit from time and space to consider their views on

authenticity. Inauthenticity leads to job dissatisfaction and a desire to leave the profession. Over the

past 20 years, the US Department of Education teacher shortage area report (2021) dashboard shows an

increased need for English and Mathematics teachers in all grade levels. Following the pandemic, both in

Pennsylvania and nationwide, teachers are leaving the profession. In a Brookings survey of teachers

before and during the pandemic,

> a high proportion of teachers reported having considered leaving or retiring during the 2020-
>
> 2021 academic year. In March 2021, 42% of teachers declared they have considered leaving or
>
> retiring from their current position during the last year. Of these, slightly more than half say it
>
> was because of COVID-19 (Zammaro et al., 2021).

> Although the study stated at least 40% of the teachers reported that colleagues contemplated

leaving, many have not yet left teaching; shifting the priorities could help save their jobs. Other studies

report that teacher turnover has not yet reached the projected peak. High poverty areas continue to

experience the highest teacher turnover rates, and researchers are concerned we have not seen the

highest numbers we will eventually see.

The Washington Post (2021) reported about seven educators who left the classroom after they

experienced deep stress and suicidal ideation. "There is a lot of trauma in teaching. It's rewarding but

also takes an emotional toll. … I was already dealing with that, and the pandemic just broke me*"

(*Streeter, 2021). The first time I needed to realign with my authentic self, came from frustration and

critical self-reflection on these feelings, like moments expressed by my participants. Frustration became

a motivator for change. All participants had experiences that questioned the authenticity of a teacher or

leader; these experiences influenced the participant to become more authentic themselves, to make a

change. If we can look at the events that transpired since March of 2020 and make changes, we could

prevent a mass exodus from education from happening. An example of this shift, or *positive reappraisal*

(Garland, E. et al., 2009) of negative memory, can be seen in Alice's story.

> This has been such a permanent memory in my mind since he (the teacher) allowed this girl to
>
> bully me using LGBTQ+ terms and gave me an uncalled for detention. I tell this story to my

students now when I have to discipline them since I often will pull both parties to the side to

discuss what the issue is instead of just taking one side of the story.

Wendy referred to this experience as one where a student situation challenged her authenticity and

affected her.

> …when I had a student say ugly racist remarks to me and I continued to have the student in my
>
> class. I killed him with kindness, but I cried the entire way home that day, and I don't think I was
>
> ever the same. I felt the need to be more "white" and always happy at my school after that.

She expressed this discomfort in the form of anxiety. She reflected on this in her questionnaire when

asked how our relationship influenced her classroom.

> I would carry over more of that zen or patience. I still think, "how would (sic. MaryJo) handle
>
> this situation". I miss having you to vent to or help me calm down when I felt anxious. I do
>
> believe I suffer from anxiety and ADHD, but I have never been diagnosed. My anxiety tends to
>
> come out as anger which many times makes situations worse. I always found that you were
>
> patient with that anxiety. I try to carry that with me now.

Wendy's responses are examples of an educator reflecting on her practice, even the most damaging

events, to inspire positive change and growth personally and professionally. Learning about my

influence on these educators and how I supported them reinforces my theory that critical self-reflection,

communication between colleagues, and allowing educators to be themselves in the classroom

positively affect student-teacher relationships and classroom culture. Wendy's reflection on positive and

negative experiences explains the influence of memories.

> I have both positive and negative influences when I think back to my past education. We moved
>
> a lot, and I attended a lot of different schools. (15 to be exact) between kindergarten and 12th
>
> grade. It made an impact on how I viewed lots of things. I was a bright student who did well
>
> most of the time, but I was bullied a lot or treated differently because I was the new kid or the

only kind of color. I did, however, have some small experiences with teachers who saw me and gave me opportunities. Teachers who made learning fun for me and made me want to learn. They were few and far between. The other thing I saw little of was teachers that looked like me. I think many of my negative influences actually became positive in the end because they influenced who I wanted to be as a teacher by showing all the ways to not be.

The data included several adverse events that inspired a positive response. Again, this phenomenon is known as *positive reappraisal*, "a critical component of meaning-based coping that enables individuals to adapt successfully to stressful life events'' (Garland, E. et al., 2009, Nagoski, 2020). Positive reappraisal was a critical characteristic in all participants and must be considered when developing future educators and leaders. I conclude that educators must unpack and discuss the events of the past and their lasting memories to inspire and encourage feminist educators to either replicate the positive experiences in their classrooms or change based on the experiences that the educator perceives as harmful. Change occurs through a positive reappraisal of the situations to make a change. If we ignore these experiences and do not validate their importance, we are doing teachers and students a disservice.

I reflected on how this made me feel.

Today I was in a presentation with families after post-covid closures. We brought the families back in, excited to see everyone. In the presentation, a fellow administrator announced, "glad that's over, we won't talk about that time anymore!!". It turns out I was hurt and uncomfortable with the idea of pushing out the traumatic memories we all endured as a community and forgetting about and not acknowledging the amazing things we did while surrounded by uncertainty and chaos.

As seen in this data, authenticity and the ability to recognize and align with one's values with action is extremely valuable to educators. This is true because educators constantly interact with people who may challenge authenticity and with individuals who will benefit from it. A feminist educator who is resilient despite criticism, open to challenging the status quo, and possesses the ability to positively reappraise a circumstance through critical self-reflection is building their authenticity through this process. The feminist educator's school trajectory, including experiences inside and outside of the school plays a vital role in the development of these traits in the participants in this study. They can reflect on the past and understand how it affects the present. This could have a positive impact on teacher retention because educators who are considering leaving the profession, but also possess these qualities, may be able to step back and reflect on how authenticity was built on their memories and experiences with others to shift from despair to rethinking the status quo in order to make positive change. These qualities must be fostered and developed through critical reflection and reappraisal.

Research Puzzle #2

How does being an authentic educator affect who we are in our personal and professional lives?

Initially the participants and I defined authenticity by reflecting on situations that felt authentic and those that felt inauthentic. The reflections included the physical and mental sensations of each. Dorothy best-described authenticity in a simple sentence.

> I guess for me, authenticity is like, when I walk into the building, I'm the same person as I was
> five seconds before I walked in and when I walk out of the building.

Each participant described negative physical sensations when forced out of their authentic selves. Each woman felt sensations such as the inability to breathe, crying, anger, fear, and an "inauthentic bubble." Alice explained.

These feelings of uneasiness and not being authentic negatively affect my students and myself. It is just overall a bad time for everyone. It is like there is an unspoken haze clouding my classroom, and I am not a fan.

Educators who feel this way cannot connect with themselves, students, colleagues, or the curriculum and will not be effective in the classroom. Feelings of inauthenticity will also negatively affect the educator's personal life. By contrast, reflective and authentic educators will have the opportunity to build their resilience and, therefore, be better equipped to meet the challenges of a career in education. Dorothy reflected on this in the closing interview.

Everybody has a story, right, so like I think reflecting on our own story opens up the compassion to others, like these are the struggles that I went through when I was 13,14, 15, 16, 17, like and this is what shaped my education and, you know, we're in a high school where these kids are making very big decisions about their future and you almost can't not reflect on where you were at that time like what were you doing when you were 16 and 17 and applying to these colleges and sometimes I feel like they forget like that there are so many influences and stimuli to these kids because they like don't reflect on our past experiences and how that has shaped them like our students are in that like they're about to embark on, you know, paths that are going to shape the rest of their lives.

In my journal, I reflected on feelings of inauthenticity and the effect of stress on my body and mind.

I started the school year in 2021 feeling what I thought was solid and strong. But after two years of rapid-fire COVID decision making and questioning every move I made, I was worn out and tired. When things changed in the administrative team, I began to experience a sense of dread and panic that I had not ever experienced before. The stress affected my health.

During the pandemic, I was flooded with memories of past leadership roles, teaching in my classroom, being with students, and what it was like when I was a student. I remembered it felt like holding back and not speaking up, even when I disagreed or knew it could be better. My silence originated from fear. Even when I knew the best way forward, I felt silenced by fear. When I became an assistant principal, my insecurities were fewer because I could lead with heart and intuition, like when I was with students in the classroom. I felt more authentic and confident and rarely experienced self-doubt. The experience was different for me because, in my first leadership role as a supervisor, I assumed self-doubt was par for the course, and the only time I didn't experience it was when I was teaching. I blamed it on a transactional leadership style in that school. I kept my head down and did the best job I could under the circumstances but never felt fully able to be myself, except as a teacher, and fortunately, I was still teaching in that position, and eventually, when the workload became unrealistic, and my superior falsely questioned my integrity, I knew it was time to move on. At the time, I thought I had found the ideal place for my skills and goals.

Reflection is proven to be an effective tool to remain connected and authentic. By contrast, educators can compare feelings of authenticity with acceptance, connection, clarity, and belonging. Dorothy describes the physical sensation of authenticity for her.

In my body, when I am feeling authentic, I feel like I can breathe easier. Truly, it feels like my lungs get filled with air, and I feel very light, as opposed to when I am feeling inauthentic when my heart is pounding, and my breathing is shallow. When I connect with people, I feel the same feelings, at peace.

Lessons Learned - Authenticity & Intuition

In the data, intuition came up as a vital asset for an authentic educator; importantly, trusting one's intuition and feeling trusted are critical to educator authenticity in the classroom or school. Critical reflection helps hone intuition because educators can analyze their thoughts, motives, and decisions. Critical reflection must be meaningfully job-embedded for educators.

When leaders or educators do not trust their intuition, they may suffer from decision fatigue or analysis paralysis. Malcolm Gladwell describes this as "verbal overshadowing" in his 2006 book *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. He explains verbal overshadowing as "when the attempt to explain and rationalize decisions prevents us from making good intuitive decisions" (Gladwell, 2006). Gladwell asserts, "truly successful decision-making relies on a balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking" (Gladwell, 2006). The key is critical thinking. Gladwell's theory is that our gut reaction and initial judgments are often more accurate than our more thought-out ones. In his analysis of Gladwell's work, author Dan Silvestre warns that these judgments "can also be a result of a subconscious racial, socioeconomic, or appearance-based bias. As important as it is to trust our intuition, it's also important to question it" (Silvestre, 2018). Critical self-reflection is the balance between the two. Reflecting on personal and professional decisions highlights our unconscious bias.

In the education field, there are two areas where critical reflection could begin to affect change: teacher evaluation protocols and master's degree programs for teachers. The continued scholarship is essential. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics - NCES (2018), in 2017-18 50% of public schools and approximately 40% of private and charter schoolteachers held a master's degree. Higher education is the perfect venue for teachers to build reflection skills and best practices.

Authenticity plays an important role in the personal and professional lives of educators. Educators who experience feelings of inauthenticity cannot connect with themselves, students, colleagues, or the curriculum and therefore will not be effective in the classroom. Feelings of

inauthenticity will also negatively affect the educator's personal life and affect work/life balance. By contrast, educators who feel they can be authentic in their roles will have the opportunity to build their resilience and, therefore, be better equipped to meet the challenges of a career in education. This can be achieved by reflection and self-awareness, but also relies on leaders to trust and allow teachers to have autonomy over their classrooms. Administrators must acknowledge the fact that their schools are filled with leaders who need support and safety to take creative risks in order to do things differently, to be their authentic selves.

Limitations, Ethical Concerns, & Assumptions

This study relied on autoethnographic methods informed by narrative inquiry; therefore, I chose participants based on our previous relationships. These relationships most certainly could influence the participant's responses since they may not want to hurt my feelings or tell me something that I did to impact them negatively. I addressed this proactively by setting norms for the study protocols, including conversations and journals that encourage honesty and critical reflection. To establish trust, I started the process with a written questionnaire to allow the participants to begin their reflection in writing rather than face to face.

Additionally, there are geographical similarities between the participants and me since we have all worked in the northeastern region of the United States. I question if these parallels provide clear evidence that the trajectory informed the career path and purpose since there are no significant discrepancies in our geography. Participant memory is another limitation. Memories fade over time, and aspects of this study rely on the participants' memories. I considered the fact with the understanding that perception of an event is as powerful as the actual reality of that event. Lastly, although this is also one of the aims for the study, there is a chance that I could have discovered that educator trajectory and experience do not inform educator authenticity and, in fact, could have no impact. The findings support the assumption that the study participants value authenticity and their past experiences impact their

work in education. This study could be performed again with a larger participant group that identifies as male, non-binary, or transgender.

Assumptions

Before the study began, I assumed that the participants saw themselves as authentic and already did some level of critical reflection on their teaching practice and may have related the experience to personal views of authenticity. Engaging in this study also meant that I assumed the participant's educational experiences made a difference in their careers in or outside the school building.

Implications for Practice

This research has multiple implications that I would like to address. Since starting this doctoral program, I left school administration to pursue alternative pathways in education. Critical reflection on my past educational experiences and my influence in the classroom at an earlier stage in my career, helped me better understand my impact on students and colleagues. The art of teaching and fostering relationships came quickly to me from the start; I took this for granted and sought to discover if others felt the same way. As a school leader, I paid particular attention to reinforcing these qualities with the teachers I evaluated and coached. If an educator was "a natural" in the classroom or impacted students in less tangible, traditional ways, such as personal connection and student rapport, I was sure to make the teacher aware that I noticed and valued these qualities. My goal was to help educators value their authenticity and not take it for granted, as I did for a long time.

This study has a potential impact on the teaching profession because it validated the importance and value of the characteristics of feminist leadership and postmodernist views of education. Educators who are open minded and open to creative risk taking are more likely to enjoy the profession and strive for transformative classrooms. Transactional leadership and micromanaging will impede the growth of

authentic and creative educational environments. Every educator has past experiences in their

educational trajectory, acknowledging the experiences, either crystalizing or paralyzing, is the first step

in understanding what shapes our values. Values and authenticity are tied to intuition, and intuition

relies on trust. When asked what their supervisor can do to support their authenticity, Alice, Wendy, and

Dorothy said that administrators can trust the teacher's intuition and open the lines of communication

so that educators feel safe to take creative risks to reinvent their classrooms and curriculum. Negative

experiences do not necessarily glean negative results. The participants in this study examined their

experiences and reflected on how they enacted positive reappraisal to transform education one student

or one classroom at a time. Based on the results of this study I recommend embedding reflection on

past experiences through timelining to become a regular practice for pre-service or in-service educators.

Devoting time to reflect on experiences with colleagues in a non-evaluative format, as a student and in

each role in the education field, will prove to be time well spent.

Addressing Teacher Shortages

> *There is a lot of trauma in teaching. It's rewarding but also takes an emotional toll. … I was*
>
> *already dealing with that, and the pandemic just broke me.* (Streeter, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted problems in the education system before, and teachers

have been stressed and overwhelmed ever since. The windfall of the pandemic challenged many

teachers' personal and professional values, and when values are challenged, authenticity is affected.

Authenticity helps maintain optimism in hard times or makes a difficult situation more meaningful. This

research will enable policymakers to examine teacher shortages to develop practical ways to increase

the number of professionals who enter the field, and who stay because they view their profession as on

where they can grow intellectually and personally, and as a pathway to emotional resilience and an

authentic expression of their values. These feelings are a far cry from a career centered on fear of

mistakes and repetitive cycles of uncertainty year after year. Allowing teachers to critically reflect and

embrace authenticity as professionals will help build stronger connections and keep teachers in the

profession. Embedding reflection and acknowledgment of experiences can help educators to rethink

their motives and practices, and to develop their values as educators. Conversation with colleagues can

enable educators to hear how others address similar situations and create trusting and supportive

relationships. The same practice can be used with students to empower them to take ownership in their

own education. This dissertation includes tools for reflection and an action plan (Appendix N) for schools

to begin to embed reflective practices into their employee evaluations and daily practice. Evidence

supports that critically reflective educators are more satisfied in their jobs and create more authentic

connections with students and each other (Larrivee, 2020). Critical reflection is a process by which an

educator looks at situations as opportunities for self-reflection, change, and growth.

Rationale for Change - Implications for Future Research

Educational Leadership is facing a challenge. Too often, there is a lack of volunteers to lead for

fear of being "wrong." Typically, people do not trust leaders; therefore, they do not want to be

associated with this group. Traits like inauthentic charisma, fear-based strategies, and false promises

overshadow kindness, compassion, connection, and collaboration. The feminist leadership theoretical

framework relies on examining the differences related to dependence and interdependence. Gender

identification may create distinct differences in leadership styles because of how males and females are

raised and perceived in our society. Cross and Madson (1997) in Gabriel and Gardner (1999) argued that

those who identify as men are relatively more independent, and those who identify as women, *or

feminine*, are generally more interdependent (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). Feminist leadership is not

necessarily reserved for those born female. Feminist leaders relate well to others and thrive in the social

aspects of leadership. Social leaders value stakeholders' views rather than only their own opinions to

make crucial decisions. They learn from experience, inside and outside their leadership role, and they

reflect on memories to learn from the positive and change from the challenging experiences they have endured. Paolo Freire's *Transformational Ideology* (1970) emphasizes dialogue as central to transformational change, "dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and people . . . Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself" (p. 89). Love is an essential characteristic for feminist leaders. Dialogical love (Freire, 1970) is characterized by humility, faith in the people, hope, critical thinking, and ultimately, solidarity. Feminist leadership includes collaboration, creativity, dialogue, community, and vital emotional intelligence and consists of transformational, constructivist, and postmodern leadership styles. The leader and the stakeholders work together in collaboration and community (Lambert et al.,1995 as cited in Wacuka Kanyiri, 2012).

Although this study focused on females assigned at birth and identify as female; future research should focus on feminist leaders who identify as male, transgender, and non-binary, people of any gender expression can enact feminist leadership goals. To truly study the impact of feminist leadership, it is vital to examine a variety of feminist leaders, particularly those who do not label themselves as such, but exhibit the qualities of a feminist leader and how these qualities affect their work/life balance, relationships with colleagues and constituents, and their feelings of authenticity.

Inspire New Leaders

This autoethnographic study was informed by the narratives of my participants. Through this work and this program, I reflected on my trajectory as a student, teacher, and school leader to define my values *a*s others see them, how I see them in myself, and to understand what authenticity is in education and its importance. Leadership has different meanings for many people. When I entered the education field, I did not set out to be a leader. In each educational setting where I worked, there was a need for someone to step up and say, "I'll do it!" I never ran for student government or answered first in class in school, but I found small ways to lead retrospectively. This study was an opportunity to gather data informing how educators who may be reluctant to become school leaders can be inspired to be

agents of change in any position. Many people have said these exact words to me, "I would never want to be a principal." In my experience, these are usually the people who would be *excellent* leaders if we can allow them to be their authentic selves as leaders. It would be beneficial to educational leadership to do two things, encourage leadership for in-service teachers, which includes empowering educators to trust their intuition to take creative risks, and then to reflect on the outcomes to transform educational experiences for students and teachers. Administrators must be encouraged to allow for this in their schools, and systems must be rearranged to provide ample time for these efforts. The second suggestion is for pre-service teacher programs to address leadership as a possibility for educators and to emphasize the benefits for all members of the school community to enact leadership for transformational experiences through education. Pre-service educators should be encouraged to embrace change and to examine their own experiences to acknowledge where they were encouraged or discouraged, and how to make shifts based on these events.

Personal & Professional Transformation

The Kutztown Ed.D. program in Transformational Teaching and Learning transformed my life as an educator and a human being. I did not enter the program looking for drastic changes, nor did I think my career would shift the way it has in the past two years. It was quite the opposite; I joined the program as an assistant principal pre-pandemic. When COVID-19 happened, I transitioned to a district-level arts supervisor and principal. This change was exciting at first because it used my strongest skill sets.

In the past, I was an art supervisor and art teacher and missed having my hand directly in the arts. During the 2020 school shutdown, after the initial shock, I was excited about instructional design and reimagining the way art is presented in the "new normal." Much of what occurred in this time was genuinely successful and changed my thinking forever. The pandemic tested everything we all thought

we knew about equity. Students and teachers were on the front lines and actively experiencing education in a new, primarily unwanted, unplanned way, and frankly, it was terrifying for all of us.

I was scared, and as a result, service became my self-care. Because there was no plan, I intuitively listened. I moved carefully and thoughtfully with compassion, listening to all sides - from the medical professionals, parents, and students to the staff, the superintendents, and the school board. COVID-19 was sending people to the hospital in droves, my students and their families were affected, and I was at the table (literally in my kitchen, most days) making the decisions that affected their lives. Creatively, the results were staggering, and I could have never predicted the successes we had. Our audiences became more diverse; people who could not attend in-person performances could see their children and grandchildren dance, sing, and act from the comfort and safety of their homes. Students and staff made remarkable and innovative works of art, and I was able to open the school community up to welcome artists from around the world to speak to our community about their craft and the creative process. We hosted artists from India to Los Angeles to teach and connect with our students and staff. The possibilities were exciting, but fear was looming, not just the uncertainty of the pandemic but also the fear that all the positives would be lost when we "returned to normal school" because no one knew how it would look.

One essential thing I learned in this school was the positive strength of a team approach to leading. I realized that being a part of a team comes naturally, and in retrospect, I can compare it to being in the sculpture studio as an undergraduate BFA student. There was brainstorming, listening, learning from each other, tension, sensemaking, and compromise. Being an administrator shaped my leadership and educator values, and I am grateful for the experiences I had. In many ways, the abrupt trajectory shift that everyone endured when COVID shut down schools was the screeching halt we all needed to see what was happening under the surface. A rebirth follows this type of death, schools slowly opened back up under new guidelines, and ready students returned to school.

We discovered that students and teachers were traumatized and confused because remote learning was not all negative; it brought more time with family, less anxiety, less unhealthy routines, the ability to take a break, and more time for creativity and reflection.

Personally, I was conflicted about returning "back" to what we had before. Before the pandemic, the teachers I led were overworked and underpaid. They burned the candle at both ends to be teachers by day and directors, curators, conductors, producers, performers, and composers by night - all the while being available for students 24-7 over the internet. After the shutdown, budgets were tighter than ever, which meant working harder with fewer resources. The results were constant anxiety because I knew there could be a better way. My concerns largely fell on deaf ears or perhaps ears clogged with fear and anxiety. Even the educators who knew change could happen were drained and paralyzed with overwhelm. This is from my journal.

> In September of 2021, I had a panic attack at work. I must trust my intuition and take time off for myself and my family. This is the most challenging career decision I have made to date. While away from work, in conjunction with the work for my Ed.D., I am going to think about and research new ways to view education and learning.

I listened to podcasts from researchers like Brene Brown and Adam Grant to learn more about the emotions associated with work. I began to consider how to think differently about what we have always taken for granted as "truth," there is a negative impact when educators get stuck doing "what we always have always done."

Many 21st-century schools do not look very different from how they did at the start of the 20th century. I was curious how I came to value connections in the classroom with students or in one-on-one conversations with teachers. I looked back at my education, and I asked myself why some people value relationships more and think differently about leadership in the broad sense of the word. These were

questions inspired by our work in the Kutztown Ed.D. program. I knew I wanted to measure the impact

of memories on school educators and relationships for students and teachers. My curiosity would

eventually transform my career.

In December of 2021, I left school administration. During the previous three months, in my

research, I discovered that some people and organizations strive to widen the scope of what

"education" means and how this impacts people throughout their lifespan. Although this transformation

is ongoing, I have taken actions in response to this curiosity and desire to explore the conceptualization

of education beyond what we already "know" to a new, currently forming paradigm.

Professional Practice Products

As part of the Kutztown Ed.D. coursework, I created a **Leadership Collective** framework

(Appendix J) professional practice product. The group is for enthusiastic current or aspiring leaders

interested in empathetic and collaborative leadership. This group will help to move leadership beyond

transactional and top-down, to inspire us to research and create new ways of leading. This collective is

built on the work of contemporary researchers who study leadership and human interaction, for

example Brene Brown and Adam Grant.

Participants will be educators, managers, administrators, and aspiring leaders interested in

transcending the traditional notions of leadership. Together we will explore contemporary books,

podcasts, and Ted Talks (and more) by authors who challenge the status quo through postmodern and

feminist leadership principles rooted in empathy, emotional intelligence, creativity, curiosity, and

collaboration. Through critical self-reflection, the group will also discuss and explore how their past

experiences inform their present leadership.

Currently, the shared resource collection includes items that I have chosen, eventually, it will

include resources provided by the participants as well. I compiled a collection of books, quotes, videos,

and podcasts that have inspired me to break out of my shell and embrace transformational leadership

informed by feminist principles. To add to the resources for current and aspiring leaders, in the doctoral

coursework, I created an action plan to introduce memory exploration to address bias for educators

(Appendix N) and a resource to assist educators in creating their own timeline (Appendix O). These items

are contained on a website (Appendix J) and are a way to communicate my research and ideas with the

education community. The Leadership Collective, which is still in the beginning phases, will critically

examine leadership (in all fields) differently, with a focus on educators. When fully realized, I intend to

collect data and engage in research to give educators the tools to do this work.

Additionally, in early 2022, I launched **The Art of…**, (Appendix I). *The Art of*… is an organization

that approaches education differently, from a feminist point of view, with open-mindedness, kindness,

and creativity. *The Art of…,* is in the early stages of development and will encourage and support

creative thinking and safe, welcoming learning for all learning styles.

Currently, *The Art of…* is considered an education and arts organization that offers courses in

creativity and artmaking, book chats, teacher training, mentoring and support in Arts Integration, and

data collection and analysis. The name "*The Art of…*" implies a focus on the art in these areas and how

we can build creative capacity in education. My goal is for the Leadership Collective to exist under the

umbrella of The Art of…as we explore the "art of" leadership.

The Mission and Vision statement for The Art of… are:

Mission

To provide instruction and individual guidance in the art of creativity for people of all ages to help

develop their confidence, collaboration, and communication skills (Appendix I).

Vision

More than ever, education needs warm, welcoming, and creative spaces. We strive to provide safe, non-

judgmental, collaborative spaces to connect and encourage every person's unique voice"

(Appendix I).

Overall, the goal is to create a community that values authenticity and reflection. Using this research, I intend to work with students to provide positive models for learning and with teachers to support authenticity in their work.

Intended Impact

Professionally, I am exploring the education landscape. By the end of this study, I left school administration and am teaching asynchronous art courses for students in districts that either do not offer the required courses, or the students are in school overseas, or they are enrolled in a cyber program, or they may be learning at home for other reasons. I am also working with online learning platforms that offer virtual instruction, both as a teacher and a consultant, to develop curriculum scope and sequence, and instructor feedback models.

The pandemic opened the world, and education is not exception, in fact, the pandemic changed education in many ways for the better, and it is important that we do not go back to "the way it always was." There are alternate ways to educate and be educated, and we need to listen carefully and compassionately to the students, families, and educators, to learn what they need. I hope to be a part of these ongoing changes, to help schools, current, and future leaders, and teachers realize their impact on students in reimagined school settings.

Through the building of organizations that value the art of teaching, leadership, change, building community, and making real connections through learning, I hope to encourage more people to see themselves as leaders, to trust their intuition, and to unapologetically embrace their authentic selves.

Leadership is an action that brings people together. There are inherent traits that can be cultivated and encouraged in budding and reluctant leaders. Becoming a leader does not require moving to a new job or other drastic change; it may simply mean a shift in mindset that encourages meaningful connection with people, recognition of one's impact, continual growth, and the flexibility to spread more feminist leadership attributes throughout schools and learning organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted through Kutztown University. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether you want to participate in the study. The University requires that you give your signed agreement if you choose to participate.

This study is being conducted by MaryJo Rosania-Harvie, a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. in Transformational teaching and learning program at Kutztown University.

Title of the Study:

Strength, Beauty, and Resilience:

The Impact of Critical Self Reflection & Exploration of Memory on Postmodern,

Feminist Educational Leaders, Inside and Outside of the Classroom

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research study is to explore and define educator authenticity and to refine the values for leaders through autoethnographic methods informed by narrative inquiry.

The researcher will seek to determine how past educational experiences & memories impact feminist and postmodern educators, and how authenticity affects educators.

Procedures: If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to:

- Participate in an introductory meeting to explain the study

- Complete a written interview questionnaire (Appendix B) by _____

- Complete a minimum of 3 journal entries (Appendix C) by _____

- Create an educational timeline (Appendix D) by _____

- Complete a writing exercise - a letter to self (Appendix E) by _____

- Participate in a closing interview (Appendix F) on _____

Risks or Discomforts, and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has the following risks and/or discomforts will be the retelling of past experiences, which can at times be difficult, uncomfortable, or painful. This may potentially occur in the journaling and writing portions. Additionally, since I have worked with each participant in some capacity, there may be experiences that we were both a part of and that I contributed to; this may cause discomfort when communicating with the researcher. We will establish norms to reduce this risk and discomfort. The data collected is for research purposes and to help the researcher understand her impact as an educator and leader, it is not meant to be taken personally and there will be no retaliation.

The benefits of participation may be growth in the participants through critical self-reflection as educators.

All data will be stored using Google Drive via Google Classroom.

- To minimize data loss or breach risk, all data will be backed up to my personal hard drive after submission to Drive. All files on Google Drive will be stored only for the length of the study and removed by May 2022.

- All participants will be instructed to not include any personal identifiers (such as full names and locations) and to use initials in their responses.

- Should an identifier be used, all identifiers will be removed when the data is collected, and pseudonyms will be used. All initials and locations will be fictitious.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

Records will be kept private and will be handled confidentially to the extent provided by law. In any report or presentation, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a

research study participant. You will remain anonymous. All names, including personal and institutional, will be anonymized. All data will be kept in the researcher's personal Google Drive and will be archived upon completion of the study. When responding to written responses, the participants may anonymize their responses. When completing the data collection exercises, please refrain from using any personal identifiers for locations or people involved. Always use initials or pseudonyms.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is:
MaryJo Rosania-Harvie
1826 Wagner Drive
Easton, PA 18045
610-334-3502 - mrosa802@live.kutztown.edu

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Kutztown University
15200 Kutztown Road
Kutztown, PA 19530
610- 683-4000.
Dr. Kathleen Stanfa, faculty advisor - stanfa@kutztown.edu

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later regarding the research study, you may contact the researcher listed above. If you have any questions or concerns about research participants' rights, please contact the IRB Committee at Kutztown University at 484-646-4167.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Future Research Studies:

I will remove all identifiers from the identifiable private information, unless it is done by the participant. After such removal, the information/data collected could be used for future research studies and will not be distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you if this might be a possibility.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the information described above and have received a copy of this information. I have asked questions I had regarding the research study and have received answers to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

Name of Participant: _____

_____ _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Thank you for your participation in my research study!

Appendix B - Opening Interview Questionnaire Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study and complete this written interview questionnaire as part of my doctoral research. In my research, I hope to identify how I impact other educators through my teaching and leadership. We have a past or current relationship as part of your educational journey. Through this research I seek to define teacher authenticity and determine if there

are experiences in a feminist educator's past that impact their authenticity in their career, and if those

experiences are focused on content, relationships, or both. This research will focus specifically on three

feminist educators. My goal is to look for common threads in our experiences and time together to

benefit future educators and leaders who question their ability to be their authentic selves and to

support them in drawing on their past experiences to become better educators. There will be two

interviews, a written interview questionnaire and a closing interview. The purpose of today will be to

present the study and present the research protocols and expectations, and the final interview will be to

reflect after the writing exercises and finalize any questions. The final interview will be semi-structured.

Be assured that your responses will remain entirely confidential, you may anonymize your

writing, but if you do not, I will redact all names and identifiers. There will be no reference to you as an

individual except for any non-identifiable information that might be pertinent to the study (number of

years teaching in general, number of years teaching at each of your positions, subject taught, initials,

fictitious school names, etc.)

Before we begin, please take the time to consider if you have any questions for me. I want you

to feel comfortable and to respond honestly with me. I will start by explaining each data collection

element, then you may ask any questions that you have.

Interview #1 - INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

How many years have you been teaching or in education?
What made you decide to become a teacher/educator? Was there a specific moment that you realized this was the career for you?
How would you define your relationship with the researcher (now and/or in the past)?
What do you currently teach? What is your role in the school?
Are you planning to stay in this position? What are your career aspirations? What influenced these decisions?
How would you describe your current relationship with your students?
How would you describe your relationship with your teaching colleagues?

How would you describe your current relationship with your school leadership? Do you trust them? Why or why not?
When you think about interacting with the parents of your students, what do you think about? How do you feel about interacting with the parents of your students?
Can you describe a moment you felt uncomfortable as an educator? What was the moment, and what was your reaction to that?
Do you have any specific memories from our time together in the classroom or workplace? What is the first thing you think of when you think about our interactions together?
Has our connection in the past contributed to anything that you have done in the classroom or at school? If so, what, and how? Was it positive or negative?
What has been the impact of your past education (in or outside of school) on your current teaching career and identity as a teacher? Is the influence positive or negative?

How important is the classroom environment to you? What do you do to create this environment?
In your interactions with the researcher in the educational setting, what do you think they considered most important in the workplace/classroom?
Describe the role of social justice in your life and teaching? What or who has influenced these choices?
How important are the arts to your teaching and the integration of multiple intelligences in your education and teaching? What or who has influenced these choices?
Have you ever planned a cross-curricular lesson, project, or event with other members of your school community? What or who has influenced these choices?
How do you react when something you have tried with a student, colleague, parent, or admin? How willing are you to change what you are doing or try new things? What or who has influenced these choices?

What do you think makes a healthy classroom environment? What or who has influenced these

choices?

Appendix C - Personal Journal Writing Prompts

Participants will keep a digital journal that will be shared with the researcher upon completion. Participants will choose three instances to reflect upon and will record a minimum of three journal entries answering the following questions. The first entry will start with the following prompt: Define "authentic" educator and/or leader as you perceive it.

- Who do you see as an authentic educator?

- How can you say that an educator is being their authentic self? Provide an example.

Second and Third Entries:

Record a journal entry directly following or based on a memory or experience where you felt or thought you <u>could or could not</u> be your true self in the classroom, school, or workplace. These entries can be based on past or current experiences and can be in or outside the school setting.

- Try to write at least one entry for a time you could not be your authentic self and one

    for a time you could.

    ○ Describe the experience

- Reflect on the experience, answer the following:

    ○ What do feelings and thoughts of authenticity or lack of authenticity feel like in

    the body or the mind? Describe these feelings.

    ○ What or who led to these feelings? Was it an external influence or an internal

    influence?

    ○ How do these feelings affect you, your students, and your teaching?

    ○ What is the result of feeling this way in the moment and upon reflection?

    ○ Did this experience remind you of any other experiences you have had in your

    life?

    ○ If so, what experiences, if not why?

Appendix D - Education Timeline

To create an artifact to base the Letter to Self-and/or Journal writing on and to collect data, please

complete a timeline of your school experiences. This should start at your childhood or earliest memory

of school, through the present. For the purposes of this research, please highlight/include your

relationship with the researcher on the timeline and focus the content of the timeline on experiences

that define who you are as an educator. Feel free to elaborate on the events in the space below each

event.

This can be done based on the structure presented below or in another way that you choose.

Major Event	Timeframe/Year/location
Started School	

Appendix E - Letter-to-self writing exercise

Adapted from Dr. Amy Pfeiler-Wunder's course *Transformational Learning Styles and Instructional Design*, (2020). Kutztown University.

Using the below prompts, participants will compose a letter to self that maps and defines some of the most influential moments in their education based on their timeline. This letter will be addressed to themselves and shared with the researcher upon completion.

Use these questions to compose a letter to your past self. This may encompass any part of your past if it addresses the questions and ideas below:

- Consider highlighting defining experiences from your past and moments that you feel inform your ideas around education and teaching.

- Include the time that we worked together, as student/teacher or colleagues in your memory and reflection

- Begin with a story of how you "see" and perceive your education from early childhood to present

- What resonates with you throughout your experiences?

- Was being educated a part of family life/expectations/culture, schooling, religion/spirituality?

- Who influenced your education the most? The least?

- What are the most important things for an individual to learn? At home? In your formal educational settings? In both settings?

- How should or do people learn? Why?

- How have your past experiences influenced how you think about education today in your family, in the communities/organizations/institutions in which you work, in curriculum development, and understanding?

Sample Sentence Stems for this letter:

- My story of education begins with…

- as I moved through my middle school years…

- later during my high school years….

- I decided to pursue higher education because of….

- In my family, education was viewed as….

- At school (or other educational settings), I felt being educated meant…. **Consider family expectations, religion/spirituality, class, gender, race, etc.**

- The person that influenced my education the most was….

- The person that influenced me the least…

- These moments (both positive or negative) have impacted my growth as an educator and who I am as an educator.

- My experiences shaped what I believed was essential to know and learn…. this varied depending on context, place, and time…. (home/informal educational spaces)

- It also influenced my notions of what it means to be in the field of education…

- How do people learn? Why? What are my roles in learning as an educator, a parent….and a leader…?

- How do these reflections impact my decisions within my learning communities (organizations or institutions) and my ability to be myself in the classroom…

Appendix F - Closing Interview Protocol

Semi-structured closing interview questions will be based on collected data. The participants were

asked the following questions:

1. Tell me about the process of: defining authenticity? Reflection and journaling?

    a. Was this impactful to you? How?

2. Do you feel your past educational experiences ultimately influence who you are in our current

    role? If yes, how, if not why?

3. Do you see *value* in this type of reflection?

4. How do you see the role of intuition in your life, professional and personally - in the day to day?

5. Do you feel intuition can be measured? Explained?

6. As an empathetic leader/teacher/educator, what do you need to feel supported?

Appendix G - Patrick Slattery's Descriptors of Postmodernism (2013)

Eclectic: encouraging many styles, multiplicity, and interdisciplinary practices

> The parts and whole interact in a profound and dynamic harmony even in apparent disorder or

> dysfunction. Bifurcations are rejected in favor of holistic philosophy.

> Inclusion of marginalized and silenced voices-particularly from racial, gendered,

> sexual, socio-economic, linguistic, religious, and cultural perspectives, including

> voices of persons of various ages, abilities, languages, and locations are demanded.

> Eclecticism is best understood in the architectural roots of postmodernism in the

> the 1950s.

(Dis)equilibrium: While uncertainty is not comfortable, a citizen-based democracy

> is built on participation, which is the very expression of permanent discomfort.

> Modern, corporate, and rational systems depend on the citizens' desire for inner comfort

> and predictability. Postmodern (dis)equilibrium is the acceptance of permanent psychic

> discomfort as the best understanding of consciousness. This (dis)equilibrium and (dis)comfort

> can inspire social change and political action. Ambiguity and

> complexity is not destabilizing; they are generative.

Environmental: Postmodernism is interactive in many environments. It is a cosmology that unites inside

> and outside, nature and the body, human and non-human, etc., is a concern for a physically and

> psychically nurturing milieu that challenges degradation and promotes sustainability

Evocative: Postmodernism presents multiple views without silencing the investigation

> of dangerous and difficult issues. It encourages a multiplicity of historical interpretations

> and an exploration of the political and the unconscious. This is sometimes

> called an acceptance of "essential tension" in interpretation.

Energetic: Like Einstein's concentrations of energy, we are constantly changing and

shifting. We do not stand on solid ground but on shifting sands. Thus, ambiguity, uncertainty,

and complexity best describe the world. New perspectives constantly emerge and deconstruct

the status quo that leads to the surging chaos of the unexpressed.

Aesthetic: Through art, architecture, music, drama, literature, dance, and various

artifacts of traditional culture, popular culture, resistant culture, and indigenous culture

we come to new "landscapes of learning" that "release the imagination" (Greene, 1995 as cited

in Slattery, 2013) and move us to equity and social justice.

Eschatological: Every present is conditioned by the past, and every present is pregnant

with future possibilities. The "already" and the "not yet" create a world of

possibilities (Bloch, 1970 as cited in Slattery, 2013) and hope (Moltmann, 1967 as cited in

Slattery, 2013). The past, present, and future are dynamically interconnected rather than

segmented on a linear timeline. "There is no such thing as was because the past is" (Faulkner,

[1950] 1965, as cited in Slattery, 2013). Time is proleptic.

Engaging: The individual participant shapes the outcome of the project or study.

In the spirit of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, the observer determines the

actual state of the experiment. As one increases the accuracy of one element of a

measurable quantity, a decrease in the certainty with which we can measure the

other quantities emerge. We participate in the (re-)creation of works of art. Like

Maxine Greene (1978, 1995, 2001, as cited in Slattery, 2013), postmodernists believe that the

arts are brought to life when human beings engage them imaginatively.

Existential: Postmodernism seeks situated/contextual learning grounded in existence

before essence. To overcome malaise is to be awake and alive in the spirit of Henry

David Thoreau and John Dewey. We are, in effect, totally free and responsible.

Expressive: Visual forms are analogous to affective responses that evoke feelings.

Responsiveness leads to the process of transformation. We must create opportunities

for expressive encounters.

Evolving: A continual process of dialogue and interaction between apparent opposites rather than static

bifurcations. Deconstruction leads to a continual process of examining the assumptions on

which we ground our interpretations.

Experimental: Process philosophy helps us to understand how to engage with an open system

cosmology (Whitehead, 1929, [1929] 1978, as cited in Slattery, 2013). This fosters a willingness

to try new styles and different approaches. Influences from sensory and unconscious

experiences lead to-new imaginative realities. Multiple forms of representation are encouraged

and supported. Alternate forms of assessment and evaluation are explored. Willingness to risk

and improvise is encouraged.

Anti-entropy: An open systems cosmology rather than a closed systems cosmology

promotes interaction across boundaries. Border crossings overcome the debilitating

effect of closed systems. Post-formal approaches are generative and overcome entropy.

Entertaining: Postmodernism is playful, ironic, kaleidoscopic, self-critical, and sensitive

to the subtleties of difference. It catches you off guard so that you can engage the irony,

celebrate the ambiguity and investigate the absurd. Postmodernism uses metaphor and

irony to express a prophetic vision and evoke community action.

Appendix H - Participant Timeline of Educational Experiences

https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1m_k47QWgKWKqCf_8-Re1kRMCuvJzZE55Smpj1IyIiBQ&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=3&height=650

The participant timeline of educational experiences was built from the participant's responses on the Educational Timeline and Letter to Self, using the Northwestern University, McCormick School of Engineering, Knightlab Timeline JS platform, an interactive timeline generator (Knightlab, n.d.). Timelining was used to overlap the participant's experiences with mine and to visualize the events as they transpire over an educator's lifetime.

Appendix I - The Art of… Website

http://maryjorosania.com/the-art-of

*The Art of…*is an educational organization founded by MaryJo Rosania-Harvie in October 2021. It was founded based on this study and my experience as an art teacher and school leader. Although I am in the beginning stages of the organization's development, the goal is to create a community that values authenticity and reflection. Using this research, I will work with students to provide positive models for learning. I also aim to engage teachers and future leaders in conversation to develop and secure their authentic selves to make significant and systemic changes in education.

Appendix J - Leadership Collective Website

http://maryjorosania.com/leadershipcollective

The Leadership Collective is a professional practice product conceptualized by MaryJo Rosania-Harvie in the Kutztown University Doctorate in Transformational Teaching and Learning program. The group was created for enthusiastic or reluctant leaders, current or aspiring, interested in empathetic and collaborative leadership. The Leadership Collective is in the planning stages, but the goal is to move leadership beyond transactional and top-down management to collaborative leadership rooted in a feminist framework. This collective is built on the work of Brene Brown, Adam Grant, and other contemporary researchers who study leadership and human interaction. Many of the works contained on the website are listed in the references of this paper.

Participants will be educators, managers, administrators, and aspiring leaders interested in transcending the traditional notions of leadership. Together we will explore contemporary books, podcasts, and Ted Talks (and more) by authors who challenge the status quo through postmodern and feminist leadership principles rooted in empathy, emotional intelligence, creativity, curiosity, and collaboration. Through critical self-reflection, the group will also discuss and explore how their past experiences inform their present leadership.

Appendix K - Code frequency counts for common themes derived from in vivo coding
Has been modified from the original version to fit on the page

Common themes derived from in vivo coding	Data Source	Encouragement	Frustration	Belonging & appreciation (or lack of)	Neg experience turned positive (positive reappraisal)	Changed view of education/ teachers/leaders (Loss of respect for authority figure - or opposite)
OVERALL TOTALS		24	21	34	26	20
Wendy	Interview #1	2	2	3	2	1
Wendy	journals	0	2	2	1	2
Wendy	timeline	2	3	3	3	3
Wendy	letter to self	1	1	2	2	2
Wendy	Interview #2	2	0	2	2	1
Wendy totals		7	8	12	10	9
Alice	Interview #1	4	2	3	2	2
Alice	journals	0	1	1	1	1
Alice	timeline	4	2	3	2	2
Alice	letter to self	1	1	1	2	1
Alice	Interview #2	1	1	1	1	2
Alice totals		10	7	9	8	8
Dorothy	Interview #1	2	1	6	1	1
Dorothy	journals	2	2	2	2	1
Dorothy	timeline	1	1	2	1	1
Dorothy	letter to self	1	2	2	2	0
Dorothy	Interview #2	1	0	1	2	0
Dorothy totals		7	6	13	8	3

Common themes derived from in vivo coding	Data Source	Formation and communication of true self (authentic self) - or loss of true self	Emotional intellience/ Resilience	Flexibilty/ Openmindedness	Continued learning & Growth	The Arts	De-siloing Education/ Education outside of school
OVERALL TOTALS		28	30	27	27	18	21
Wendy	Interview #1	2	2	3	3	1	2
Wendy	journals	2	0	2	0	0	0
Wendy	timeline	2	2	2	2	2	3
Wendy	letter to self	2	2	1	2	0	1
Wendy	Interview #2	1	2	1	2	1	0
Wendy totals		9	8	9	9	4	6
Alice	Interview #1	2	3	3	2	3	3
Alice	journals	3	1	2	0	1	1
Alice	timeline	3	2	2	2	2	1
Alice	letter to self	1	1	1	2	1	1
Alice	Interview #2	1	1	1	2	0	3
Alice totals		10	8	9	8	7	9
Dorothy	Interview #1	2	1	2	2	2	2
Dorothy	journals	2	7	1	2	0	1
Dorothy	timeline	1	2	2	2	2	2
Dorothy	letter to self	2	2	2	2	2	1
Dorothy	Interview #2	2	2	2	2	1	0
Dorothy totals		9	14	9	10	7	6

Appendix L - Code frequency counts for descriptors of postmodernism (Slattery, 2013)
Has been modified from the original version to fit on the page

A prori codes ~ Slattery descriptors of postmodernism (2013)	Data Source	Eclectic (Flexible)	(Dis)equilibrium Ambiguity and complexity are not destabilizing; they are generative.	Environmental - multiplicity	Evocative - multiple views without silencing one or shying away from difficult topics	Energetic - to decontruct the status quo
Overall totals		34	42	40	39	41
Wendy	Interview #1	1	3	2	1	3
Wendy	journals	0	2	2	0	0
Wendy	timeline	3	3	3	3	3
Wendy	letter to self	3	3	3	3	3
Wendy	Interview #2	2	3	3	3	3
Wendy totals		9	14	13	10	12
Alice	Interview #1	3	3	2	3	3
Alice	journals	1	3	3	3	3
Alice	timeline	3	3	2	3	3
Alice	letter to self	1	3	3	3	3
Alice	Interview #2	3	3	3	3	3
Alice totals		11	15	13	15	15
Dorothy	Interview #1	3	3	3	3	3
Dorothy	journals	3	3	3	3	3
Dorothy	timeline	3	2	2	2	2
Dorothy	letter to self	3	3	3	3	3
Dorothy	Interview #2	2	2	3	3	3
Dorothy totals		14	13	14	14	14

A prori codes ~ Slattery descriptors of postmodernism (2013)	Data Source	Aesthetic - beauty	Eschatological - The past, present, and future are dynamically interconnected rather than segmented on a linear timeline.	Engaging - recreation and rethinking	Existential - free and responsible
Overall totals		17	39	36	38
Wendy	Interview #1	0	1	1	1
Wendy	journals	0	2	0	0
Wendy	timeline	2	3	3	2
Wendy	letter to self	1	3	3	3
Wendy	Interview #2	0	3	3	3
Wendy totals		3	12	10	9
Alice	Interview #1	2	3	3	3
Alice	journals	2	1	2	2
Alice	timeline	2	3	3	3
Alice	letter to self	1	3	3	3
Alice	Interview #2	1	3	3	3
Alice totals		8	13	14	14
Dorothy	Interview #1	2	3	3	3
Dorothy	journals	1	2	2	3
Dorothy	timeline	1	3	1	3
Dorothy	letter to self	1	3	3	3
Dorothy	Interview #2	1	3	3	3
Dorothy totals		6	14	12	15

A prori codes ~ Slattery descriptors of postmodernism (2013)	Data Source	Expressive - reexamine through deconstruction	Evolving - reinventing and growing	Experimental - dialogue between opposites	Anti-entropy - border crossing	Entertaining - playful and community centered
Overall totals		42	44	38	37	38
Wendy	Interview #1	1	3	1	1	1
Wendy	journals	2	2	2	2	0
Wendy	timeline	3	3	3	3	3
Wendy	letter to self	3	3	3	3	3
Wendy	Interview #2	3	3	2	2	3
Wendy totals		12	14	11	11	10
Alice	Interview #1	3	3	3	3	3
Alice	journals	3	3	3	3	3
Alice	timeline	3	3	3	3	3
Alice	letter to self	3	3	3	3	3
Alice	Interview #2	3	3	3	3	3
Alice totals		15	15	15	15	15
Dorothy	Interview #1	3	3	3	2	3
Dorothy	journals	3	3	2	2	3
Dorothy	timeline	3	3	2	2	2
Dorothy	letter to self	3	3	3	3	3
Dorothy	Interview #2	3	3	2	2	2
Dorothy totals		15	15	12	11	13

Appendix M - Code frequency counts for descriptors of feminist leaders

This has been slightly modified from the original version to fit on the page

A Priori codes feminist leadership Descriptors *(Kark et al., 2003 as cited in Porter & Henderson Daniel, 2007)*	Data Sources	Inspirational motivation	Idealized influence	Consideration for the individual	Intellectual stimulation
Overall TOTALS		41	38	44	41
Wendy	Interview #1	1	1	3	3
	journals	1	2	3	2
	timeline	3	2	3	3
	letter to self	3	2	2	3
	Interview #2	3	3	3	0
Wendy TOTAL		**11**	**10**	**14**	**11**
Alice	Interview #1	3	3	3	3
	journals	3	3	3	3
	timeline	3	3	3	3
	letter to self	3	3	3	3
	Interview #2	3	3	3	3
Alice TOTAL		**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**
Dorothy	Interview #1	3	1	3	3
	journals	3	3	3	3
	timeline	3	3	3	3
	letter to self	3	3	3	3
	Interview #2	3	3	3	3
Dorothy TOTAL		15	13	15	15

Appendix N - Action Plan Draft – Addressing teacher bias through exploration of memory

To be used as a Leadership Collective resource or with a school district

Project Goal

This action plan aims to develop a platform for organizations and their constituents to engage in critical self-reflection accessible to all stakeholders and customized for and designed by its members. I will speak specifically about how to apply this to educational settings for the remainder of this plan. Still, since this work is also informed by organizational development and improvements outside of the education sphere, educators could apply it in other settings.

Evidence supports that critically reflective educators are more satisfied in their jobs and create more authentic connections with students and each other (Larrivee, 2020). Critical reflection is a process by which an educator looks at situations as opportunities for self-reflection, change, and growth.

Research on critically reflective *leadership* is less prevalent than critically reflective *teaching.* Reflection is a vital element to move from being a person of authority to a true leader (Linsky, 2020) both in the classroom and as a school leader. Critical reflection for educators should include time to look back at their own educational experiences to address any bias based on their school trajectory and education in general. Our experiences and stories create who we are. Every person has a story about their time in school and how that impacted them. Two students can be in the same class, with the same teacher and content, and have entirely different experiences. When a person decides to go into education as a teacher or school leader, these experiences inevitably shape how they enact the job of the teacher and school leader. Barriers to this process include time and proper tools for reflection. Participants should devote time to developing reflection tools that fit the environment created by the people who use them. The action plan includes time for this as well as time for community building and connection between stakeholders. It also provides time to gather feedback from students and focus groups to reflect on the process and refine as needed. Each group will require a facilitator, and thus facilitators will be identified and will meet as a group to determine the best way to lead groups. This action plan will need the school to restructure their time to prioritize teacher and leader reflection, team building, and involve students in the process. It will be a commitment to equity and creating an open, honest culture that focuses on student growth and educator growth.

Action Plan Goals & Strategies

Focus Area

Address educators & student bias based on past educational experiences to improve student outcomes through critical self-reflection and relationships. Gain an understanding of Critical Self Reflection and engage in meaningful engagement within the community.

Goals

Goal 1: Develop a self-reflection tool and a timeline for the process

Goal 2: Assist teachers in reflecting on past educational experiences.

Goal 3: Create a mechanism for educator critical reflection based on teacher feedback

Goal 4: Develop Student focus groups to evaluate the current climate and monitor the program from the student perspective
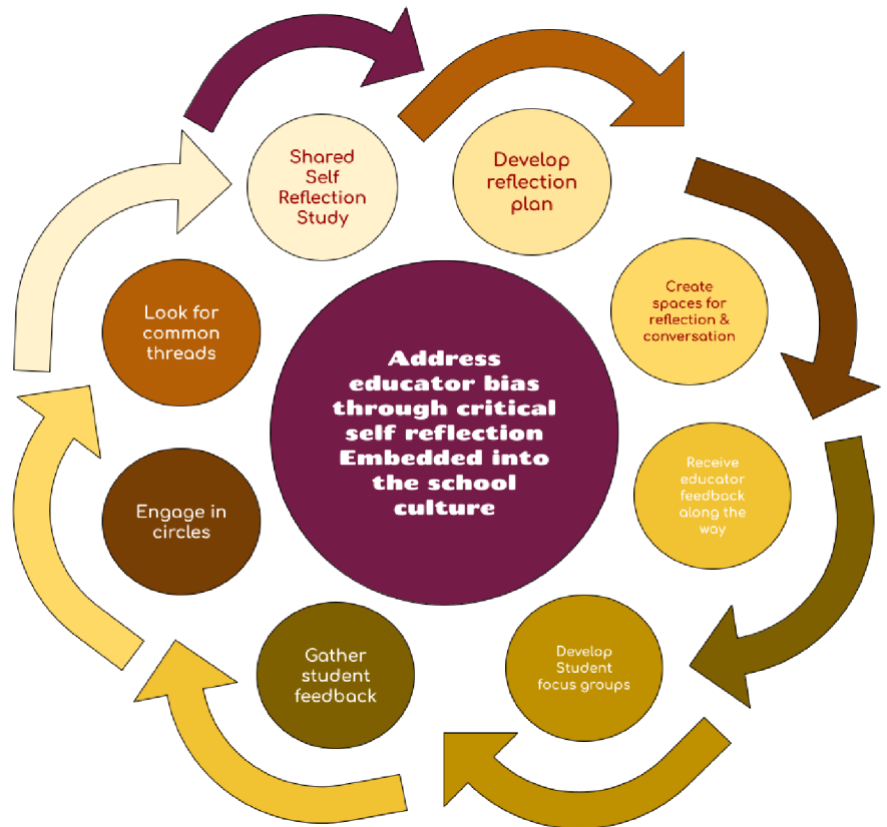
Goal 1: Develop a self-reflection tool and a timeline for the process			Baseline Data/Year: Pre-survey response data *Current school year*	
Objective: Determine the best way to change the schedule to fit in time for school stakeholders to participate in self-reflection and assemble a team to develop the reflection tool				
Strategies	**Activities**	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Timeline(s)**	**Evaluation**
Evaluate the school day and determine how and when to engage in the process.	Review the current professional development schedule to construct a timeline. Consider what changes can be made to focus on this process.	Teachers Admin Consultants	1-2 meetings and some pre-work looking at the schedule	Send out and gather feedback make revisions as needed Successful development of a timeline and schedule

145

Assemble a team to develop a self and program reflection tool. Consultant will offer suggestions.	Meet to review suggestions and develop a tool that suits the environment and participants Review literature regarding team and personal reflection tools	Teachers Consultant	1-2 meetings and open work to review suggested tools	Pilot to ensure the device is effective Review pilot, make changes, and successfully implement with: - Teachers - Students - Staff - Families

Goal 2: Assist teachers in reflecting on past educational experiences.			**Baseline Data/Year:** Pre-survey response data *Current school year*	
Objective: In addition to a stakeholder-generated tool, all constituents will engage in these activities to determine what experiences teachers reflect on when they examine their past educational experience (positive and negative) and help them reframe their experiences (positive reappraisal) Nagoski 2020.				
Strategies	**Activities**	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Timeline(s)**	**Evaluation**
Educator reflects on past educational experiences that inform their present classroom and bias	Produce an educational timeline	Teachers Consultant	Month #1 - give time for teachers to do this as part of the school day/in-service Reflect in groups to discuss	Feedback sessions/ discussions Participant feedback
Educators engage in discussions with others in their field about past experiences to hear the voices of others	Facilitated conversation circles	Teachers Consultant	At least 1 hour per circle, if possible, switching groups to hear multiple stories.	Qualitative data - survey reflections Stories, Feedback, Reflection (SFR)

Goal 3: Create a mechanism for educator critical reflection based on teacher feedback			Baseline Data/Year: Pre-survey 2021-2022	
Objective: To determine how and when teachers reflect on their teaching practice and relationships with students when this thinking is activated and how educators can use it to improve teaching				
Strategies	Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline(s)	Evaluation
How and when do teachers reflect? Make time in the day/week for reflection	Journaling as reflection happens Survey for educators to reflect on what helps determine what reflection is and when it may or may not occur	Teachers & Consultant Survey development team Schedule development team	Month #2 - provide time for teachers to fill out a survey Provide time for journaling (may require schedule changes)	Feedback sessions/ discussions Review survey data Circles
Assist teachers in thinking critically about their work as teachers	Readings and discussion groups Create reading circles to engage in literature-based critical thinking sessions	Teachers Consultant	3-5 hours	Teacher feedback Notes pages from sessions Feedback from participants

Goal 4: Develop Student focus groups to evaluate the current climate and monitor the program from the student perspective			Baseline Data/Year: Previous student survey data current	
Objective: Listen to student experiences of teachers and look for common threads between the student experience and the teacher's stories. Evaluate the program from the student's perspective.				
Strategies	Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline(s)	Evaluation
Students will help to gather feedback about their school experiences	Form focus groups of student volunteers and students that are specifically chosen to participate	Administration, Counselors, Teachers, Consultant	Simultaneously with teacher groups	Number of student volunteers Student comments (exit tickets) Discussions with students

Hear student voices to inform the best way forward Evaluate changes that may be occurring based on the implementation of the program	Develop a survey for all students Have one on one conversations with students	Students Teachers Consultant Counselors Administration	Give students time to complete the survey. Daily conversations	Survey results Feedback

Goal 5: Look for commonalities in the stories of teachers and students	Baseline Data/Year: Past school climate surveys Current year

Objective: Discover what fosters connections in the organization,
What do students remember about their teachers, what impression did they leave, this thinking is, it can and why?

Strategies	Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline(s)	Evaluation
Align the thinking of the teachers with the thinking of the students to create a safer culture	Mixed focus groups of teachers and students to explore and discuss past experiences	Teachers Students Counselors Administration Consultant	Following the goals above, possibly Months 3-4 of the program.	Anecdotal stories and conversations notes from groups One on one feedback
Have difficult and meaningful conversations about classroom culture and how the school can feel safer and more inclusive	Propose changes that are incremental and reasonable Improve school culture	Teachers Students Counselors Administration Consultant		Changes in lesson plans Observations Student referrals Student achievement and participation

Resources Needed

Connection before Content will be the mantra for school reform to be effective and meaningful. It cannot be a passing trend or initiative; it must become the norm and a part of the organization's fabric. It is essential to take a strategic, step-by-step approach to develop a tailored and unique program to the school culture. The below resources will help to inform the meetings and planning sessions for all involved.

Essential Readings
Resources - There are additional resources included for further study and consideration.

Larrivee, B. (2000). Transforming teaching practice: becoming the critically reflective teacher. *Reflective Practice*. (1)3, 293-307. DOI: 10.1080/713693162

Safir, S. & Dugan, J. (2021). Street Data: a next-generation model for equity, pedagogy, and school transformation. Corwin.

Books and Podcasts listed by Author/Host

Brene Brown
Dare to Lead (book), (2018)
Dare to Lead (podcast)
EPISODES:
- Adam Grant, (2021)
- Angela Duckworth, (2021)
- Armored Vs. Daring Leadership, (2021) -   Dr. Pippa Grange, (2021) - Fearing Less
- Amy Cuddy, (2021) - Pandemic Flux Syndrome
- Priya Parker, (2021) Meeting Makeover
- Simon Sinek, (2021) Developing and Infinite Mindset

Unlocking Us (podcast)
- Esther Perel (2020)
- Emily & Amelia Nagoski, (2020)
- Glennon Doyle (2020)

Adam Grant
Think Again (2021)
https://www.adamgrant.net/book/think-again/

Simon Sinek
Start with Why (2011)
How Great Leaders Inspire Action, TED Talk, (2009)

Glennon Doyle
Untamed (2020)

Emily Nagoski, PhD & Amelia Nagoski, DMA
Burnout - the secret to unlocking the stress cycle (2019)

SELF REFLECTION AND EXPLORATION OF MEMORY

Meeting topics and discussion points

Resources - There are additional resources included for further study and consideration. Because of this, there will be study groups that explore the resources above. All stakeholders will contribute and be a part of this initiative.

Multiple meetings devoted to Street Data, Safir & Dugan

TOPIC/ACTIVITY 1
Listen to: *Dare to Lead* **Episode with Adam Grant before attending the first meeting.**

"We talk about the courage it takes to leave the comfort of our convictions and enter the territory of doubt, uncertainty, challenge what we know, challenge our ideas, what it means to think like a scientist, to bring in a lot of data that we need to form excellent opinions. We also talk about why it's important to not oversimplify complex issues and why there are not just two sides that are made out to be, both often dehumanized characterizations of groups of people, but complex problems require complex thinking and answers" (Brown, 2020).

Begin reading *Think Again,* **Adam Grant (2020)**
Bonus - listen to *Dare to Lead* **with Angela Duckworth, link above. Topic:** Grit and the Importance of Trying New Things

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TOPIC/ACTIVITY 2
Dare to Lead & Think Again - Adam Grant
Discussion Points
Consider this segment of the podcast, found at:
https://brenebrown.com/transcript/brene-with-adam-grant-on-the-power-of-knowing-what-you-dont-kn ow/

BB: What's the big answer to this big question? Why do we refuse to challenge what we think we know? What is the most significant barrier? You have me in elevator for one minute. What is the greatest barrier to challenging what we know and rethinking our position on things, even in the face of new data?

AG: That's such an important question. It's one I should be able to answer, having written an entire book about this topic. I think I have a top three.

BB: That's great.

AG: I think the top three might be ego, predictability, and belonging. I should have asked you for your top three before I told you mine.

BB: I would have said self-worth, discomfort/ vulnerability, and belonging.

- *Discuss the barriers to your rethinking or those in your organization.*
- *Where in your life can you begin to rethink what you think you know?*

TOPIC/ACTIVITY 3
Self-reflection
Do you have an infinite mindset?
Dare to Lead **with Simon Sinek** -   Podcast:
                https://brenebrown.com/transcript/brene-with-simon-sinek-on-developing-an-infinite-mindset/
*Untamed***, Glennon Doyle**
    -        Podcast: https://brenebrown.com/transcript/glennon-doyle-and-brene-on-untamed/ -   Book: linked above
Transcript from Sinek & Brown:
Then there are infinite games. Infinite games are defined as known and unknown players, which means new players can join whenever they want. The rules are changeable, which means you can play however you want, and the objective is to perpetuate the game, to stay in the game as long as possible. It turns out we're players in infinite games every day of our lives. There's no such thing as winning global politics. No one's ever declared the winner of careers. Nobody wins health care or education. You can come in first for the finite time you're in high school or college, but you don't win education, to and there's definitely no such thing as winning business.

SS: But if we listen to the leaders of so many of our organizations, it becomes abundantly clear that they don't know the game they're playing in. They talk about being number one, being the best, or beating their competition. Based on what? Based on what agreed-upon objectives, time frames, or metrics? And the problem is**, is** when we play in an infinite game with a finite mindset when we play to win in a game that has no finish line, there are some predictable and consistent outcomes. The big ones include the decline of trust, the decline of cooperation, and the decline of innovation.
Doyle: "...And what I have come to believe is that what is inside of us is often more real than what is outside of us. That what is inside of us we were meant to, as you would say, unlock, we were meant to
unleash, to change the outside order of things. That maybe imagination is not where we go to escape reality, but maybe imagination is where we go to discover the truest reality that we were..."

- *What opportunities do you take to look inside and be reflective?*
- *What have you learned through self-reflection that questions what you always knew about yourself?*
- **Before the next meeting, review Sinek***, Start with Why & Ted Talk.*

TOPIC/ACTIVITY 3
Why do you do what you do?

**Sinek***, Start with Why & Ted Talk* **Discussion of this image:**

- *Analyze your workplace using this image*

- *Journal and then discuss*

The Golden Circle

WHAT
Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services

HOW
Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

WHY
Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. WHY is a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.
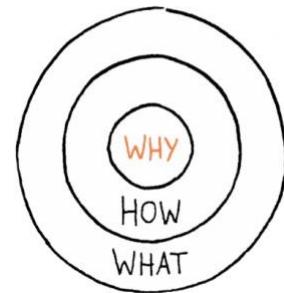
TOPIC/ACTIVITY 4
Avoiding burnout and getting support
Emily Nagoski, PhD & Amelia Nagoski, DMA
Burnout - the secret to unlocking the stress cycle **(2019)**
Use the Burnout worksheet to analyze stress
2015 Emily Nagoski, Ph.D.,
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a2311d41f318d2a02e64554/t/604126a90effa45fa499913a/16148
82473902/Stress%2BWorksheet.pdf)

Future meetings:

Consider the <u>connections </u>between:

- Think Again, Adam Grant & Pippa Grange **(linked above)**
- Daring vs. Armored Leadership & any other resource

Monitoring

Monitor, evaluate, and update

Creating a culture of critical reflection, connection, and safe feedback must be continually monitored. It will take time and effort, along with open-minded enthusiasm.

Monitoring will include:

- Monthly check-ins with facilitators, consultants, and teachers
- Surveys that include teachers, students, and families
- Informal check-ins with Educators and students to ensure that all can have their voices heard
- Collecting current resources and developing a resource share mechanism for a constant learning culture

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Appendix O – Timeline Exercise for Educators

*To be used in the Leadership Collective or in a school district setting.*

Critical Reflection Exercise for Educators
Educators focusing on past memories
MaryJo Rosania-Harvie, EdD candidate

First event that comes to mind:	
Was it a positive event or a negative event?	
What was the impact of this event?	
Was the event crystallizing or paralyzing?	

Timelining Exercise
Add events to the timeframe they occurred, as you remember them.
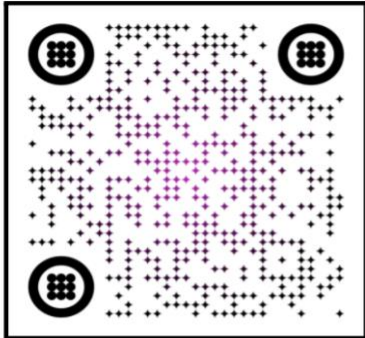Don't think too hard about it.
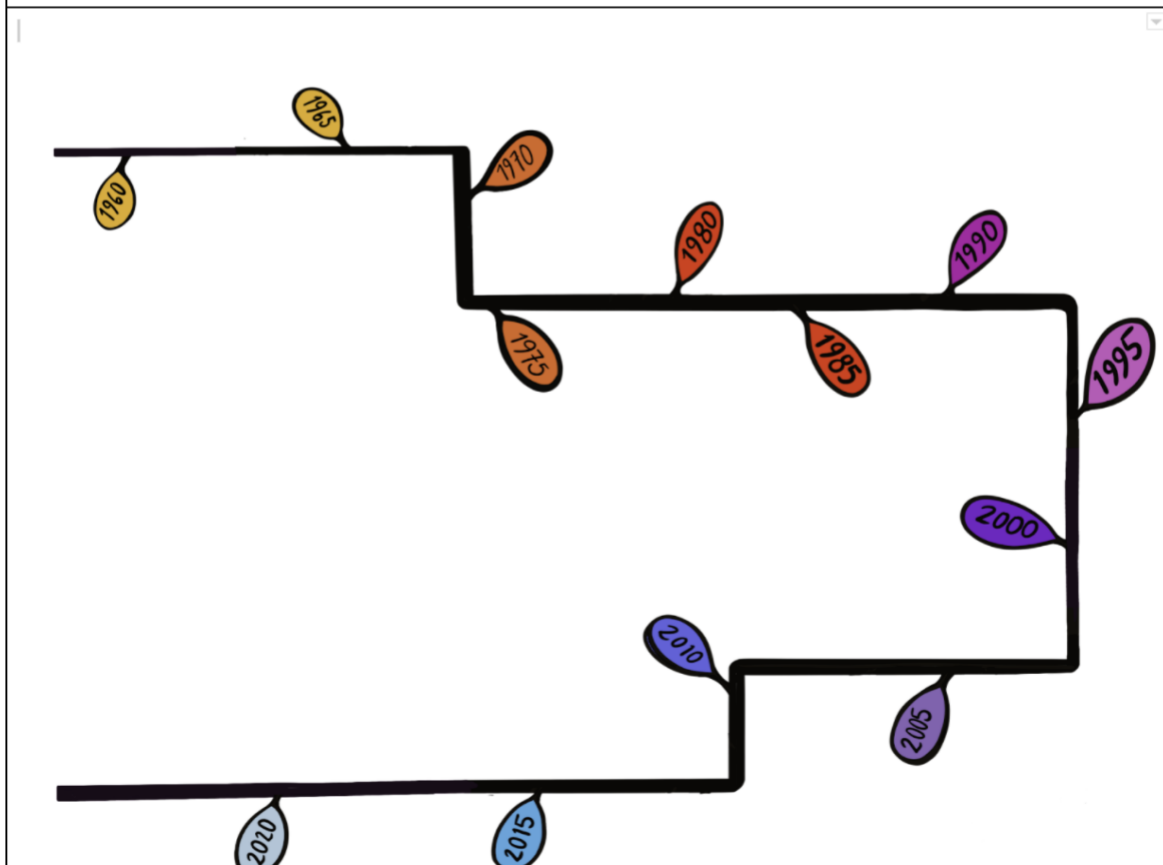
Choose one event:

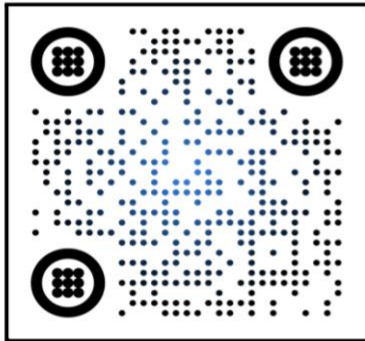At the time of the event, did you consider this event to be positive or negative?

How did this event impact you?
- Did it cause a change in your thinking about a person, place, event?
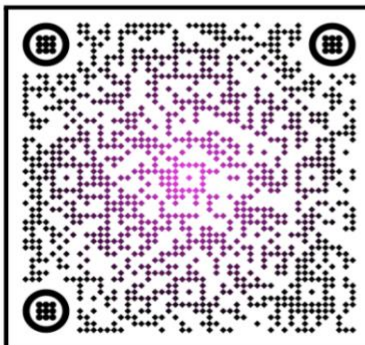- Did it create a value that you still consider important?

Continue this exercise for more events on your timeline

QR Code directed to the Leadership Collective website

QR Code directed to the Northwestern University, McCormick School of Engineering, Knightlab Timeline JS platform

QR Code directed to reflective timeline resource