Illinois State University

ISU ReD: Research and eData

Theses and Dissertations

5-11-2022

Educating Through Democracy: A Critical Analysis of Classroom Discourse

Jill Ann Donnel
Illinois State University, jdonnel@ilstu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd

EDUCATING THROUGH DEMOCRACY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM

DISCOURSE

JILL A. DONNEL

250 Pages

In this dissertation, the researcher examined teachers' and students' discourses through a

social constructionist framing of democratic education to understand how they disrupted or

maintained traditional schooling discourses. Data were generated during four consecutive days of

video and audio recording of teachers' and students' discourses. Other data sources included

open-ended interviews; observations; field notes; methodological journal; analytic memos; and

the school's website. Two cycles of coding were employed to identify the teachers' and students'

discursive enactments. The researcher then utilized a process of micro-ethnographic Interactional

Sociolinguistic Transcription as well as Gee's (2014) processes of micro-ethnographic and

macro-ethnographic critical discourse analyses to understand how the teachers' and students'

discourses disrupted or maintained traditional schooling discourses. Findings demonstrate that

teachers and students enacted discourses that disrupted and maintained traditional schooling

discourses, sometimes simultaneously. Additionally, findings indicate that it is necessary to

employ a social constructionist framing when studying democratic education in order to

understand how democracy is nurtured within discourse.

EDUCATING THROUGH DEMOCRACY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM

DISCOURSE

JILL A. DONNEL

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

School of Teaching and Learning

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2022

EDUCATING THROUGH DEMOCRACY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM

DISCOURSE

JILL A. DONNEL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Deborah MacPhee, Chair

Carolyn S. Hunt

Nancy Latham

Gary Weilbacher

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have supported me throughout the writing of this dissertation. I would like to express a special thanks to the participants of the study. Thank you for opening your classrooms and hearts as I observed your important work. I am fortunate to have been able to spend time in a school specifically founded to nurture democratic education and to experience the work you are doing to support your community.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my adviser, Deborah MacPhee, who has acted as mentor, encourager, and friend throughout this process. Her thoughtful, challenging questions led me to deeper connections and understandings and helped me to better articulate the ideas behind the words. Her constant encouragement steadied me through the most difficult times, and I am sincerely grateful for her expert guidance.

I am also sincerely grateful for the guidance provided to me by my committee members without whose additional support I could not have done this work. Conversations with Carolyn Hunt proved invaluable to me as I constructed my methodology and delved deeper into my findings. Her expertise guided many of my decisions, and I am grateful for our conversations that helped me to more effectively ground my understanding. I am forever grateful to Gary Weilbacher for starting me on this journey related to democratic education when he was my professor during my masters program. His lived example has shown me what it means to be a democratic educator, and his guidance and feedback have deepened my understanding of what schools can be. Nancy Latham's guidance, friendship, and professional mentoring have led me to pursue a doctorate, giving me the confidence I needed as a colleague and friend. I am sincerely grateful for her professional example and her ongoing support throughout this process.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to my family. My parents, Lyle and Jane Triebwasser, and my darling girl, Emily Donnel, have shown me what it means to think deeply and to love unconditionally. They have blessed my life with immeasurable gifts, and without their love, care, and support, I could not have finished this work. I dedicate this dissertation to them.

J.A.D.

CONTENTS

TABLES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Discussions with professors and fellow students during my master's program in 2004 led me to redefine my definitions of *effective* education. This was challenging work, because I, like the majority of American educators, had been brought up in a system of education that favors the acquisition of information as a means unto itself; that favors content knowledge rather than knowledge of children; and that favors the external, measurable outcomes of testing and grading (Dewey, 1991). For the first time I wrestled with the purpose of education in broader terms— whether education and the process of schooling was an end unto itself, or whether something deeper was at stake. In particular, for the first time I became aware of how my instructional strategies, the way I arranged my classroom, the way I emphasized my role as a teacher and de-emphasized learner agency could affect my students' understandings of democracy and freedom (hooks, 1994).

For the first time, I measured my own instructional and management strategies (honed over 13 years as a classroom teacher at that time) against a broader philosophical base as framed by John Dewey. This led me to question whether my classroom practices supported problem-solving in community or if they perpetuated norms of control and imitation (Dewey, 1991). Was I nurturing a community of learners that found their satisfaction from solving real problems where acquiring information served a purpose, was integral to the thinking process, or was I nurturing a community that thrilled to finding the answer the teacher wanted, where acquiring information was an end unto itself (Dewey, 1991)? Was I promoting conformity to the cult of my personality and to my pre-established rules, to social conventions and dogma, or was I encouraging my students to seriously consider the thinking that affects and establishes behavior (Dewey, 1991)?

Rather than looking at education as a means for successfully navigating the societal status quo, Dewey caused me to consider a broader view of the purpose of education as being the means for promoting and nurturing humanity to be the best version of humanity (Dewey, 2004). He encouraged me to consider education as a means of nurturing a student towards social goals, and he caused me to deeply consider what those social goals are, what they should be, and who establishes or defines the best version of humanity (Dewey, 2004). I began to view the classroom environment as a communal space where current and future societal norms are critiqued and reconstructed for the betterment of humanity through conversations related to real issues and problem-solving (Dewey, 2004). I came to realize that my students were co-constructors of the meaning that formed any understanding occurring in the classroom—that they were capable of co-constructing societal norms. Perhaps, most importantly, Dewey (2004) led me to an understanding of my students as citizens, not as future citizens, and caused me to consider the enactment of "agency" as the right of every citizen, old and young. He inspired me to consider the role of conversation as a means for constructing meaning, to consider how citizens dialogue with one another to create community and shared understandings--how one citizen's voice can connect with another's to create new understandings, new societal norms that better society.

My practice began to evolve as a result of my reading. My goal as a teacher became to nurture conversation. I reorganized classroom seating from rows to groups of desks and tables. I began positioning myself as a facilitator of conversations around topics that were of interest to the students. For example, I designed conversations that promoted literacy and science learning around the questions generated by my students after spending time in the butterfly garden. Social studies became a time for them to go deeply into issues of equity by engaging in heated discussions about how King George III managed the American Colonies through taxation. (They

wanted to discuss parity in taxation—why some paid more than others to the Crown.) The mandated curricular guides became starting points for conversations. I found myself talking less often *at* the students and more often *with* the students. Through these changes, I began to better understand community and what it meant to co-construct meaning through conversation. My students were eager to voice their opinions; they were eager to engage in conversations with one another and with me; their questions in conversations helped me to better know what meaning they were constructing; and their conversations took us way beyond the tenets of the mandated curriculum. I came to understand that students are able to verbalize and to construct meaning well beyond established norms of "developmentally appropriate" limitations established by companies producing curriculum. I experienced a mid-career renewal, and my students were engaged in their own learning in ways that I could not have imagined.

But this work was extremely challenging--I came to understand that the practice of democracy in the classroom, the value of student agency, was not a priority for my principal and was often misunderstood by my colleagues. My principal felt that there was a lack of "rigor" in my teaching style (hooks, 2003). He did not see the students sitting in rows completing worksheets; therefore, he felt that the "real" work of school was not occurring. My colleagues resented the "buzz" coming from my classroom—they felt that I was trying to be the "favorite" teacher by "doing" engaging activities, and they, too, were concerned at my lack of "worksheets." However, once the standardized test scores of my students were found to be "exemplary," the principal left me alone to "do my thing." And, once parents began sharing all that their students were learning in my class, my colleagues also left me alone to "do my thing". For the first time, I began to consider my place in the system of schooling and the norms that perpetuate the "status quo" of schools.

My personal redefining of effective education begun in Dewey has deepened and has become more critical. As I have read Dewey more deeply and have read critical theorists, I have begun developing deeper sensibilities of what educating towards democracy and freedom means for *all* citizens, especially those who have been marginalized by those who have traditionally held power in our society. Education can *reflect* society or education can *affect or create* society (Dewey, 2004). Education can be used to nurture complacent citizens happy with the societal status quo, or it can be used to nurture agentive citizens willing to create a more just and equitable society (Giroux & McLaren, 1986; King, 1967/2010). Ultimately, I became interested in and remain deeply committed to nurturing democratic spaces in schools where children are enculturated in communally effecting societal change by learning how to interact democratically with one another.

Statement of the Problem

Multiple researchers have called for the disruption of the prevalent traditional schooling system in order to deepen the authentic practice of democracy (Apple & Beane, eds., 2007; Dewey, 2004; DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985; Green, 1999; hooks 1994; Love, 2019; Noddings, 2013; Tampio, 2018; Woodson, 1988). Practicing "education" as a critiquing of the status quo towards shared goals and ideal humanity is challenging within a system of schooling that favors individualization and specialization and economic viability over collective participation and realizations of communal goals (King, 1967/2010; Meens, 2016). Our American schooling system promotes agendas supporting free market competition and individualization, and is likely to promote segregation and inequality, thus making it antithetical to promoting ideals of democracy and freedom (Apple & Beane, 2007; DuBois, 1986; Fitch & Hulgin, 2018; Freire, 1985; Green, 1999; King, 1968). Our American system of schooling often reduces education to

an economic commodity—knowledge itself becomes a means to an end for economic fulfillment and students are left questioning their own value outside of the marketplace (Deweese-Boyd, 2015; DuBois, 1986; King, 1967/2010; Woodson, 1988). The adoption of the Common Core in the majority of states indicates that a utilitarian knowledge base predicated as a means towards learning "21st century skills" that meet the demands of the marketplace, ensures a narrowing of the curriculum where the standardization measures established by for-profit publishing companies determines the texts that are of worth in the process of schooling (Tampio, 2018).

Co-constructing new ways of being and new understandings that support the common good is the life-blood of authentic democratic societies (Apple & Beane, 2007; Dewey, 1991, 2004; King, 1967/2010); however, definitions of "common good" can be problematic when left critically unexamined and when exclusive to the dominant culture of Whiteness that pervades our system of schooling (Love, 2019). Industrial education and classical education, two significant educational movements in America over the past 200 years that favor economic utilitarianism and that privilege content, carry an inherent danger of oppression because both create a vision of life bounded and described by Whiteness and those who have historically enacted an identity of the oppressor (DuBois, 1986; Woodson, 1988).

Teachers may view "teaching for democracy" as inculcating students in particular aspects of the history of America while ignoring the histories of entire groups of citizens, teaching them about the white "founding fathers," and teaching a view of "good citizenship" as being a compliant citizen, one who obeys the laws of the land or more specifically, the rules of the classroom (DuBois, 1986; King, 1967/2010; Love, 2019; Woodson, 1988). Lortie (2002) in his seminal study of 6,000 teachers found that the majority of respondents viewed morality and citizenship in terms of compliance and obedience, and that "connecting compliance with

classroom norms to future citizenship" legitimized the teachers' efforts for classroom control from their perspective (p. 113).

Creating a learning environment with the student at the center of the decision-making process is a radical departure from most systems of schooling, and is disturbing for many (Soder, Goodlad, & McMannon, 2001). Often, supporting student agency is not a priority for school administrators and teachers and is sacrificed to allow time for coaching towards measurable, testable outcomes and the rote memorization of curricula deemed "appropriate" by decision-makers (Boyte & Finders, 2016). The hegemonic message of "schooling" as a means of transmitting existing societal norms and as a means of preparing children for future jobs seems unquestionable and/or irrefutable in their minds (DuBois, 1986; King, 1967/2010; Woodson, 1988). Accountability measures derail democratic pedagogies and discourses because teachers must focus on outcomes rather than processes (Buxton, Kayumova, & Allexsaht-Snider, 2013). This focus on "academic skills, knowledge, and economic competitiveness" drowns out a "focus on the whole person…from the arts to character building and social-emotional well-being" and results in a de-humanizing rhetoric of reform (Knecht, 2018, p. 10).

Bucking entrenched systems of control, individualization and competition can seem overwhelming and undoable by many (Apple & Beane, 2007; Green, 1999; Love, 2019). But moving towards a just, equitable society for all citizens demands that the marketplace discourse of schools be replaced with a transformative discourse, a discourse that nurtures the agency of all citizens (Dewey, 1991/2004; Green, 1999; King, 1967/2010). Educators cannot remain passive enablers of a system that privileges a White perspective; that treats student citizens as economic commodities; and that does not arm all student citizens with the means to disrupt racist and inequitable governmental policies. If a transformative, authentically democratic discourse in

schools is not enacted by educators and student citizens, our society will not experience a deeper democracy, one where the welfare of all of our citizens is bettered. Governmental policies that marginalize some and privilege others will remain intact and systemic change will be impossible.

Research Questions

Providing examples of teachers' and students' discursive enactments that support a transformative democratic discourse will enable educators to envision a new way of enacting school. Drawing attention to the moments where teachers nurture democratic discourses will benefit teachers—raising their consciousness about their own discursive practice (Britzman, 2003). Teacher candidates seldom observe classroom teaching specifically designed and implemented to nurture democratic practices (Michelli & Keiser, 2005), and most have spent a lifetime seeing undemocratic practices and authoritarian structures modeled in their own schooling experiences. Studying classroom discourses that nurture democratic education (while disrupting hegemonic, marketplace messages of schooling) that can be implemented across curricula is highly valuable to the field if we are interested in preparing teachers who are skilled in creating democratic community. Researching the discourses in classroom settings in a school founded to nurture democracy within their community could inform the field of discursive practices that support democracy in schools providing a way forward for educators interested in disrupting traditional schooling practices.

After conducting a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2015) of the website associated with Sunrise Community School (a pseudonym used to protect the anonymity of the participants) during my earlier doctoral coursework, I discovered that this school could provide a means forward for better understanding discursive enactments that can lead to a transformative democratic pedagogy. Using Fairclough's (2015) methodology, I examined the discursive text

of the website in relation to other ideologies, power relationships, and social elements while examining connections among claims, expectations, and reality. Through a critical discourse analysis of the stated process of schooling at Sunrise Community School (delineated through their mission statement, statement of core beliefs, and statement of their educational approach), I discovered that the founders describe their process of schooling as a shared enterprise among stakeholders, a co-creation with a shared ownership of the process of schooling. The idea of "cultivating" and/or "cultivation" was used throughout their stated ideas about schooling--implying a sowing and reaping, a planting and "letting bloom," a preparing of the mental ground for educational growth. Additionally, authors of the website used an extended metaphor of students as explorers, using the students' own curiosity and wonderings as starting points for learning. Per the website, the founders believe that students, using the tools of curiosity, wonder, questioning, and problem-solving, find new understandings, new perspectives, and ways of being for life, in essence, a renewing or transforming of their community.

In particular, I was interested in researching discourses within this school founded to nurture democratic education, particularly those discourses that disrupted or maintained the status quo of traditional schooling. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define traditional schooling as schooling practices characterized by the following historically dominant discourses: teacher-centered, teacher-directed discourses; authoritarian, control-focused discourses; and discourses that support the work of school being defined by the market-place and economic utility (Apple & Beane, 2007; Lortie, 2002; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Kliebard, 2004). I framed my research around the following questions:

1. How do participants discourse in a school that is endeavoring to provide a student-centered, democratic learning environment?

2. How do participants' discourses disrupt or maintain traditional school discourses?

I chose to ground my research in theories of democratic education that support a disruption of the status quo through societal transformation or reconstructionist perspectives of educating for democracy (Dewey, 1991, 2004; DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985; Green, 1999; hooks, 1994, 2003; King, 1967/2010; Love, 2019; Noddings, 2013 & Woodson, 1988). Because I believe that democratic education is based in communication within communities of learners, and that all meaning is socially constructed through discursive enactments, I chose to use a social constructionist framing based primarily in Gergen (1994; 2015) and others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cap, 2019; Cunliffe, 2008; Galbin, 2014; Holquist, 2002; Mokkoken, 2012; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). And I chose to use a process of critical discourse analysis grounded in Bloome, et al (2005, 2008) and Gee (2014a & b).

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I situate my study in an understanding of democratic education as framed by Dewey (1991, 2004) and others (Apple, 2004; Apple & Beane, 2007; Biesta, 2006; Biesta, 2010; Biesta, 2014; Biesta, 2019; Gutman, 1999; hooks, 1994; hooks, 2003; Noddings, 2005; and Noddings, 2013). I deepen my definition of democratic education through the radical, critical, pragmatic lens suggested by Judith Green (1999) connecting to more critical theorists of democratic education that center social justice and equity for student citizens (DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985; King, 1967/2010; Love, 2019; and Woodson, 1988). Because these definitions of democratic education emphasize communication as the link between individuality and community, I frame my study within a social constructionist perspective as articulated primarily by Gergen (2015) and others (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Cap, 2019; Cunliffe, 2008; Galbin, 2014; Holquist, 2002; Mokkoken, 2012; Phillips & Hardy, 2002) to discuss how meaning is

9

made within a classroom context and to define how democratic education is enacted. And finally, I describe a process of critical discourse analysis as framed primarily by Bloome et al (2005, 2008) and Gee (2014) to discuss how democratic discursive enactments in classrooms disrupt traditional schooling. I have chosen to focus my discussion on the nurturing of discursive enactments that support democratic education recognizing that a comprehensive discussion of the political and theoretical constructs of democratic education is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Democracy and Democratic Education

Dewey (1991, 2004) situates democratic education in a pragmatic perspective emphasizing communication as the link between individuality and social community. He views meaning-making as a social process and emphasizes the importance of students' inquiry relative to social problems that are unique to their experience (1991, 2004). Dewey viewed the school as the means for expanding democracy by creating learning environments where classroom social issues and solutions can be explored and connected to larger societal issues and solutions (1991, 2004). Dewey's is an agentive perspective—he emphasizes educating towards the best of humanity through shared decision-making in communities of learners (1991, 2004).

It is important to endeavor to define *democracy* for the purposes of my discussion as it is a word that is often contextualized through assumptions and taken-for-granted "realities" by some and that is often not examined through a critical lens (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; King, 1967/2010). The online Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022) defines d*emocracy* as "a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections." Some define *democracy* as the supporting of shared understandings of the rights of

individuals within society, while others invoke the word to justify capitalistic, free-market economies, and particular political and/or individualistic agendas (Appel & Beane, 2007). While some believe that educating for democracy is a transmission of ideals and values held by the "majority" (often, in reality, those accustomed to holding hegemonic power through being white), I believe that democratic values are constructions formed in dialogue and collaborative work among a diverse group of individuals who share common interests and goals and talents (Dewey, 1916/2004; Noddings, 2013). These constructions are ever changing, ever fluid as participants' experiences grow and adapt as they share their experiences with others and as larger social and political discourses shape their experiences and subsequent meaning-making.

In light of this fluidity of changing norms and meanings, I believe that democracy is best served when these democratic values being constructed are examined through a process of justification and critical analysis (Gergen, 2015) rather than by a transmission of unexamined terms and collective definitions. The meaning of *democracy* should be critically constructed and justified from multiple viewpoints and should build towards a common good that reflects the diversity and well-being of all participants (Dewey, 1916/2004; DuBois, 1986; Gutman, 1999; hooks, 1994; King, 1967/2010). The meaning of "common good" can be transformational when constructed from multiple perspectives, considering issues of equity and diversity for all (not just for "American citizens," and not only for white citizens), and when formed in dialogue that is respectful and inclusive of all voices. The meaning of "common good" is problematic when it is fixed, transmitted from one generation to the next, and supposedly built on an "ideal" that may or may not exist and that may represent systems of oppression and capitalistic frameworks that exploit some and advantage others (DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985; King, 1967/2010; Love, 2019;

Woodson, 1988). I believe that the constant construction and reconstruction of the meaning of "the greater good" for all citizens is democracy.

Teaching through Democracy

I begin my definition of democratic education as an educating *through* democracy (as defined above) recognizing that it is a constructive process of engagement within community (Apple & Beane, 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 2004). I further define democratic education as a space where students own their learning experience, share in decision-making, are grounded in a culture of nurture and respect, and enact agency (Dewey, 1916/2004; Apple & Beane, eds., 2007; Mills, 2013). And finally, I define "democratic education" as engaging student citizens in practices related to social transformation (Apple & Beane, 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 1916/2004; DuBois, 1986; Green, 1999; Knoester, 2012; King, 1967/2010). With Giroux and McLaren (1986), I believe that democratic education moves us *from* models of schooling as sites that promote "pedagogical practices designed to create a school-business partnership" for economic advancement in world markets *to* a "conception of schooling in which classrooms are seen as active sites of public intervention and social struggle" (p. 221, *italics mine*).

The entire structure of school is called into question when analyzing whether or not we can *create* democracy outside of *practicing* democracy (Biesta, 2006; hooks, 1994; Laursen, 2020; Noddings, 2013). I believe that when a teacher teaches through democracy, she guides students towards critical considerations and nurtures participatory democracy (Dewey, 1991, 2004; Love, 2019; Noddings, 2013). Educating through participatory democracy means that we move away from the commonly held view among educators that democratic principles are known and must only be taught "in didactic form—from specific learning objectives to easily measured items on a test" (Noddings, 2013, p. 22). And we move towards viewing students as

citizens, rather than as future citizens, and that we craft classrooms where discussing social issues and problem-solving towards the greater good for all citizens is the norm rather than the exception (Dewey, 1916/2004; Gutman, 1999). When nurturing participatory democracy, we encourage student citizens to engage with social and economic challenges in order for them to practice how to positively affect political democracy (Buck & Fisher, 2008).

Agency

When nurturing participatory democracy with student citizens, a teacher recognizes and supports "the capacity of individuals to act with others in diverse and open environments to shape the world around us" (Boyte and Finders, 2016, p. 130). This definition of agency as articulated by Boyte and Finders (2016) and as grounded in Dewey's conception of engagement allows space for parents, guardians, students, teachers, and community members to live "democracy" within the context of school when making decisions, recognizing the need for the co-construction of transformative practice, and highlighting the need for broad, rather than restrictive, classroom environments. Democratic schools are spaces where democratic practices are lived, places where all stakeholders practice decision-making that informs and impacts and shapes their shared living experiences (Apple & Beane, 2007; Dewey, 1991/2004). However, qualifying *how* the school community shapes the world (towards agentive transformative discourses or towards hegemonic discourses of the status quo) is a key consideration that cannot be ignored when nurturing "agency." It is necessary to define what is meant by the "greater good" or "common good" in order to link transformative practice with "agency."

Critical Democratic Education

While my definition and understanding of democratic education (educating *through* democratic practices) begins in Dewey, I must extend my theoretical frame to include a critique

of historical inequities when theorizing the construction of democracy (DuBois, 1986; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Green, 1999; Love, 2019). Dewey was interested in transformative pedagogies that sprang from a mutually articulated democratic ideal—an ever-evolving shared democratic ideal brought about through mutual agreement and struggle to right what was dysfunctional in society (that which did not work for all members of society) (Green, 1999); however, his view of the democratic ideal stops short of naming and critiquing the historical oppressions and inequities based on gender, race, and class that made a shared conception of a democratic ideal challenging or impossible to realize (Green, 1999; Giroux & McLaren, 1986). By linking Dewey's conceptualization of democratic education with a more critical consciousness, we are able to move into a theoretical space that celebrates diversity while engaging in truly liberatory, transformative praxis (Green, 1999). This critical lens gets us closer to authentic definitions of the "greater" or "common good" to which educators must aspire.

Community

Dewey's articulation of community includes an underlying assumption that our understandings of community need to be rewritten in new ways to address the unraveling of our societal structure—a rewriting that addresses how the factors that shape an individual's development affect the community's development (Green, 1999). Of concern to Dewey was how the liberation of individuals within groups would also affect the liberatory practice of groups in relation to one another (Dewey, 1927). While Dewey's conception of community lays a foundation for the rights of the individual, he stops short of radically critiquing the social inequities and systemic racism that derail democratic enactments of an individual's rights (Green, 1999; Giroux & McLaren, 1986). Dewey's articulation of a "Great Community" recognizes the need for a public to shape individual goals in mutually beneficial ways through

14

social interaction (Green, 1999); however, he primarily focuses on a shared interpretation of an ever-evolving democratic ideal as a means of counteracting capitalistic political economic challenges (Dewey, 1927). The assumed articulation of shared interpretations of anything paves a way towards transference of knowledge rather than towards acts of knowledge—something that was not Dewey's intention. An uncritical consciousness is dangerous, a place where dehumanizing education flourishes, a place where criticality is subsumed in an absolutism that assumes not only that we think, but that we think correctly (correctly as defined by the dominant culture) (Freire, 1985). So, even when considering a generative construction of democratic education like Dewey's, we must assume a critical discourse to engage in transformative discourses.

It is necessary to address the challenges that prevent shared interpretations of a democratic ideal within community when historical oppressive measures related to race, gender, and class remain (DuBois, 1986; Green, 1999; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; King, 1967/2010). Dewey lays a foundation for beginning the work of addressing these challenges by stating the *need* to remake or transform discourses among citizens that deepen democratic ways of being while "transforming the macro-level social institutions that should exist to serve [democratic ways of being]" (Green, 1999, p. 21, *italics mine*). But a discourse of possibility must be coupled with a discourse of critique; otherwise the transformative discourse is shallow and may continue to support hegemonic messages of the status quo (Freire, 1985).

Community as Participatory Democracy

With these critical considerations in mind, participatory democracy (democracy as the constant construction and reconstruction of the meaning of "the greater good" for all citizens) *is* the purpose of community. Community becomes a space where marginalized voices are

supported and amplified; where diversity is centered and celebrated; and where systemic

injustices are named, countered, and ended—a practicing of participatory democracy that results

in the common good for all citizens (hooks, 1994; King, 1967/2019; Love, 2019). Thus, my

definition of "community" is supporting and amplifying marginalized voices; centering and

celebrating diversity; naming, countering, and ending systemic injustices—community *as* active,

engaged, participatory democracy around concerns that are shared and lived by all community

members. For we must first begin, as did King, to criticize and dismantle undemocratic elements

in our social structure before we can ever work towards transformative discourses that

reconstruct democracy for the betterment of lived community for all citizens (Green, 1999; King,

1967/2010).

Communication

I believe that communication is the lifeblood of active, engaged, participatory

democracy—community— as earlier defined. Conversation among classroom citizens (teacher

with students, and students with students) is central to the dismantling of hegemonic messages of

oppression and control when it supports a critical awareness of the attitudes, tone, topics, and

speech of the classroom (hooks, 2003). But for many educators, effective classroom

communication is seen as the sharing of information by the teacher as a means of enculturation

towards established norms, as dependent upon the teacher's personality, and meant to be taken at

face value, rather than to be critically examined (Dewey, 1991).

"Communication" is defined in the online Merriam-Webster dictionary (2022) as "a

process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of

symbols, signs, or behavior." As an educator interested in nurturing democracy, I must critically

examine how a "common system of symbols, signs, or behavior" is first created and to what

ends. I must also critically examine how "information is exchanged between individuals." In order to effectively situate the communication of the classroom as relative to democratic education, I ground my definition of "communication" within a pragmatic paradigm: I espouse communication as the link between individuality and social community; I view meaning-making as a social process; I recognize the importance of analyzing "real" social problems within communicative settings; and I view reality as indeterminate and ever-evolving (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). This requires me to consider the discursive enactments of the classroom as informed by the students' environmental backgrounds and upbringings and as constantly in flux, shaped by responses to others' discoursing (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2015; Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). I believe that who we are and what we do are constantly informing the messaging and meaning that teachers and students construct with one another in classrooms. I will more fully articulate "identity" (and how communication is socially constructed through identities we assume) (Gee, 2014b) when I discuss social constructionism and critical discourse analysis as part of my theoretical framework.

Social Constructionism: The Social Construction of Meaning

A social constructionist perspective as framed by Gergen (1994; 2015) and others (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Cap, 2019; Cunliffe, 2008; Galbin, 2014; Holquist, 2002; Mokkoken, 2012; Phillips & Hardy, 2002) informs my understanding of democratic education as communal, communicative, and agentive, and provides a structure for understanding the discursive enactments used to make meaning within a school community. I believe that individuals construct and reconstruct identities through social interactions within communities of learners, and that the process of communication requires us to consider the identities that are put forth in a moment that shape the understandings of the speaker and the listener (Gee, 2015; Gergen, 2015;

Holquist, 2002; Van Dijk, ed., 2011). These discursive identities may be shaped by larger

discourses (often dominant, hegemonic, oppressive discourses), and individuals may be unaware

of their influence on their identity construction (Gee, 2014b; Fairclough, 2015; Gergen, 2015).

Student citizens enact identities transforming their existing words, experiences, and meaning-

making in dialogue with who they are, with what work they do, and with their future chosen

worlds (Gee, 2015). This perspective of meaning-making as discursive enactments is inherently

agentive as it represents a continuous process of constructing and reconstructing meaning as we

dialogue, including new voices, thinking from a questioning perspective, and critiquing historical

ways of being (Gergen, 2015).

I chose to use Gergen's (2015) work as the generic framing for my discussion relative to

social constructionism because he is interested in how a constructionist framing invites us to

challenge our own assumptions; to nurture an interest in the perspectives of others; to replace a

"right" or "wrong" mentality with what could be; and to allow space for reconstructing

previously held opinions and ideas—all necessary constructs for nurturing democratic practices.

Gergen (2015) is interested in how our socially constructed meanings frame the kind of world we

want to live in.

I center my understanding of the social construction of knowledge within a pragmatic

view, a view that considers all forms of knowledge to be constructions made in relationship

within community; to be value-laden; and to be useful to members of the community (Gergen,

2015). Thus, within this pragmatic view, we focus more on outcomes and possibilities as

opposed to truth, and "right" or "wrong" (Gergen, 2015). This perspective allows a suspension of

opinions and dichotomies of thought and allows an exploration of new ways of being when

nurtured within the context of school.

Within a social constructionist framing, I recognize knowledge to be socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). Different words, sign, and symbols have different meanings for individuals and have been influenced by the relationships in which individuals have engaged and will engage—our realities are continuously shaped by our relationships (Gergen, 2015; Berger & Luckmann, 1967). As individuals discourse opinions and ideas (and curricular content in the case of school contexts), taken-for-granted assumptions about reality develop and deepen and must be analyzed as social constructions considering how the "group" to which the individual belongs takes those meanings to be (Berger & Luckman, 1967).

The Relational Self

While individual agency and thought (as closely linked to individual rights) are often considered to be the cornerstones of democracy, I believe that a focus on isolated selves leads to the competitive, market-driven, social-efficiency models of schooling that lead us further from democratic practices (Gergen, 2015). I believe that the concept of "isolated selves" is a misunderstanding of how the self is constructed. I begin my understanding of the construction of self (the identities an individual puts forth at any given moment) from a cultural psychology tradition as defined by Vygotsky and Bruner (Gergen, 2015) where there is no independent thought apart from social processes; where social relationships shape the mind (focus, thought, memory); and where the social narratives of the individual's society/community shape the way an individual interprets the world—the mind *becomes* socialized (Gergen, 2015, italics mine). But within a social constructionist perspective, I deepen my understanding of the creation of self to recognize the self as a co-creator of social process, where the social world is constructed and reconstructed through dialogic enactments, where "there is no me and you until there is us"

(Gergen, 2015, p. 104). In other words, it is through relational processes that we construct our individual selves (Gergen, 2015).

Making Meaning in Relationship

Bakhtin's thoroughly social conception of the person (Gergen, 2015) informs my understanding of an agentive, participatory democracy. The continuous construction and reconstruction of what is best for each member of our society begins in the relational nature of meaning-making among individuals. For Bakhtin, this meaning-making occurs through individuals (agents) joining in a long-standing cultural process of language use where we draw from a vast array of contested meanings, a *heteroglossia* (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). Thus, meaning-making is a shared event (no one individual is originating the process) shaped by the contested meanings that inform the shared event for participants (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). For Bakhtin, this process begins with an utterance (a word, a sign, a group of sentences) (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). This utterance is contextualized by its addressivity (it is addressed to another), and by its answerability, the sense that can be made by the other, thus shaping the relational meaning as one thing and not another (Gergen, 2015). Our utterances are further contextualized by performance—performances associated with our utterances (Gergen, 2015). These may include how we hold or move our bodies, where we look when making the utterance, how we modulate our voices—how we enact the utterance (Gergen, 2015). This understanding of meaning-making moves us into the realm of doing rather than thinking. In other words, we do not possess thoughts and emotions, we do them, we construct them in relationship with the other (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). This helps us to better understand how the meaning of democracy is constructed and reconstructed through relationship as well as how to better understand the basis of democratic education within relationship. It is within discursive

enactments that transformative meaning occurs, meaning that is always constructed with the other.

The idea of the relational self as being the foundation of meaning-making (and within the context of my dissertation the foundation of democratic education) leads me to the importance of the study of dialogue or discourse. My utterances only have meaning within your response to them—understanding is achieved in relationship as we collaboratively enact discourses (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). In other words, "to understand is to act in a particular way, and to have the other accept this action as understanding" (Gergen, 2015, p. 128). A study of discourse enables me to identify the moves made in relationship that support the co-construction of transformative discourses, discourses that are shaped by the past, informed by the moment, and that move us to a common purpose (Gergen, 2015).

By framing my understanding of democratic education within a social constructionist perspective, I understand that in order to support democracy, schools must become dialogical spaces where there is a free exchange of ideas; where nurturing engaged relationships is a primary focus; where teachers set aside their status to encourage collaboration with and among their students; and where all aspects of the classroom community become collaborative (Gergen, 2015). This perspective also provides the necessary framework for studying how and when students contextualize their meaning-making within larger discourses and critique the status-quo of societal norms. By grounding this construction and reconstruction of social realities in students' lived experience and by connecting this process of construction and reconstruction to larger discourses and perceived social norms, teachers teaching through democracy can guide students to and model for them actions that transform society. For it is through classroom discourse that we can move towards a critical pedagogy, a pedagogy that begins in the interests

of students and their motivations and leads to their empowerment to transform their community into truly democratic spaces (Giroux & McLaren, 1986).

Situating Meaning-Making

Within a social constructionist framing as I have detailed above, the study of meaning-making is a study of discursive enactments used by individuals to construct knowledge in relationship with one another but also in relationship with past experiences, societal norms and expectations, power relations, race, class, gender, etc. (Bloome et.al, 2005/2008; Gee, 2014a; 2014b). Bakhtin's thoroughly social conception of a person (Gergen, 2015) frames discursive enactments as consisting of multiple contexts at any given time and situates every discursive event as a context (Bloome, et. al, 2008; Fairclough, 2015; Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 1986). This idea of contextualized selves brings me to the idea of "language as doing" recognizing that individuals are saying, doing, and being simultaneously—they are enacting identities that are dependent on multiple contexts and that are used for multiple purposes within a given event or context (Bloome, 2008; Gee, 2014a). Because I recognize meaning-making as being an integration of the ways individuals are saying, doing, and being within a given moment, I have to study participants' discursive enactments at the micro-level (utterance, grammar, sentences) as well as the macro-level (societal institutions, power relations, larger societal discourses) (Gee, 2014b). A process of critical discourse analysis allows me to examine how individuals are enacting particular identities at particular times and for what purpose (Gee, 2014b). Using micro-level and macro-level analysis of participants' discourses allows me to better examine and articulate the identities that participants enact while connecting their discourses to potential purposes and to larger discourses and social institutions and constructs. I chose to use a process

of critical discourse analysis to study the meaning-making occurring among participants because I believe language to be political in that it is always purposeful (Gee, 2014, 4th ed.).

Examining Meaning-Making from an Interactional Sociolinguistic Perspective

Because I am approaching my study from a social constructionist perspective, I chose a method of micro-transcription that centers the interactions among participants, the in-the-moment relationships to what they are intending to say, their interpretations of one another's discoursing, the connections they are making to larger discourses—all for the purpose of making meaning together within a particular context (Bloome, et.al., 2008). Transcribing the discourse from an interactional sociolinguistic perspective allows me to examine the contextualization cues used by the participants providing insight into what the participants are constructing together from their multiple enacted identities (Bloome, et.al., 2008).

The process of transcribing from an interactional sociolinguistic perspective is necessary when interpreting democratic education through a social constructionist lens because it requires the researcher to identify the message units or utterances of participants, but to also connect the identified message units into bounded sets of interactional units as identified by the participants' own signaling and decision-making (Bloome, et.al, 2008). In other words, this is a process of micro-transcription grounded in the decision-making of participants—how they will react to the discoursing, what decisions they make as to whether they pick-up and build on the discoursing of the others or whether they change the discourse (Bloome, et. al., 2008). Examining this in-the-moment decision-making enables a researcher to better understand what counts as knowledge for the participants as well as to identify how the meaning-making may be extended beyond a particular context (Bloome, et. al., 2008). This is a process of examining the patterning of discoursing, particularly what is initiated by the teacher or student, how the teacher or student

responds to what is initiated, and how the teacher (or perhaps the student) evaluates the response (Bloome, et.al., 2008). This is a necessary process for me to use (as a researcher who is interested in democratic education) as it may highlight the power structures that may exist within a given context by revealing how agency is enacted or not. Also, this process of analysis goes beyond simply identifying the discourses that exist within a particular context to how those discourses are adapted by participants (Bloome, et. al., 2008). The way that participants adapt the discourse points to how they are using the discourse (to what purpose)—a construct that is of particular interest to me as I endeavor to understand language-in-use and how it may support the status quo or may lead to transformative practices. Through this process of micro-transcription using an interactional sociolinguistic lens, I am able to identify the actual discourse of the context, to examine how participants are adapting the discourse (perhaps to what purpose), and to begin to examine how agency is enacted within a context. To deepen my understanding of how participants are constructing identities and the relationship among their enacted discourses, I turn to another process of critical discourse analysis as articulated by Gee (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2014a.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is uniquely situated to provide a means of studying democratic practices in schools through a social constructionist framing for it offers a method for describing democratic education in schools while also providing a methodology for studying how the social construction of meaning occurs (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). In addition, discourse analysis studies provide a means for connecting the micro-level discourses of the classroom with macro-level discourses of societal institutions and historical discourses. (Cap, 2019; Fairclough, 2015; Gee, 2014a; Gee, 2014a). A social constructionist framing means that the underlying understanding

for study is that social reality does not exist outside of social constructions, and that identity construction is made through social and discursive interactions (Van Dijk, 2011; Gee, 2014b; Fairclough, 2015; Gergen, 2015; Berger & Luckman, 1966). Because we speak and write in specific social languages designed to convey meanings to known or assumed recipients, it is important to unpack the identities and assumptions that are behind the social language (Gee, 2014).

The interconnectedness of "text, discourse, and context" is central to an understanding of discourse analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 6). The nuances of these connections can drive decision-making when choosing a particular form of discourse analysis to use when conducting a research study. A conversation analysis and/or a narrative analysis may study specific discourses to connect "microevents to broader discourses," whereas an ethnographic approach could be used to study "how discourses are enacted in particular practices" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 9). The types of discourse analyses are varied and reflexive. I have chosen to situate my research within a social constructionist framing that recognizes discourse as social practice in order to link the discourse of the specific school to the linguistic side of discourse, to examine issues of hegemony affecting the discourse, and to examine the power and knowledge affecting the discourse (Cap, 2019). Within the ontology of discourse as social practice, I am able to best examine how discourse maintains or disrupts the status quo (Cap, 2019).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis is a broad label encompassing varied research approaches within varied theoretical framings used for a variety of purposes (Van Dijk, 2011). Key to this type of analysis is the semiotic nature of power, abuses of power, injustice, and societal change (Van Dijk, 2011; Fairclough, 2015). The signs and symbols (discourse) of a particular construct

are socially enacted implying a dialectical relationship where the discourse of an event is shaped by societal institutions, structures, situations while simultaneously shaping societal institutions, structures, and situations (Van Dijk, 2011).

According to Cap (2019) in his review of discourse studies centered in a social constructionist framing, a critical discourse analysis enables the researcher to do the following: to examine the language of the event within constructed social realities of the participants; to contextualize the discourse considering issues of power and empowerment; and to identify how the discourse creates meaning, changes meaning, and negotiates meaning—meaning constructed within particular ideologies. According to Cap (2019) all critical discourse studies share a common thread of systematically examining language in text to see how it is used in constructing societal ideology and power. Of particular interest to my research is Cap's (2019) assertion that Bakhtin's dialogical framing of discourse is particularly useful for explaining how democracy may be discoursed when participants do not agree, when there is not a consensus of opinion, but better understandings may still be made through the process of discoursing.

Van Dijk (2011) provides an overview of a critical approach to discourse analysis. According to Van Dijk (2011) a critical approach to analysis requires a focus of "social problems and political issues;" a multidisciplinary approach to studying these issues; a focus on explaining rather than describing; and a focus on how discourse relates to and challenges power. This is a critically important approach to studying education settings if teachers are to discover whether they are nurturing or denigrating social capital with their practice (Soder, Goodlad, & McMannon, 2001). A critical discourse analysis perspective is particularly important in critiquing educational settings because educational discourse sustains particular types of relationships between teachers and students which in turn reproduce societal systems of

classification and control (Fairclough, 2015). Unmasking cultures of power and hegemonic

dominance is key to nurturing democracy. In order to begin to do so, researchers must "uncover

the linkages between meaning and control in our cultural institutions" (Apple, 2004, p. 27).

Understanding social control and power (particularly access to control and power) of the group

and then of the institution is key to a critical understanding of power (Van Dijk, 2011).

A social constructionist framing of my understanding of democratic education led me to

use a process of discourse analysis to study how speakers' identities were socially and

discursively enacted (Van Dijk, 2011), and how social constructions of the speakers were

sustained within Sunrise Community School (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Because I was interested

in the semiotic nature of power, abuses of power, injustice, and societal change (particularly

related to realizing a more critical construction of democratic education), I chose to use a process

of critical discourse analysis for my study (Van Dijk, ed., 2011). Specifically, for micro-

transcriptive purposes I chose a process of micro-analysis as articulated by Bloome, et. al.

(2005/2008), and a process of critical discourse analysis for further micro-analysis and macro-

analysis as articulated by Gee (Gee, 2014a; Gee, 2014b).

Gee's Critical Discourse Analysis

Gee's process of critical discourse analysis deepens my study of language-in-use by

providing a framing grounded in a social constructionist perspective where "…language has

meaning only in and through social practices" (2014b, p. 12). His tools of inquiry are sufficiently

adaptable to effectively examine how participants are constructing identities and using language

to make meaning within multiple contexts (2014b; 2014b). His work extends the process of

micro-transcription detailed above by providing a means to connect the discourses of a particular

context to larger discourses and to examine the identities individuals construct in relationship

while considering the interaction of their discourses within particular contexts (Gee, 2014b). I believe Gee's process of discourse analysis is especially useful for studying democratic education because he emphasizes inquiry, social action, context, and reflexivity when analyzing discourse (Gee, 2014b).

Interactive Construction of Meaning. Gee (2014b) frames his method of analysis within two tasks of speakers and writers and two jobs of listeners and readers. According to Gee, speakers and writers design and adapt their discourses within particular contexts or events in relation to who they understand their audience to be (Recipient Design) while also positioning their audience in particular ways within considerations of how they want their audience to think, behave, be (Position Design) (Gee, 2014b). Simultaneously, listeners and readers assign specific meaning to the discourse by contextualizing the language within larger contexts and within the context of the actively constructed event (Situated Meaning) and respond to the work of the speaker or writer by crafting a response from the perspective of the situated meaning they have used when crafting their understanding of the event (Response Design) (Gee, 2014b). This sense of the interactive co-construction of meaning leads me to an understanding of "discourse" as a way of being, saying, or doing (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2015). It is the way an individual crafts his or her identity as a certain type of individual for that moment, in that context, for a specific purpose as well as how his or her partner in context crafts his or her identity in response (while making his or her own meaning of the identities put forth in the moment) (Gee, 2014b). Within Gee's critical discourse analysis process, the tasks of the speaker and writer and the jobs of the listener and reader are all affected by the ways of being, saying, or doing (discourses) that are considered to be taken-for-granted and normative for that context while also being shaped by larger discourses (Gee, 2014b). The study of this co-construction of meaning (the integration of the

speakers' and writers' tasks with the listeners' and readers' jobs) is crucial to my study of democratic education within a social constructionist framing, because it enables me to better understand how democratic practices are nurtured, sustained, or denigrated within the smallest of discursive interactions. And it enables me to see how the smallest of interactions are shaped by prior understandings, larger discourses, and other social constructs that may at first appear to be outside of the specific context being studied.

Gee's Inquiry Process. In order to effectively study the types of discourses that disrupt traditional schooling it is necessary to consider how the participants' discourses (ways of being, doing, and saying) connect to larger discourses; how participants' language is connected to context; and how participants are building and designing meaning with language (Gee, 2014b). Gee's process of analysis allows me to move among the different events I am studying, asking particular questions of the data as needed (Gee, 2014a). In other words, his process of inquiry is not static and linear, but is flexible and divergent.

Connecting to Broader Discoursing. Because I am interested in identifying the discourses of the classroom and also studying how traditional schooling is disrupted (or not) by the discourses of the classroom in a specific school setting, Gee's questions are suited to my own process of inquiry. By using his process of inquiry, I am able to connect the classroom discourse to larger themes (a beginning point advocated by Gee) conducting a "big picture" analysis examining how participants background or foreground information; how they build identities; and how they construct what counts as a social good and how they share or withhold those goods from others (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2014a).

Gee's process of inquiry provides additional ways of connecting participants' discourse to broader constructs by examining how they frame their discursive enactments

through their stories or taken-for-granted theories about their worlds; how their discourse is affected by larger societal constructs; and how history and current events shape the discourse of the particular context (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2014a).

Connecting Language and Context. Because I am framing my discussion of democratic education within a social constructionist framing that accounts for an understanding of discourse as interactively constructed within specific contexts, it is imperative that I connect the language of the event with the contextual meanings participants may use when interpreting the event. Gee's process of analysis provides a means for analyzing how participants use deictics to contextualize their language use and to signify assumptions; to better understand the speaker's intention when language was unclear or when assumptions were necessary to understand the meaning; to identify what a non-participant would find unclear about the language, particularly one who did not hold the same assumptions, or beliefs; to understand why participants chose particular subjects and what they chose to say about those subjects; and to understand how the participants used intonation to convey meaning (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2014a).

Saying, Doing and Designing. Because I believe that speakers and writers are using language for particular purposes and that listeners and readers are listening with purpose and intention, I believe that all language is political and therefore is always supporting or denigrating democratic ways of being. Gee's process of analysis helps me to understand how participants build and design with language by providing a means to examine what participants are trying to do with language; how the use of Germanic or Latinate words affects the discursive event; and why participants use grammar in a particular way (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2014a).

Purpose of My Research

The purpose of my research is closely tied to the statement of the problem that I constructed earlier in this chapter. Multiple researchers have called for the disruption of the prevalent traditional schooling system in order to deepen the authentic practice of democracy (Apple & Beane, 2007; Dewey, 2004; DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985; Green, 1999; hooks 1994; Love, 2019; Noddings, 2013; Tampio, 2018; Woodson, 1988). But I believe that the authentic practice of democracy, (a communicative, agentive, communal attitude and practice) precedes the disruption of systemic ills in today's public schools. A democratic discourse (between teachers and students and between students and students) can nurture learning communities that foster social and self-empowerment which in turn may lead to the type of democratic spheres advocated by Dewey (Dewey, 1992/2004; Giroux & McLaren, 1986). A critical democratic discourse in schools can set the stage for establishing democratic communities that enact disruptive discourses for the good of every student citizen. (As stated previously, for the purposes of my dissertation, I am limiting my discussion to discursive enactments in the classroom. Exploring whether the classroom creates the society or the society creates the classroom is beyond the scope of this dissertation but is of particular interest to me for future research (Biesta, 2019).

With my research, I am endeavoring to make a distinction between teaching *for* critical citizenship and students and teachers *enacting* critical citizenship (Biesta, 2006; Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Giroux & McLaren, 1986). By framing democratic education through a social constructionist lens, I am adding to the conversation related to educating through democracy by highlighting discursive enactments that nurture democratic ways of saying, doing, and being that may in turn disrupt traditional ways of schooling. And when we disrupt the authoritarian

31

structure of schooling that supports hegemonic messages of the dominant culture we begin to

disrupt systemic social, racial, and moral injustices (Apple, 2013).

CHAPTER II:LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching within structures and systems that are designed for the marketplace and that support dominant discourses of economic profit and utility and control by the dominant culture leads to definitions that equate "effective schooling" with institutions focused on producing individuals who are employable as opposed to individuals who live deep, caring, community-focused lives (Goodlad, 1994). Knoester (2012) warns against the narrowing of curriculum to suit the needs of the marketplace, and he encourages teachers to define "teaching for democracy" as preparing citizens for practices related to social transformation. While I agree with Knoester's view of the danger of a narrowed, marketplace-driven curriculum, I believe it is necessary for educators to consider the difference between "teaching for democracy" as a preparation for students' future participation in democracy and "teaching through democracy" where student citizens engage in democratic discursive enactments as citizens in classroom community (Biesta, 2006/2019).

Educating through democracy can disrupt these dominant discourses and can move teachers towards transformative practices. But it is important to first understand the basis for traditional American schooling if we are to effectively disrupt the systemic injustices that are inherent in dominant discourses that are enacted throughout classroom settings. Systemic control by the dominant culture is the thread woven throughout each aspect of traditional American schooling, and it is deeply entrenched within status-quo discourses that lead to racial and social and individual injustices (DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; hooks, 1994; Lortie, 2002; Love, 2019).

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the development of traditional American schooling using Sim's scaffold of historical periods to describe the development of "school"

(Sim, 2017). I then review the literature related to democratic education and social constructionism to discuss pragmatic democratic education within a social constructionist framing as a means of outlining a way towards teaching through democratic discourses. Finally, I discuss the analysis of discourse and the importance of criticality in any analysis of school discourse.

Historical Understandings

An understanding of how the marketplace came to dominate teacher discourses and practices in schools is key to understanding how teachers can move forward to transformative practices. Teachers must first come to terms with their own understandings and identities related to practicing democracy before effectively engaging with students in democratic discourses (Britzman, 2003; Payne, 2018).

Sim's Scaffold of Historical Periods

Sim's scaffold of historical periods can serve as a framework for situating democratic education historically within the field of education and provide evidence for how dominant discourses of social efficiency came to be the dominant perspective of educators. Sim (2017) states that competing values of social efficiency, democratic equality, and social justice have informed educational perspectives related to liberal humanism, neo-classicism, modernism, and progressivism. These perspectives each reflected the thought of a particular age. According to Sim (2017), liberal humanism within the Classical Age promoted educating to live the good life, to promote the general well-being of everyone in society. Neo-classicism (the prevalent ideology from the Renaissance to the enlightenment) favored an ordering of knowledge, a universal discourse facilitated by the elite (Sim, 2017). Modernism situated education (through a "techno-rationalism") within the market—education would increase an individual's value to the

economy, thus enabling his or her upward mobility which would allow the individual to "make informed political choices to the benefit of democracy" (Sim, 2017, p. 130). And finally, progressivism moved educators to an emphasis of the practical over the theoretical situating the individual within the role of active meaning-maker (Sim, 2017).

Liberal Humanism

A dominant discourse of educating elites towards commonly held views and economic utility has informed educational practice since the classical age. Plato, a chief philosopher of the classical age, understood community in static terms believing in planned societies of soldiers, artists, and rulers who valued critical reasoning (Reich, Garrison, & Neubert, 2016). This philosophical structure leads to societies sustained through perpetuating the "status quo," through fixed truths that are explicated by some to others, and the role of the individual is diminished (Reich, Garrison, & Neubert, 2016). For a liberal humanist, this meant that an education provided an "universalized conception of culture and citizenship," and that "all men had a 'natural right' to be educated for the benefit of society" (Sim, 2017, p. 129). For Dewey this meant that the child was subjugated to the desired social order and was educated towards fixed ends, thus limiting the scope of educational vision (Kliebard, 2004).

Neo-Classicism

Elitism and educating towards dominant discourses continued into the neo-classical age. "Formal reasoning" was taught from a perspective of truth coming from a "common origin" and was taught to societal elites by the clergy (Sim, 2017, p. 129). This educational perspective favored commodification of elite society's standards, and top-down structures of education (Sim, 2017). Both liberal humanism and neo-classicism inform today's educational perspectives particularly related to national solidarity around standards, core knowledge, and methods of

instruction that promote mastery of content as the priority of the curriculum. Sim (2017) raises important questions related to knowledge when education is meant to promote the culture and knowledge of the elites: "…does knowledge become privileged by virtue of its 'correctness,' its position in our episteme? Or is it privilege instead that legitimates what knowledge is?" (p. 130). I believe that because America continues to be a stratified society (King, 1967/2010; Kendi; 2019; Love, 2019), it is more important than ever to ask, "why a particular form of social collectivity exists, how it is maintained and who benefits from it" (Apple, 2004, p. 6).

Techno-Rationalism

The role of school changed significantly at the beginning of the 19th century as a result of industrialization, immigration, and nationalization of the curriculum—the teacher's role was minimized, and curriculum became preeminent (Kliebard, 2004). The school's job became to prepare workers for the labor force thus allowing for the prospect of upward mobility of future employees (Sim, 2017). Techno-rationalism situates democratic health in this upward social mobility—educated workers can make informed decisions that benefit democratic practice (Sim, 2017). If the school is truly educating future workers for understanding and individual decision-making, then the techno-rationalistic perspective could potentially be justified; however, because schools often privilege existing "social privilege, interests, and knowledge", it is difficult to determine who is benefitting from the upward mobility of the worker—the worker or the employer? (Apple, 2004, p. 44). In other words, if the education of the worker is reinforcing that which benefits the employer, then the worker's decisions will most often benefit the establishment. Both industrial education and classical education have marginalized populations by failing to connect their learning with their own understandings of the world—for both were oriented towards the oppressor's agenda (Woodson, 1988). While vocational training and

curricula could allow immigrants opportunities to "…transform their immediate environment and improve their economic condition…[they] did not necessarily equip them to challenge and transform the broader political and social system that segregated and oppressed them" (Fallace, 2015, p. 63).

Progressivism

The progressive movement articulated a marked contrast to these prior sensibilities. The focus of this movement was the importance of the developmental processes of children and their role as citizens—not citizens in the making. Rousseau ushered in new ways of thinking about the importance of the developmental processes of children and their identities emphasizing the importance of Nature on the child's development and education and believing that the child learned through connections with Nature—often without any mitigating factors (Reich, Garrison, & Neubert, 2016). Viewing children as meaning-makers had the potential to revolutionize curriculum, and a balance was struck (primarily through the writings of Dewey) between the role of the teacher and the role of the curriculum. This progressive movement played against the backdrop of four major forces within the field of education that arose in the 19th century: humanists, developmentalists, advocates of social efficiency, and social meliorists (Kliebard, 2004). At the heart of the debate among these forces/movements were two questions: what knowledge is worth knowing and teaching? and what is the central function of teaching?

Humanists believed in the power of reason and in preserving the "best" of tradition and values from the past (Kliebard, 2004). This approach does not address the child's realm of experience or prior knowledge—they learn what prior and current nation-state's deem as valuable and important, not what may be of value to them (Sim, 2017); thus, education becomes inculcation rather than transformation. The other three forces can be seen as reform movements

"each representing a different conception of what knowledge should be embodied in the curriculum and to what ends the curriculum should be directed" (Kliebard, 2004, p. 23). Developmentalists were primarily concerned with scientific understandings of child and adolescent development and how humans learn (Kliebard, 2004). Social efficiency advocates were interested in effective processes, skill development, and curricular differentiation to meet the needs of skill development (Kliebard, 2004). "Social efficiency" gradually became a term used to describe social control by advocates using it to describe schools as "sorting mechanism[s] to engineer social progress"—eventually endorsing "using a curriculum differentiated by race" (Fallace, 2015, p. 74). And, finally, the social meliorists were interested in social justice, changing society, and creating new visions for schooling (Kliebard, 2004).

Progressivism as a movement can be difficult to define because of the wide range of attributes that are typically ascribed to it. Kliebard suggests an approach that considers the fluidity of attributes related to progressivist thought recognizing that "subgroups" and "coalition of subgroups" exist within any movement (Kliebard, 2004, p. 286). Progressive educators of the 19th century advocated for "interdisciplinary, integrated, and inquiry-based approaches" in schools (Webber & Miller, 2016, p. 1064). They focused on an individual's freedom to develop naturally (motivated by interest) with the teacher as guide and sought to facilitate cooperation between school and home (Kliebard, 2004).

What is recognized as the progressive movement brought particular constructs related to educating for democracy or for democratic living to the forefront of conversations. Progressivists' were against fitting children into prescribed social orders and recognized the importance of advocating for developmental practices that supported student identity and freedom (Kliebard, 2004). They rebelled against compartmentalized, sequential curricula and

supported integration of subject matter across disciplines (Kliebard, 2004). Reformers of the early 1900s primarily pushed back against "hard efficiency and the maintenance of the existing social order" and supported "a sentimental belief in the natural unfolding of children's natural propensities" (Kliebard, 2004, p. 159). For many, progressive thought represented victory of "democracy and enlightenment over the forces of elitism and hidebound tradition" (Kliebard, 2004, p. 271); however, because skill development is often easier to measure and to teach than critical reasoning, social efficiency remained the dominant discourse in schools.

According to Zhao (2007), progressive thought was a call to deeper thinking and deeper engagement—"an intellectual effort to avert the authoritarian hold on children" (p. 2). Today's teachers have seemingly adopted some of the ideas of progressive thought without adopting the intellectual rigor needed to fully emancipate children to freedom of thought. Zhao (2007) states that current practice utilizes "learning through projects, learning by doing, etc., without stressing the need to engage students in deep thinking" and this can result in disappointing outcomes for "child-centeredness and education for democracy" practice (p. 2). When teachers try to enact student-centered pedagogies advocated by progressivists within the systems and structures of industrial/classical sensibilities democratic practices are undermined, for I believe that democratic education is about processes and ways of being as much as it is about products and outcomes.

Pragmatic Democratic Education within a Social Constructionist Framing

Dewey stood apart from these movements (even the progressivist movement at times), critiquing, and eventually integrating and transforming ideas put forth by others (Kliebard, 2004). Dewey's view was honed in response to the arguments of his day and provides a balanced Questiway forward for talking about practices that promote democracy and that can be

considered democratic education. According to Gordon (2016), Dewey provides a balanced

pragmatic approach to democratic education that transcends any one school of thought and that

provides adaptive means for changing issues and societies from which all children may benefit.

Dewey's framing of a pragmatic democratic education situated within a symbolic interactionist

paradigm is deepened by a social constructionist framing. By recognizing that individuals do not

only shape meaning by entering the conversation, but that they *create* the conversation and

create meaning in relationship, we are better able to understand how communication,

community, and agency can be used to nurture democratic spaces.

Pragmatisim

Dewey came to be closely associated with pragmatism because of his centering

communication within his educational, philosophical, and political understandings (Biesta,

2010). Pragmatism, as a philosophical construction, is situated within the sociocultural tradition

where the associations and influences of macro-level structures ("shared patterns of action and

meaning") on micro-level communication (utterances, sentences, messages) are studied (Lindlof

& Taylor, 2002, p. 39). Pragmatists championed "the role of open communication as a necessary

condition of democracy," and recognized that the "complexity of socialization creates selves

who are capable of both conformity and innovation" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, pp. 43-44).

Philosophers associated with a pragmatic view (including Dewey) are interested in how identities

are shaped by communication which in turn shape individuality and community, a philosophical

construct known as symbolic interactionism (SI)(Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Within SI, meaning is

shaped or constructed within social contexts for specific purposes; these social constructions

change over time in relation to "real" social problems; and thus, reality is considered to be

indeterminate in that there is a constant process of negotiation as individuals make meaning in

community related to one another, historical or future events, and objects (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Dewey's pragmatism is a metaphysical consideration, for he believed it is in planning and acting for the future that educators acknowledge a world that is still forming, still being constructed (McDermott, 1981). West (1999) states that Dewey's pragmatic view means (to Dewey) that "all facts are fallible, and all experience is experimental," and that it is through "unique selves acting in and through participatory communities [that] give ethical significance to an open, risk-ridden future" (p. 178). Dewey's pragmatic view emphasizes an indeterminate reality, a reality of possibility rather than certainty (Biesta, 2014). His perspective moves us from old "either/or" considerations related to reality into considering meaning being made in relation to specific concerns in response to specific questions, thus minimizing chaotic considerations and faulty conclusions that could arise from an "anything goes" ethos (Biesta, 2014). A social constructionist paradigm helps us to understand the indeterminate nature of reality--our perceptions and constructions are negotiated through discourse making them flexible, subject to change in the moment, while also helping us to understand how we enter a world of already constructed meanings (Cap, 2019).

Social Constructionism

While symbolic interactionism begins the discussion for how meaning is formed in relationship, it still emphasizes the cognitive mind as the basis for understanding—the individual comes to experience others and must mentally assume the role of the other in order to understand the self; the mind of the self is developed through social engagement, thus it is a view where "a social world pre-exists the mind" and where "…the mind becomes socialized" (Gergen, 2015, p. 104).

But to fully understand how meaning is constructed, we must move away from cognitivistic framings of the construction of knowledge to account for the wide array of historical, social, cultural, and relational meanings that exist in context when we participate in the process of making meaning (Gergen, 2015). Berger and Luckman (1966) in their seminal work *The Social Construction of Reality* provided insight into how reality is socially constructed in relationship in the moment (reality as indeterminate and flexible), while at the same time individuals in relationship may operate within that context as if their realities are fixed and prescribed. According to Gergen (2015), it is "only when we join in a longstanding cultural process do we become meaningful agents" (p.105-106). In other words, we must acknowledge the paradigms in which any exchange occurs to completely participate in the meaning-making that is occurring.

No one individual starts the process (Gergen, 2015). Gergen (2015) further explicates this social constructionist view of meaning making by stating, "The ability of the individual to mean anything—to be rational or sensible—is owing to participation in the process" (p. 106). This view of meaning-making is necessary if we are to deepen Dewey's version of community and to counteract the dangers inherent in individualism, for individualism more likely supports a social-efficiency model of education rather than democratic practices.

Galbin (2014) in her review of the literature associated with social constructionism shares guiding principles of a social constructionist perspective that I believe are essential for the study of democratic education and that evidence support for defining and examining democratic education through a social constructionist lens. According to her review of the literature, social constructionists espouse the social construction of reality and believe that realities are constituted through language and are sustained through social processes (Galbin, 2014). This view of

meaning making emphasizes the ability of humans to act reflexively and recognizes meaning to be a construction, not the property of the "objects and events themselves" (Galbin, 2014, p. 84). Meaning is shaped by "the prevailing cultural frame of social, linguistic, discursive and symbolic practices" (Galbin, 2014, p. 84). Additionally, social constructionists espouse that as participants interact with one another, meaning becomes habitual and institutionalized as they form concepts and mental representations of each other's actions—in this way societal meaning may be constructed (Galbin, 2014). According to Galbin's (2014) review of the literature, within a social constructionist paradigm, our consciousness and ways of relating are socially constructed; we "exist in language;" we focus on the social interaction rather than the individual; and knowledge is built in contextual relationship and is socially and historically situated; therefore, realities are indeterminate (Galbin, 2014, p. 84). A social constructionist framing focuses on the complicated interrelatedness of individuals within their communities (Galbin, 2014).

Gergen (1994) warns that empiricist and relativist views that center the construction of meaning within an individualistic paradigm lead to an understanding of the world in binary terms (e.g., good or evil; right or wrong; this or that; my opinion or your opinion) rather than encouraging alternative perspectives. Gergen (1994) asserts that it is only through relationship that individuals' identities are recognized and valued; therefore, the process of relating must be preeminent when discussing how community impacts the construction of meaning. For Gergen (1994), a constructionist framing can help us to better understand articulations and realizations of a "good society" by focusing on collaborative meanings and consequences; by focusing on how relationships are organized; by focusing on how problems are contextualized within historical framings, and by focusing on interdependent patterns within those developing problems; and by moving discussions from the theoretical (specifically the axiological) to the practical, to how

satisfactory outcomes are achieved within relationship (focusing on the processes). The purpose of my research is to add to this discussion by critically examining how teachers and students discourse democracy within a specific school setting; thus, I have chosen to examine democratic education through a social constructivist framing.

Knowledge and the Curriculum

The curricula of a democratic school must be thoughtfully chosen and inclusive. Dewey (2004) expands "curricula" to include the child's wonderings, issues, and concerns, and he encourages a child-centered approach to school that makes the curricula serve the purposes of the child's inquiring mind. Rather than a more traditional method of educating in which the authority (teacher, parent, community) determines the knowledge that is worth knowing and delivers that information to the students, Dewey advocates a method of teaching and learning that encourages participating in the world, learning from that experience, and applying the new information gained to other situations (Menand, 2001). This progressive approach better serves the needs of a local community as well as a global economy by emphasizing inquiry, by integrating subject matter to serve the issue and/or problem being investigated by the students, and by putting students' projects (and, therefore, the development of their problem-solving skills) at the core of the curricula (Little & Ellison, 2015).

Dewey focused on the meaningful connection between the curriculum and the child as a transactional space, a space where the coordination of meaning occurs through interactions (Biesta, 2014). For Dewey, knowledge is about "the relationship between (our) actions and (their) consequences" (Biesta, 2014, p. 41). Because, for Dewey, our actions are always contextualized in transactional situations, the consequences are flexible and perhaps indeterminate (within that situation), thus our knowledge is flexible and agentive—we are able to

act in different ways based on our knowledge learned in prior situations (Biesta, 2014). For

Dewey and other pragmatists, the question is related to the problem rather than to the truth—our

judgments are related to specific issues and to specific outcomes (Biesta, 2014).

For Biesta (2014), this understanding of Dewey's representation of the construction of

knowledge leads us beyond arguments against the relativism of socially constructed paradigms

by grounding our questions always in matters of human concern, in real questions and

transactions where our actions (discourses) have consequences from which we learn and adapt in

relationship with others. Dewey's way forward demands a shift in thinking, a philosophical

shift—it is not a simple recipe to follow, but a theoretical understanding that informs the ways in

which we develop higher levels of thinking and being (Quay, 2016). When knowledge is viewed

as created in relationship, as dependent upon prior constructions made in relationship, as

inherently agentive (able to be changed as new knowledge is constructed in new situations), as

shaped by the other, and as discursively enacted, communicative experiences within community

are important.

According to Biesta (2006), when considering the curriculum of the school and how it

supports the construction of meaning (especially relative to democracy), it is important that we

examine what school is for, its purpose. Is the purpose of the curriculum to prepare students to

act and live democratically as adult citizens (to produce a democratic person for future

citizenship), or is the purpose of school to nurture democratic discourse (ways of being, doing,

saying), to effectively live democracy (Biesta, 2006)? There is a difference—either the school is

educating for democracy or it is educating through democracy positioning students as citizens

and democracy as a mode of associated living, to borrow Dewey's term (Biesta, 2006; Biesta &

Lawy, 2006; Dewey, 2004). This moves educators away from ideas of schools as instruments

that lead to democracy, or from individualistic approaches where students are taught

"knowledge, skills, and dispositions" of democratic living but without criticality, without

questioning the contextual considerations that inform their practice relative to others (Biesta,

2006, p. 120). Apple & Beane (2007) speak of the importance of establishing democratic

structures in the life of the school situated within a curriculum that provides democratic

experiences for students to live; however, within a social constructionist framing of democratic

education, it is important to recognize that all discursive enactments among stakeholders in a

school may support or denigrate democracy at any given time. For student citizens are constantly

evaluating, contextualizing, creating, relating, making meaning in the smallest of discursive

enactments with one another. Dewey's idea of democracy as a mode of associated living (2004)

gets at this. My definition of democratic education as communicative, communal, and agentive

begun in Dewey is deepened through a social constructionist framing where even the process of

meaning making supports enacting democracy. Within a social constructionist framing of

democratic education, the transactional space espoused by Dewey is co-constructed, co-created.

But we can move one step further when we frame democratic education through a social

constructionist lens. When students are associating, transacting, discoursing, they are making

meaning, and thus, are evaluating and choosing. In this way, they are political—they are acting.

To live democracy means that we are choosing to constantly interrogate our choices and others'

discursive enactments in light of what is of greater good for the community, not only for

ourselves (Biesta & Lawy, 2006).

Communicative Experiences in Community

Central to Dewey's construction of knowledge is the idea that participants' constructed

identities may or may not be consciously shared or apprehended within a transactional event to

the extent that they are actually shaping the others' construction of meaning in that event—a shaping that is necessary for shared meaning to be made (Dewey, 2004; Biesta, 2006). Dewey emphasizes the importance of shared purpose in experience—something must be useful and purposeful to me and to my associates—if we are to effectively engage in constructing new meaning or ways of being from engaging in the experience (Dewey, 2004). In this way, Dewey grounds meaning making in community within shared spheres of experience. Creating shared meanings is a critical component of Dewey's philosophy. In Democracy and Education, he states:

> To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience…to formulate requires getting outside of it, seeing it as another would see it, considering what points of contact it has with the life of another so that it may be got into such form that he can appreciate its meaning (Dewey, 2004, pp. 5-6).

Dewey (2004) speaks of the importance for all group members to have multiple opportunities of sharing and receiving, of having a wide variety of "shared undertakings and experiences"—he warns that "otherwise, the influences which educate some into masters, educate others into slaves" (p. 80). Dewey (2004) continues to equate knowledge-as-an-end-unto-itself with slavery by stating that "[slavery] is found wherever men are engaged in activity which is socially serviceable, but whose service they do not understand and have no personal interest in" (p. 81). Could this not be a description of much of what goes on in today's schools? Often, the authority of the teacher is conflated with the natural authority of knowledge (Irwin, 2012). But, in a classroom built on shared construction of knowledge and shared meaning-making, the teacher and student learn from and teach the other—they are "jointly responsible for a process in which they all grow" (Freiere, 1985, p. 67).

For Dewey, the only true education "comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" (Flinders & Thorton, 2004, p. 18). It is through these social demands that a child learns to act "as a member of unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling, and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs" (Flinders & Thorton, 2004, p. 18). It is out of this idea that Dewey articulates a purpose of schooling as being the shaping of the social order, creating a shared social consciousness in which each student finds his or her societal role which leads to the reconstructing of the social order and in which each student learns to "extract the desirable traits of forms of community life which actually exist, and employ[s] them to criticize undesirable features and suggest improvements" (Dewey, 2004, p. 79). For Dewey, education links a student's psychological experience to his or her understanding of the social order for the purpose of promoting "a mode of associated living, of con-joint communicated experience" or rather a democracy (Dewey, 2004, p. 83). By situating the construction of meaning within relationship, and by focusing on the construction of individuals identities as shared constructions among community members, we are able to move closer to a more authentic form of associated living then if we remain in definitions of identity construction as being the work of an individual and the work of socializing individual minds.

Today's accountability measures, particularly the "extreme focus on testing…[and] narrowly defined skills and knowledge," are in direct contrast to humanizing pedagogy that supports communities (Bruce, 2018, p. 123). Linking to Dewey's vision, Bruce asks educators to consider "democratic education as both means and end" making "community an explicit goal for education…and [making] community as curriculum a means to foster democratic living and learning" (Bruce, 2018, p. 125). According to Bruce (2018), this reciprocity is enacted through

balancing autonomous decision making and individualized project work with shared decision making that benefits community enterprises. Recognizing the community as offering on-site learning opportunities helps to contextualize teaching and learning in contrast to "modern schooling" that "often means posing decontextualized problems with little connection to students' lives" (Bruce, 2018, p. 127). Bruce (2018) also cites the importance of bringing the life of the community into the school and taking school learning into the community. It is in this way that children become problem posers and problem solvers—change agents for their community.

Unfortunately, there is little research that relates to the social construction of democracy in schools (Biesta & Lawy, 2006). By the social construction of democracy, I mean how students or young people discursively enact democratic practices (contextualize, problematize, critically or non-critically discourse—discourse as a verb).

France (1998) studied how 50 British males and females between the ages of 14 and 25 from a local youth center in Sheffield perceive and experience citizenship. He found that while participants valued community membership, they were frustrated by the expectations of the larger community, to be expected to accept the status-quo, and to be expected to conform to the responsibilities as outlined by older community members (France, 1998). He also found that poverty was cited as a reason (by participants) for not wanting to engage with their community— they saw no economic benefit to remaining part of the community citing being disillusioned and exploited by the up-and-down nature of the market and government job-training programs (France, 1998). In short, the young people felt as though there were no agentive answers available to them—they felt as if they had "no say" in their futures as community members; therefore, they were choosing to not engage within the civic responsibilities of the community (France, 1998). This points to the importance of student citizens being part of decision-making

processes within community; to the importance of engagement versus top-down authoritarian requirements of adherence to the status-quo; to the end result of exclusion and exploitation—disengagement from the community. A shared purpose among community members is critical to remaining engaged.

In order to build community and to support advocacy, teachers must model how to listen within the community. hooks (1994) speaks of the importance of students and educators learning "how to listen, how to hear one another" while engaging in the serious consideration of their work (p. 150). This listening leads to a sense of self, a sense of the importance of the other's view, and minimizes the need for the teacher's validation when forming opinions (hooks, 1994). The importance of dialogue cannot be overstated in describing democratic education for "conversation is the central location of pedagogy for the democratic educator" (hooks, 2003, p. 44).

Enacting Democratic Pedagogies

Dewey's philosophy of shared decision-making and shared construction of knowledge (shared between students and between teacher and students) is threatening to those who hold traditional views of curriculum and students' relationship to the curriculum (Hopkins, 2018). Issues of authority are difficult to navigate for most educators. In more traditional classrooms, according to Dewey, the question of whether an answer is "right" often refers to whether the answer is "right" per what the teacher expects or wants instead of meaning "does it satisfy the inherent conditions of the problem?" (1991, p. 50). hooks (1994) views engaging in dialogue as the means for "teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences" (p. 130). According to Freire (1985), this process of mutual meaning-making

negates issues of authority—authority is shifted to the knowledge and its place in the meaning-making process as children act as problem-posers and problem solvers. Children are able to imagine the world as other than it is through critical reasoning and reflection (Rodd and Sanders, 2018).

A school that is endeavoring to educate through democracy nurtures spaces where student citizens are able to experience the impact and consequences of their agentive decisions. In order for the school culture to support shared decision-making and to nurture agency, teachers must be prepared to enact democratic pedagogies. It is equally important for educators to consider their "body posture, tone, [and] word choice that may "perpetuate [the] very hierarchies and biases they are critiquing" (hooks, 1994, p. 141).

Payne (2018) examined how mentor teachers guide pre-service teachers into understanding and practicing democratic pedagogies. She situated her study within a consideration of living democratically attending to "rights, welfare, and abilities to work together" (Payne, 2018, p. 134). According to Payne (2018), both schools and teacher preparation programs are responsible for linking democratic thought with democratic practices. She cited the importance of future teachers being prepared to teach by addressing teacher dispositions, shared decision-making related to coursework, field experiences that promote democratic practice, and collaborating with other stakeholders (Payne, 2018). In other words, Payne found that teacher preparation programs need to enact democratic pedagogies in order to adequately prepare teachers to enact democratic pedagogies.

Payne (2018) found that the cooperating teachers' democratic philosophies and beliefs infused their work with the teacher candidates and that the cooperating teachers shaped the democratic learning experiences of their assigned novice teachers in the following ways: by

encouraging "inquiry and discussion" around pedagogical issues and concerns; by encouraging a critical awareness of educational issues; by encouraging respectful relationships focused on the good of the group; and by encouraging the "distributed expertise of teaching knowledge" (p. 141). The crux of the effectiveness of Payne's findings relates to engaging cooperating teachers who are practicing democratic pedagogies. Payne (2018) selected teachers who "[focused] on student voice, choice, and participation" (p. 138).

Knecht (2018) interviewed practitioners from ten schools (where he believes serious attention to educating for democracy is occurring) in an effort to learn whether or not patterns of democratic pedagogy and practice would emerge. Knecht (2018) found six interconnected themes in his interviews: first, intentionally developed content connects students with their communities and was aligned with the school's commitment to democratic practices and values; secondly, a commitment to diversity is enacted in the schools through admission goals and policies, and through a commitment to listening to one another, "[exploring] each other's humanity and [broadening] one's understanding of difference" (p. 17); thirdly, informed decision-making as both individuals and as a collective is nurtured by examining the reason for making a particular choice as well as considering the consequences for others; fourthly, "participatory governance and justice" enables students to exercise their voices in building "a stronger and more just community" (p. 23); fifthly, the students are change makers participating in community engagements; and lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the teachers in the school model democratic practices with each other and with students. However, while Knecht's research points to the advantages of enacting democratic pedagogies, he warns that a de-humanizing rhetoric is seemingly driving reform efforts in American education, that a focus in schools on "academic skills, knowledge, and economic competitiveness" often drowns out a "focus on the

whole person…from the arts to character building and social-emotional well-being" (Knecht, 2018, p. 10.)

Current accountability measures can derail democratic pedagogies and discourses in classrooms (Buxton, Kayumova, & Allexsaht-Snider, 2013). When teachers become focused on outcomes rather than processes, they drift further afield from the principles of communal engagement espoused by Dewey (Buxton, Kayumova, & Allexsaht-Snider, 2013). Buxton, Kayumova, and Allexsaht-Snider (2013) found through their discourse analysis study of middle grades science teachers that it is possible to help teachers to push against high-stakes accountability measures through the use of a hybridized discourse that blends discourses related to high-stakes accountability (often the discourse of the school) with discourses related to critical thinking and student-centered pedagogy (often the discourse of the researcher). By creating space for teachers to critically examine (through conversation) an outcomes-based pedagogy against a student-centered/critical thinking pedagogy, these researchers found that "even in a tightly controlled curriculum there is still space to enact more democratic processes to support teaching and learning" (Buxton, Kayumova, & Allexsaht-Snider, 2013, p. 10).

Campo (2016) provides an overview of enacting democratic pedagogies for educators stating that community decision-making, advocacy, and engagement in political decision-making is essential to nurturing democratic schools and focusing on standardized achievement and neutralizing the content marginalizes connections between the school and community (Campo, 2016). Linking to Dewey's (2004) concept of reconstructing society, Campo (2016) advocates for schools that are as focused on their role of advocates for change as they are on providing a "strong standards-based curriculum" (p. 169). She states, "A community school should be a climate where teachers and school leaders are unafraid of delving in the uncertain and

controversial" (Campo, 2016, p. 169). And she states that multiplicity of voice, experience, and expertise should be encouraged (Campo, 2016).

Educators must consider whose interest is served when they are considering curricula, pedagogical practices, and classroom dispositions (Apple, 2004). In other words, it is important that an effective educator consider the motives of the publishers, of the individuals creating educational policy, and of the federal and state lawmakers legislating education. Thoughtful educators will examine the replication of practice, ideology, and components of the status quo— are their classroom practices and curricular content supporting hegemonic practices that serve to suppress particular members of society, to perpetuate economic suppression of societal members, and to perpetuate inequitable distribution of social and cultural capital (Apple, 2004)? Effective educators must lead citizens (students) to understandings that enable them to consider others' perspectives and to be able to make decisions that promote the welfare of all members of society (Dewey, 2004).

Enacting Agency

Gutmann (1999) suggests that citizens, parents, and professional educators share responsibility for educating children in non-repressive, fully inclusive ways that respect all learners. If a child is already a citizen, rather than a future citizen, then the child also enters into this shared authority/shared responsibility for his or her own education. Democratic schools are spaces where democratic practices are lived, places where stakeholders (including the students) practice decision-making that informs and impacts their shared living experiences (Apple & Beane, 2007). When children are encouraged to act with purpose and agency in solving issues of importance to themselves, they begin to understand how their actions impact their learning community.

Agency, one's ability to be a force for change through their decision-making (Boyte & Finders, 2016), is at the heart of democratic schooling. Knoester (2012) states "…since powerful forces of inequality and suppression exist within our society, leading to the reproduction of social inequalities in and by schools, a democratic school must be aware of, and continuously thoughtful, innovative, and courageous in counteracting these forces" (pp. 6-7). Schools can be powerful arbiters of hegemony ensuring the continuity of repressive practices of dominant cultures, and educators must vigilantly provide spaces that celebrate student agency (Apple, 2004). hooks (1994) speaks of agency when she states: "Coming to voice is not just the act of telling one's experience[;] it is using that telling strategically—to come to voice so that you can also speak freely about other subjects" (p. 148). Within a social constructionist framing, I reframe the idea of "coming to voice" as enacting voice, for "coming to voice" seems to indicate a point in time when voice is not part of an individual's identity; within a social constructionist framing, every individual always has voice, has agency, even though they might not choose to enact agency within particular contexts (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002).

Laursen (2020) in his study of principals, teachers, and staff at four Danish schools found that a program designed to support the professional agency of principals adversely impacted the enactment of core democratic practices within the schools. Laursen (2020) contextualizes his use of principals' "agency" as principals' enacting agency within a framework of top-down, government mandates that recognize strong leadership as strong outcomes on standardized tests. In other words, for these school principals, "good," professional enactments of agency meant enacting the government's mandates of standardization and protecting the reputation of the school by producing good scores (Laursen, 2020). However, the mandated implementation of a Learning Management System (to support the implementation of standardized mandates)

eliminated autonomy of decision-making from principals, teachers, and students, and limited opportunities for principals, teachers, and students to enact agency in matters of curriculum, time spent teaching certain topics, and social interactions among stakeholders (Laursen, 2020). Of particular note was how the embedded nature of the LMS shaped the stakeholders' agency towards the dominant political discourse of mandated curriculum—stakeholders could "enact agency" within the confines of the mandated curriculum—and how this dictated how the principals shaped professional development of the teachers. Thus, the principals' supposed autonomy and agency in crafting professional development that they felt would be best for their schools was inauthentic as it was prescribed within boundaries of the dominant authority (Laursen, 2020).

Hantzopoulos (2015) studied students' lived experiences at a small public high school in New York City. This particular school was designed for students who had previously found school to be a place of unresponsiveness (Hantzopoulos, 2015). Her two-year study was framed around questions related to how students discursively enacted democratic practices and how their discursive enactments matched or diverged from the faculty's discursive enactments (Hantzopoulos, 2015). Using participant-observation methods, individual and group interviews, and document analysis, Hantzopoulos (2015) found that the school's democratic schooling practices and critical pedagogy nurtured students' hopeful experiences and provided opportunities for participatory engagement. Students studied overwhelmingly felt that the school provided opportunities for them to act agentively, to develop their voice, to develop a framework for thinking about how the future could be different, and to create a framework for thinking differently and more critically (Hantzopoulos, 2015). However, students and alumni studied also indicated that there were difficulties with enacting agency when their views differed from their

teachers or when situations arose that they felt to be out of their control, and they felt that their perspectives were sometimes minimized (Hantzopoulos, 2015). Specifically cited by students and alumni was a perception that the school (from its utopian environment) may not have adequately prepared them for operating within real world contexts, thus limiting their ability to enact agency when confronted with real world issues (Hantzopoulos, 2015). A major conclusion of her study is that within a school enacting democratic schooling practices and a critical pedagogy, "multiple contradictions arise, sometimes even simultaneously, as participants struggle to make meaning of their agency in prohibitive contexts" (Hantzopoulos, 2015). This does not discourage Hantzopoulos from encouraging these types of pedagogies, but she recommends situating future study of students' enactment of agency within a critical sociocultural lens to see how participants use enactments to negotiate power (Hantzopoulos, 2015).

When repression and discrimination are found to exist, citizens should choose societal change for the greater good. However, the ability to view others through a caring and democratic lens is too often rare and must be continually cultivated within each generation of citizens (Michelli & Keiser, 2005). Postman and Weingartner (1969) indicate that "the process of becoming an effective social being is contingent upon seeing the other's point of view" (p. 90). In this way, we see that agency is closely related to an ethos of caring.

An Inquiry Approach

Many school districts recognize the need to prepare 21st century learners for 21st century issues, but those same districts often advocate standardized test preparation, teacher-directed lessons delivered to waiting receptacles (children), tests of minimum levels of understanding or recall—making the education process about developing successful test takers rather than

57

effective thinkers (Little & Ellison, 2015). "Teaching through democracy" requires more of curricula—curricula must provide an expansive view of knowledge that includes multiple voices and perspectives; curricula must support children's questions, and must consider children as makers of meaning, rather than as passive receptors of the teacher's knowledge; and curricula must support the view of children as constructors of their own knowledge (Apple & Beane, 2007). The fundamental differences between viewing children as active constructors of meaning versus viewing children as receptors of pre-determined knowledge create the differences seen in school curricula—if children are makers of meaning, the curricula become large and expansive and differentiated and focused on the children's wonderings; if children are receptors of pre-determined knowledge, standardization and narrowing of the curricula becomes the name of the game (Postman & Weingartner, 1969).

Conducting "meaningful in-depth explorations of complex topics" allows teachers and students to nurture and produce high-quality work and to make "meaningful connections" among curricula (Knoester, 2012, p. 86). A progressive view of learning enables students to make connections between what they know and what they want to know by establishing a learning environment that allows mistakes, second tries, and explorations of blunders—all with the view of shaping understanding through doing (Little & Ellison, 2015).

Effective teachers are learners themselves—they model mistake-making and learning-from-mistakes for their students while discussing their learning processes with the students each step of the way. Effective teachers share the knowledge they are gleaning from their reading and exploration, but they refrain from narrowing the discussion to their own viewpoints—they allow the students to actively participate in the meaning-making that participatory conversation brings to a learning environment. Mills and Donnelly (2001) describe the criteria used for hiring

teachers (when establishing the Center for Inquiry in a local school district) as finding teachers who "embraced inquiry both as a guiding philosophy for creating curriculum and as a way of thinking and being in general" (p. 8). Teaching from theoretical understandings towards ownership of experiences and meaning (in other words, constructing new knowledge from what is known) creates inquiry-driven learning environments that best support students' understandings (Mills & Donnelly, 2001).

Knoester (2012), in his study of Deborah Meier's The Mission Hill School in Boston, Massachusetts, describes the inquiry framework used by faculty and students to build a curriculum that moves students and faculty to empathy, to an appreciation of "otherness", and to community engagement (Knoester, 2012). Their curricula is built around five habits of mind that lead students to deliberative and participatory practice (Knoester, 2012). Faculty members and students use these habits of mind (phrased as questions) to plan for engagement and reflection, and as tools for deliberation: "what is the evidence? what is the relevance? how is this connected with other structures, forces, or facts? from whose viewpoint am I looking? and how could it be different?" (Knoester, 2012, p. 72). According to Knoester (2012), these habits of mind create a healthy skepticism, an ethos of care, an interconnectedness of content, an appreciation for others' perspectives, and a forward-thinking mindset. Perhaps most importantly, these habits of mind permeate projects, portfolios, and classroom rhetoric and structure, and the school's administrators recognize that these habits are developed over the entire life of a student—they recognize that planning for "long-term goals of education" nurture the type of democratic deliberation that should be a hallmark of a democratic society (Knoester, 2012, p. 72). Knoester (2012) makes an important point related to the "counter-hegemonic" message of this deliberative, inquiry approach to a school's curriculum—a slow approach to developing

democratic, inquisitive thinking does not mean that development of skills and mastery of content are not valued as means of success in the marketplace; this slow approach means (to the administration of Mission Hill School) that curricula is highly valued and "therefore…educators must be students of human nature and how children actually learn" (Knoester, 2012, p. 73). If a student is to be successful in forming "correct ideas out of their incorrect old ideas," then a student needs time to construct understanding (Knoester, 2012, p. 73). (And again, I must emphasize the importance of critiquing what is meant by "correct ideas" and "incorrect old ideas" when considering democratic education. A democratic educator must consider the perspective of those determining what is correct and what is incorrect and must recognize that these definitions are flexible and ever-changing as individuals craft meaning in relationship towards what is best for members of their community.)

Kloss (2018), in his study of the Peachtown Elementary School in Aurora, New York, describes how a school creates an alternative to Traditional Public Schooling. He describes a school where students choose projects; where instructors serve as "true facilitator[s] in place of direct instruction and assessment"; where students choose their level of participation and engagement; and where students identify the tasks for each other to accomplish (p. 71). The school's approach is a progressive approach where a student's capabilities are developed through critical reasoning (Kloss, 2018). The underlying principles of the school that guide their decision-making processes are a focus on student-centeredness, community engagement, and "democratic decision making" (p. 69). Kloss (2018) describes evidence of democracy in practice in the school through the students' deliberation, the shared learning experiences, the diverse student population, their emphasis on building their community, and their view of the teacher as a co-learner with students. However, Kloss (2018) highlights the fragility of the work at

Peachtree and the constant financial unease that is experienced by the school's administration. (According to Kloss (2018), at any given time up to 70% of the student population is there on some sort of financial aid/scholarship).

Instead of schools founded around inquiry, today's educational scene shows schools in many states are organized around The Common Core Curriculum—a curriculum that places "college readiness and workplace preparation" at the forefront of its purposes (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 3). According to Neem (2018), The Common Core situates "democratic purposes of K-12 education" as "not goals but…[as] "a natural outgrowth of work force preparation" (p. 2). According to The Common Core Standards (2010), students will learn the deep deliberative inquiry necessary for "both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic" by learning the skills privileged for the marketplace (p. 3). While it may be true that students will learn skills that can deepen their deliberation and critical thinking, The Common Core emphasizes a "using" rather than a "being"—"education is valuable only to the extent that it leads to money" (Neem, 2018, p. 2). Apple (2004) cautions democratic educators against a type of social control that is found in a hidden curriculum that privileges "the selection and generation of personality attributes and normative meanings that enable one to have a supposed chance at economic rewards" (p. 47). When conformity to the marketplace is the end goal, classrooms can become sites of learned conformity where good behavior and restraint are prized and "work" means doing what you are told (Apple, 2004). When the marketplace drives criteria for college readiness, using skills for personal growth and community advocacy becomes secondary to using skills for economic advancement (Neem, 2018). Neem (2018) states that when viewed from this perspective, "The Common Core is decidedly hostile to democratic education" (p. 4). However, teachers are often more comfortable with a curriculum

that conforms to societal standards of measurement. Lortie (2002) in his seminal study of 6,000 teachers found that the majority of respondents viewed morality and citizenship in terms of compliance and obedience. Lortie (2002) states that "connecting compliance with classroom norms to future citizenship authenticates the teachers' control efforts" (p. 113).

Discourses that Nurture Democratic Education and Disrupt Traditional Schooling

While the above referenced literature provides a necessary framework for democratic schools, a process of discourse analysis is needed to understand how democratic enactments occur and are supported. This process of analysis is necessary to understand how individuals' shared meanings and theories (or frameworks) influence their socially constructed understandings (Gee, 2016). Our socially constructed frameworks "tell us what exists, what characteristics things and events have, and what perspectives to take on them" (Gee, 2016, p. 351). The analysis of these frameworks (through discourse analysis) is central to better understanding how democratic education is enacted in schools as students' discourse is examined towards preconceptions, misconceptions, understandings, and ways of thinking. Language is not neutral because individuals "[construct] their identities, [ascribe] identities to others [and] position others" through language (Lester, Lochmiller, & Gabriel, 2016, p. 3.)

Other researchers have analyzed discourse at the micro and/or macro level to critique social languaging and contextual constructions. They have provided evidence of the importance of critically analyzing classroom discourses as a means of understanding what shapes the discourse; how normative discourse is created and sustained in classroom discourse; and how teachers and students enact agency within classroom spaces. While their studies are not specifically linked with democratic education, they support the need for critical discourse analysis when studying discursive enactments related to democratic education.

Mokkoken (2012)

Mokkoken (2012) studied transcripts of classroom interactions among a group of first and second graders in a Finnish school to understand how they were collaboratively constructing their social relationships and identities. Using data collected over 18 months from 77 audio and audio-visually recorded lessons, interviews with stakeholders, and additional artifacts, Mokkoken analyzed the discourse using Gee's process of discourse analysis to identify where and how the students enacted a teacher-like discourse (Mokkoken, 2012). She found that norms for using language in the classrooms were socialized through peer-centered interaction and that participation by the students was guided by certain moral obligations (Mokkoken, 2012). Additionally, she found that the role of the subteacher (a student using the language of the teacher) was co-constructed but was also agentively resisted in certain instances (Mokkoken, 2010).

Souto-Manning & Cheruvu (2016)

Souto-Manning & Cheruvu (2016) used Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA) to examine in-depth interviews of six early childhood public pre-school educators who had been identified by colleagues, supervisors, and professors as being specifically committed to teaching children of color and who held masters level degrees. Using Critical Narrative Analysis (the process of critically analyzing the contextualization of peoples' everyday stories within larger institutional discourses), Souto-Manning and Cheruvu (2016) found the ways that "oppressive, exclusionary and deficit-based paradigmatic macro-discourses were appropriated and therefore, resisted by these early childhood teachers of color" (p. 16). CNA allowed the researchers to identity macro-discourses that were included or resisted in the participants' counter-narratives that were specifically related to "racialized experiences, Whiteness as the norm, and multiple

selves/identities" (Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016, p. 16). Within their stories of multiple

adversities and challenges they experienced, CNA revealed that these teachers responded "from

powerful agentive stances, …in ways that can be viewed as forms of transformational resistance"

(Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016, p. 21).

Wilson and Carlsen (2016)

Wilson and Carlsen (2016) utilized a CDA approach when examining the online

marketing texts of 55 charter schools and found that the websites situated the schools in the

larger community conversation as the schools wanted to be understood thus making the online

text "a cultural, political, and social object" (p. 29). According to Wilson and Carlsen (2016) the

websites in their study not only described available options, but they shaped options. This is a

point of interest to me as a researcher, not only the words, but the power behind the words. In

the case of websites, the "power" of the authors shaped the text, and the socially constructed

understandings of the readers shaped their understandings of the website's text.

Rogers & Wetzel (2013)

Rogers & Wetzel (2013) used a multi-layered process of discourse analysis when

researching a teacher's agentive discursive enactments. They used narrative analysis, Critical

Discourse Analysis and multimodal discourse analysis to begin their case study research, and

they then examined the data related to each of those types of analysis to find where there were

opportunities for transformative, agentive practice to occur, a process they label as Positive

Discourse Analysis (PDA; Rogers & Wetzel, 2013). This additional step of the discourse

analysis process enabled them to see the participant's narrative as a narrative of transformation

and to identity the specific points where she made turns towards cultural relevancy in her work

(Rogers & Wetzel, 2013). Specifically, looking at the data for this "turn toward the positive"

64

helped them to identify agentive discourses as "using problems to extend learning, accepting and extending invitations for agency, using narrative and counter-narratives and creating multiple story-lines for herself and others" (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013, p. 89).

Positive Discourse Analysis

Rogers (2018) advocates for a type of critical analysis that points to "hope, transformation, and liberation," and identifies this analysis as reconstructive discourse analysis or Positive Discourse Analysis (p. 3). This transformative analysis sits alongside CDA—it is rooted in the semiotic praxis that Fairclough advocates (Rogers, 2018). The critical analysis of discourse is necessary to recognize the spaces where transformation may or may not be occurring or where there is the best opportunity for growth to happen; however, Rogers adds that researchers need to widen their perspective to include "those moment-to-moment acts and actions that make up life in classrooms and communities" identifying "how a teacher and her students sustain and extend social justice practices" (Rogers, 2018, p. 6). By focusing on the transformative discursive enactments, this type of analysis is situated to support work in democratic education, work that leads to better understandings of transformative actions. Rogers (2018) in her critical analysis within the field of literacy focuses on the "semiotic potential" of each discursive interaction to focus on "how meanings are leveraged within and across people as they engage in collaborative transformative practice" (p. 7). In general, those researchers who employ a reconstructionist or positive slant to their analysis process, endeavor to identify the participants' moments of "transformation, learning, change, and becoming" (Rogers, 2018, p. 15). In this way, they hope to build a body of knowledge related to the specific practices that nurture "generative" discursive practices that in turn can nurture democratic educative spaces (Rogers, 2018). Rogers and Wetzel (2013) argue that "PDA is not a new approach but a shift in

65

analytic focus" (p. 62). However, Bartlett (2012) cautions that researchers employing a positive analysis be careful to "integrate textual and contextual analyses of communicative practices and to account for the link between language features and social structure" in order to produce balanced research" (p. 9).

Gee's Critical Discourse Analysis

Gee's orientation towards inquiry, social action, context, and reflexivity supports critical discursive analysis of democratic spaces while supporting the agentive, liberatory analysis that Rogers and Wetzel advocate. His process as detailed in chapters 1 and 3 (and evidenced in chapters 4 and 5) of this dissertation provides a means of connecting micro-level discourses with macro-level discourses; to study how the language connects with the context of the event; and to study what participants are trying to build with their language (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2014a). Gee recommends synthesizing initial findings by asking how the participants were using their figured worlds, the macro-level discourses and conversations informing and contextualizing the data, as well as the situated meanings employed by the participants to build significance, identities, and politics—a process that can provide insights into agentive, transformative discursive enactments of the participants (Gee, 2014b). Gee's process of analysis is flexible, adaptable, and allows the researcher to analyze data intuitively, choosing specific tools for specific purposes at specific times (Gee, 2014b; Gee, 2014a). Gee's "tools of inquiry" position the researcher as a wonderer, as a co-constructor in the meaning-making process, thus supporting a social constructionist perspective of research. Additionally, Gee (2014a) draws from multiple fields (e.g., cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, literary criticism, psychological anthropology) when designing his method of analysis allowing the researcher to move easily among philosophical and theoretical perspectives.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I explain my choices as a researcher, and I explicate the data collection and analyses I conducted. I used *in vivo*, process, concept, and pattern coding to identify the discourses used by participants within a particular school context. I used a process of micro-analysis for transcription (Bloome, et al, 2005; Bloome, et al, 2008) as well as a micro and macro critical discourse analysis to further analyze representative excerpts selected from the data (Gee, 2014a; Gee, 2014b) to address the following questions:

1. How do participants discourse in a school that is endeavoring to provide a student-centered, democratic learning environment?

2. How do participants' discourses disrupt or maintain traditional school discourses?

Research Paradigm

Because I was interested in studying a school that is endeavoring to provide a student-centered, democratic learning environment and how participants' discourses disrupt or maintain traditional school discourses, I chose to use a social constructionist framing of democratic education. By situating my research within social constructionism and democratic education, I was able to acknowledge the unique context of a school established purposefully to provide a student-centered, democratic learning environment while examining the discursive enactments of participants that were used to create meanings. I chose to examine my data towards established definitions of democratic education from the literature and towards how the participants were co-constructing meaning within this context. Through a multi-layered process of *in vivo*, process, concept, and pattern coding, I examined how participants socially constructed discourses within this setting (Galbin, 2014). And I used processes of micro-ethnographic discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis to understand how the participants' socially constructed discourses

disrupted or maintained traditional schooling discourses. Together, these lenses (of social

constructionism and democratic education) allowed me to examine how participants were co-

constructing meaning within a framework of educating through democracy (or not) as well as

how their discourses related to established definitions of democratic education (or not). These

lenses also allowed me to effectively examine how their discourses related to larger social and

political discoursing. These processes of analyses enabled me to contextualize and to understand

the meaning-making occurring in this research setting relative to democratic education and to

"sustain the primacy of utility, participation, and social transformation in the assessment and use

of knowledge" rather than merely reflecting "what is" (Galbin, 2014, p. 91). By focusing on how

participants constructed meaning, I was better able to identify dominant discourses and the

effects dominant discourses and co-constructed cultural understandings had on the meaning

being constructed, thus supporting validity as "a reflection of social consensus" rather than only

"reflections of an independent world" (Gergen, 2015, p. 63). By establishing my methodology

and analyzing my data through the lenses of democratic education and social constructionism, I

was able to "develop valid connections among actions, objects, actors, and activities" to

theoretically situate understandings relative to participants' discursive enactments (Green, et al,

2020, pp. 164-165).

   I specifically chose a social constructionist perspective as it acknowledges the power

inherent in the ongoing social construction of meaning to potentially "reconstruct…to raise

questions, ponder alternatives, and play at the edges of common sense" to create "new worlds of

meaning" (Gergen, 2015, p. 6). Teaching in democratic ways and nurturing democratic actions in

classrooms require educators to constantly consider what may be, what could be, what should be;

thus, thinking through a lens of continual construction (and re-construction) of meaning can

benefit any discussion relative to democratic education. Gergen (2015) articulates constructionism as an invitation to have a "certain humility about one's assumptions and ways of life" to "foster curiosity about others' perspectives and values," and to "[open] the way to replacing the contentious battles over who is right with the mutual probing for possibilities" (p. 27). Dialogic classrooms (in which teachers recognize that all meaning is constructed within relationship) best support the constructing and reconstructing of an identity of democratic citizen because these classrooms are more likely to support more democratic discursive enactments (Gergen, 2015); therefore, it was imperative that I situate my study in methods that would enable me to examine the dialogic discourse of participants.

Democratic Education

While some believe that educating for democracy is a transmission of ideals and values held in common by most citizens, I believe that democratic values are constructions formed in dialogue and collaborative work among a diverse group of individuals who come to share common interests and goals (Dewey, 1916/2004; Gergen, 2015; Noddings, 2013). These constructions are ever changing, ever fluid as participants' experiences grow and adapt as they share their experiences with others, and as larger social and political discourses shape their experiences and subsequent meaning-making (Gergen, 2015). In light of this fluidity of changing norms and meanings, I believe democracy is best served by a process of justification and critical analysis (Gergen & Gergen eds., 2003) rather than by a transmission of unexamined terms and definitions, and that the meaning of "democracy" should be critically constructed and justified from multiple viewpoints and should build towards a common good that reflects the diversity and well-being of all participants.

Social Constructionism

I believe that all "human 'knowledge' is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations," (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 3) and that identities are constructed or reconstructed through social and discursive interactions (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002; Van Dijk, 2011). The process of communication requires us to consider the identities that are put forth in a moment that shape the understandings of the speaker and the listener (Gee 2014a). Therefore, I designed my research from a social constructionist perspective. I chose to situate my methodology within an articulation of social constructionism as "a relationally responsive social constructionism"— an articulation that focuses on the "intersubjective and dialogical nature of experience" (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 131) where co-creating meaning is dependent upon the response of the other; where "to understand is to act in a particular way, and to have the other accept this action as understanding"; and where how we assign and respond to social position in the moment affects the co-construction of meaning (Gergen, 2015, p. 128).

Believing that meaning is made not only through language, but also through multiple other means of discursive enactments such as "the sense impressions, gestures, emotional expressions and responses" of participants (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 131), I chose to audio and video-record participants' discursive enactments. The school board agreed to allow me to conduct my research for four consecutive school days to capture how meaning is articulated and embodied among participants.

Critical Discourse Analysis within a Social Constructionist Framing

After completing two cycles of coding, I chose to do a deeper language study of excerpts of my data to better understand how the participants' discursive enactments disrupted or maintained traditional schooling discourses. Because I believe (within a social constructionist

70

framing) that all language is purposeful within relationship, I believe it is political (Gee, 2014b).

Participants' enacted identities are embedded within varying relationships to particular levels of

status and to what is recognized within their community as social goods—considerations that

often support the status quo and the systemic marginalization of the other (Gee, 2014b);

therefore, I chose to use a process of critical discourse analysis to reveal potential problems and

contested identities of participants as well as to "illuminate issues about the distribution of social

goods, who gets helped and who gets harmed" (Gee, 2014b, p. 10). A critical discourse process

of analysis enabled me to identify and analyze how meaning was being co-constructed through a

participant's discursive enactments as responses to the other; to identify and analyze how

meaning was being co-constructed as participants acted to convey their own understanding and

as others accepted these actions as the understanding put forth in the moment; and to identify and

analyze how participants positioned their own identities and others' identities within specific

contexts (Gergen, 2015).

Micro-ethnographic Transcription

Using the findings from my coding processes as a basis for decision making, I chose two

episodes from my video-recorded data to further analyze through processes of critical discourse

analysis. I chose two episodes that contained elements relative to building community,

questioning, and norming (broad themes articulated through my qualitative coding processes).

Because I conceptualize discourse as action and recognize that human thought is not "immune to

the ideologizing influences of its social context" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 9), I specifically

chose to use Bloome's et al (2008) micro-ethnographic form of discourse analysis when creating

micro-transcriptions of these episodes. This process enabled me to articulate the

contextualization cues that marked the shared narrative among participants and including the

71

researcher (a process that helped me to identify and to articulate my biases while interpreting data). This process also enabled me to consider the shared sense about what they were collectively doing, and to articulate how teachers and students created opportunities to construct knowledge (Bloome, et.al., 2008). I chose this process of analysis to better understand the narratives of identity that participants constructed through their discoursing as well as to consider the consequences of those narratives—the collective effect of participants' discoursing (Bloome, et.al, 2008). Because I was working within a social constructionist framework, I specifically chose to use an interactional sociolinguistic perspective when creating micro-transcriptions of the episodes because I believe it is through their interactions (actions and reactions primarily through language) that participants "construct what they are doing, what it means, who they are, and what the social significance of the event they are creating is;" that through these interactions intertextuality and inter-contextuality are socially constructed; and that these interactions offer learning opportunities (Bloome, et al, 2008, p. 80).

Gee's Critical Discourse Analysis

Once I had created the micro-transcriptions, I then chose to use Gee's critical discourse analysis process to connect the micro-level discourses of participants with macro-level discourses found in wider society and institutions (Gee, 2014a). Gee's (Gee, 2014a; Gee, 2014b) process of analysis supports the theoretical lenses of democratic education and social constructionism by being situated within a theoretical framework of how "language-in-use" constructs "worlds, institutions, and human relationships" thus affecting culture and society for better or worse (Gee, 2014b, p. 13). Gee's approach is an "applied approach"—an approach that focuses on "questions, topics, and data that bear on issues and problems important to people, society, and the world" (Gee, 2014a, p. 3-4). His articulation of specific tools related to how

meaning is built among participants and his articulation of specific tools of inquiry designed to explicate how discursive enactments "bear on pressing social, cultural, and institutional problems" supported my analysis conducted through the lenses of democratic education and social constructionism (Gee, 2014a, p. 3-4). Through Gee's approach to critical discourse analysis, I was able to situate my research within a social constructionist paradigm attending to making meaning as a socially constructed process produced by interaction (rather than as an individualistic, intrinsic process). A process of critical discourse analysis acknowledges that our worldview is constructed through a framework of historical understandings that affect and are affected by the other's framing, and by critically examining the status quo that supports or reinforces dominant discourses of dominant social groups (Galbin, 2014). A critical analysis enabled me to move from a "normative critique of discourse" to an "explanatory critique of aspects of the existing social reality focused upon relations between discourse and other social elements, providing reasons for transformative action to change the existing social reality" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 19).

Research Design

To understand socially constructed discourses that shape democratic education, I developed an instrumental qualitative case study in which the units of analysis were the teachers and students in a school designed to nurture a student-centered, democratic learning environment. The school was in its fourth year of existence.

Instrumental Case Study Design

Because I was interested in illuminating a particular issue or theme (disrupting traditional schooling discourses) in my research, I conducted an instrumental case study where I described the activities of the participants that related to how democratic education is nurtured or not

(Creswell, 2005). My unit of analysis was Sunrise Community School, a school founded to nurture a student-centered, democratic learning environment in a mid-size Mid-western city. Specifically, I analyzed the prevalent socially constructed discoursing among the teachers and students, and how teachers and students discoursed democratic education and/or a more traditional, social efficiency model of schooling. I collected data from video and audio recordings of the teachers and students, from field notes, and from interviews to develop a deeper level of understanding related to the case (Creswell, 2005).

Context of the Study

Per the school's website, Sunrise Community School is a "progressive, independent, private" school founded to promote an educational learning space that recognizes children as natural learners; that endeavors to value individuality over conformity; that promotes learning through integrated and meaningful experiences; and that endeavors to empower learners to be agents of change in their world. At the time of the research, the school was led by 3 full-time teachers and 8 board members from the local community. During the academic year in which the research occurred, the school served a total of 37 students in multi-age classrooms ranging from 5 years of age through 15 years of age. The youngest group of students ranged from 5 to 7 years of age (roughly kindergarten and first grade and were known as the Seeds class. The next group of students ranged in age from 8-10 years were known as the Stems class (approximately 2nd through 4th grade). And the oldest group of students, known as the Flowers class, ranged from 9 through 15 years of age (approximately 5th grade through 8th grade). Currently, the school has not sought recognition by the Illinois State Board of Education for philosophical reasons; therefore, official state report card data (including student demographics) is not available. It should be noted that the school's student body and teaching staff is predominantly white, middle

class, and that it is a tuition based school with available scholarships. Of particular note, I conducted my research during a period of time when Sunrise Community School was conducting all instruction in the out-of-doors as a protective Covid measure. This context proposed some challenges for video and audio recording—within particular recordings some dialogue was rendered inaudible due to wind interference as noted in each transcript (where applicable). And also, unique to this setting and of particular interest, a faculty member from the local university recently completed a sabbatical supporting the work of the school. He has extensive experience and knowledge of enacting democratic practices and philosophy in schools. He serves as a board member for Sunrise Community School and as a committee member for this dissertation study.

In order to conduct research in this school, I had to first obtain approval from the school board and teachers associated with Sunrise Community school. I wrote an email that could be shared with board members and teachers explaining the research proposal and the Internal Review Board (IRB) process through Illinois State University with which I had to comply. I agreed to quarantine for a designated time period and to comply with any additional Covid protective measures that were required by the board and teachers. As part of the IRB approval process, I had modified my process for obtaining family permissions using an email process rather than a face-to-face process due to protective Covid measures which also was approved by the board and teachers.

Participants

Once I had secured permission from the School Board and teachers at Sunrise Community School to conduct the proposed research, the teachers emailed my invitation and necessary consent form details to families. I visited the classrooms a week prior to my proposed

start date to secure student assent. The primary participants were the three teachers and 25 of the 37 students.

Teachers

Gwen is a teacher-leader in the school, and is a founding board member of the school. She teaches the upper elementary/middle school-aged children, and she often serves as the de facto administrator of the school, particularly in matters of discipline and establishing the direction of the teachers (personal communication, 2018). Gwen's son attends the school and was a major influence on her decision to take up the work of democratic education (Interview, 8/19/20). Per the school's website, Gwen has more than 20 years of teaching experience in a range of settings. She is a graduate of an Ivy League institution and holds a Master of Fine Arts Degree from a public university. She has worked as a public elementary school classroom teacher, a reading specialist, and an English Language Learners (ELL) instructor. She is an active ceramics artist and concurrently serves as an adjunct assistant professor of art at a private university in the local community.

Also, per the school's website, Gwen has "developed a teaching philosophy that embraces a combination of structure and autonomy to promote learning and growth in her students." Per the website, "she strives to create a learning environment that fosters independence, self-confidence, personal responsibility, and social awareness" designing "cross-disciplinary projects and inquiry-based learning activities to address curricular goals while also providing meaningful, integrated experiences that encourage students to be active and engaged participants in their own learning and to develop into lifelong learners."

Per a personal communication shared with me, Gwen has found the planning for more democratic practice to be challenging and time consuming (2018). She has been instrumental in

leading the staff and families to a more holistic approach to education and is very interested in project-based learning (Interview, 8/19/20).

Jennifer was in her third year of teaching the youngest students at Sunrise Community School at the time the research was conducted. She holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from a public university, and has taught Preschool, Kindergarten and 1st grade in her 8 years of teaching (Interview, 8/19/20). Per the school's website, "…in 2016 she was one of 14 individuals nationwide awarded the Lasting Legacy Scholarship to attend her first Annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference."

According to the school's website, Jennifer is "inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach" and "combined with inquiry-based learning, Jennifer guides her students through social-emotional and curricula challenges each day through hands-on, collaboration-encouraging projects and opportunities for building confidence and independence" while creat[ing] supportive structure to ensure that students feel secure, yet free: free to ask questions, to be their authentic selves, to build positive relationships, to fail, to feel proud, to be intrinsically motivated, to create, and to build a love of learning." According to Jennifer, her prior experience teaching at a university laboratory school was restrictive in that she felt she was unable to teach in a more democratic fashion because of the school's emphasis on standardized test scores and family expectations of "rigor" (personal communication, July 2018).

Linda is primarily responsible for the second through fourth grade students, although she and Grace share some curricular responsibilities for all but the youngest students. Linda was in her third year of teaching at Sunrise Community School at the time the research was conducted, and she has three years of teaching experience in an international school that infused project-based learning in the curricula. Linda holds a bachelor's degree in education from a public

university, and has had multiple teaching experiences around the world, per the school's website. Also, according to the school's website, Linda is "a dedicated life-long learner, and has developed expertise in English as an Additional Language (EAL), reading and writing workshops, prevention of bullying, visible thinking strategies, supporting students succeeding with dyslexia, project-based learning, and co-teaching practices." Please see Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Participant Information: Teachers

Pseudonym	Role	Years of Experience	Gender
Ms. Jennifer	Seeds Teacher (Kindergarten-1st grade)	9	Female
Ms. Linda	Stems Teacher (2nd grade-4th grade)	18	Female
Ms. Gwen	Flowers Teacher (5th-8th grade)	20	Female

Students

The participating students ranged in age from five to fourteen and were dispersed among the three classrooms. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, state report card data is not available for Sunrise Community School, so the demographics of the students are not able to be verified beyond self-reporting. Please see Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Participant Information: Students

Classroom	Pseudonym	Age	Gender
Seeds	Lisa	5	F
	Charlotte	5	F
	Len	6	M
	Emma	4	F
	Forester	5	M
	Noah	5	F
	Jake	5	M
Stems	Clarissa	7	F
	Evelyn	6	F
	James	6	M
	Ruth	8	F
	Ione	8	F
	William	7	M

Table Continues

78

Table Continued

Flowers	Eloise	10	F
	Jim	12	M
	Daniel	10	M
	David	11	M
	Hannah	13	F
	Harper	9	F
	Henry	9	M
	Logan	9	M
	Lucas	13	M
	Madison	10	F
	Ryan	13	M
	Amos	9	M

Researcher's Positionality

As a White, middle-class female, I am part of the dominant group in the teaching profession. As a former elementary school teacher, principal, and now as a university administrator within a teacher preparation program, I was uniquely situated to potentially interpret nuances within the observation setting that might otherwise be unnoticed by other researchers without this extensive background in the field of education, as well as to effectively bridge potential gaps between theory and practice (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012). Because of my background and current role, I was careful to try to not identify too closely with participants, guarding against consciously or unconsciously skewing data collection and interpretations of data towards my own purposes. Keeping a reflexive journal of analytic memos (later identified and referred to as my methodological journal) allowed me to address these concerns in a methodical, authentic way, and provided me a means to better describe my positionality and the role it played in my data collection and data interpretations for the readers of my research (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012). When I completed the interactional socio-linguistic transcription process of the two specific episodes chosen to examine disruptive discourses, I sought to

understand what was happening in the discursive event, who was doing it, what the effects of the discursive actions were, through three perspectives: the teacher's perspective, the students' perspectives; and my perspective as the researcher (Bloome, et. al., 2005). This enabled me to examine my potential biases in the micro-transcription process through a social constructionist lens by recognizing my own narrative as part of the meaning-making process.

Data Sources and Collection Methods

Data for this study included video and audio recordings and field notes taken during observations of student/student, teacher/students, and teacher/teacher interactions (see Appendix A: Data Collection Chart). The primary location for data collection was Sunrise Community School during regular school hours and regular school activities. I collected data over a period of one school week (specifically Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday as Tuesday was an all-school vacation day). I visited the school from the time that students arrived at the school to the time that students left at the end of the school day. I conducted open-ended, one-on-one interviews with the teachers prior to my visiting the school. These interviews were up to 60 minutes in length; occurred the summer prior to the identified fall semester; and follow-up interviews with the teachers occurred during the week of observations. In addition, I recorded analytic memos and kept a methodological journal throughout the study. I chose to use open-ended interviews, observations, and video recordings as my main data sources because I believe that the "most important experiences of others take place in the face-to-face situation…" that "all other cases [of social interaction] are derivatives of it" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 28).

Open-ended Interviews

I chose to begin my research by conducting open-ended, one-on-one interviews with the teachers at Sunrise Community School in order to ascertain their perspectives and possible

theoretical framings of their work in the school. I met individually with each teacher one time for approximately one to one and a half hours the summer prior to beginning my observations. I chose to use open-ended questions and one-on-one interviews so that I would not lead the teachers towards particular theoretical constructs or definitions or my own perspectives relative to democratic education; so they would not be influenced by the others' responses during the interview process; and so that I could receive broader responses that could potentially take my data beyond what a closed-ended (pre-determined) question could achieve (Creswell, 2005). Because I was interested in eliciting open-ended responses that clarified individual's conceptual understandings and practice of democratic education, I chose to use a modified respondent interview format where I began with an open-ended question related to participants' understandings, and then crafted additional questions that "probed for clarity and greater interpretive depth" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011, p. 179) as warranted throughout each interview. (see Appendix B: Interview Protocol). I conducted these interviews using Zoom technology, and I subsequently recorded (audio and video), transcribed, and coded each interview.

Observations

I chose to situate my data collection methods primarily in face-to-face interactions so that I could identify and analyze a multiplicity of actions and responses among participants, and so that I could identify and analyze the language-in-use as well as the context of the discursive enactments of the participants (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Gee, 2014a; Gee, 2014b; Gergen, 2015). In this way I could also connect what the participants were saying with what they were actually doing, thus minimizing discrepancies between their words and actions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). I also wanted to situate myself within the action—to be able to see and hear firsthand what was occurring in the discursive spaces (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Video and Audio Recordings

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I chose to video and audio record four school days of interactions because I believe that meaning is made not only through language, but also through multiple other means of discursive enactments such as "the sense impressions, gestures, emotional expressions and responses" of participants (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 131). Video and audio recording allowed me to better capture instances of how meaning was articulated and embodied among participants. I chose to record consecutive classroom events across a regular school day (spending a minimum of one full class day with each teacher) in order to minimize my influence as a researcher on what data was chosen to be recorded (Creswell, 2005). When I was observing, I endeavored to capture verbatim discourses enacted by both teachers and students. Video recording allowed me to better capture and to describe evolving classroom practices not only allowing me to capture thick descriptions but to capture thick description when discourses changed and evolved (Bloome, et. al., 2005). I transcribed, coded, and analyzed 114 video recordings and 38 audio recordings of varying lengths.

Field Notes

I kept observational notes in a Word document of the "events or interactions" observed in the classroom (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 120) in an effort to more fully articulate what was being captured on video. I used the following steps of effective field-note taking advocated by Lindloft and Taylor (2011): recording notes during the observation; recording my own reflection as a member of the observation; and providing detailed "description of appearances and activities" (pp. 157-159).

Methodological Journal

I kept a methodological journal (both electronic and hand-written) throughout the research process to examine my own positionality (values and beliefs), how my positionality may have shaped what data was collected and valued and co-constructed with participants, and how I organized my data (Charmaz, 2014). My methodological journal was also used by me to record notes from discussions with my committee members and to "think through" my emerging data and findings and to record my own reflections as I worked with my data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). For example, in an electronic journal entry dated November 29, 2020, I recorded the "aha moment" and the intellectual "processing" of that moment I experienced when writing an analytic memo related to my data collection; the feelings I had related to the sheer enormity of my data; the potential bias I may have exhibited when talking through my data collection with a parent at the school; and additional questions and/or potential research topics that I saw emerging from my working with my data up to that point of the analytical process (see Appendix E).

Analytic Memos

I used analytic memos as a means of capturing my first impressions of the action of the verbatim transcripts of my audio and video recordings and of contextualizing the discursive enactments of participants (Charmaz, 2014). In some instances, potential codes seemed to be very evident, and I recorded those within my analytical memos; however, I realized that in some instances, I was leading my data through my analysis, perhaps making it say what I wanted it to say, and I had to re-examine the *in vivo* codes to ensure that I was staying close to participants' meanings rather than imposing my own ideas onto their meaning making. I began my analytical memos in a more descriptive phase, focusing on describing and grouping verbatim discursive enactments, but I gradually conceptualized the descriptions through process coding and through

discourse analysis, and my analytical memos became more conceptual and theoretical as my research progressed (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Charmaz, 2014).

Documents

Because the school's website articulates its mission, curricula, and philosophical underpinnings, I included references to these portions of the website in my analysis to provide deeper context related to my classroom observations and interviews and the theoretical framing of the teachers.

Data Analysis

I used multiple qualitative methodological tools when analyzing my data set in three phases: coding; micro-transcription; and critical discourse analysis of two identified discursive exchanges. I began my first cycle of coding utilizing *in vivo* coding, process coding, and concept coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2020) to identify how participants discourse at Sunrise Community School. I then completed a second cycle of coding analyzing my data through pattern coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2020).

The second phase of my overall analysis included analyzing instructional units through an Interactional Sociolinguistic Perspective (Bloome et al, 2008) to capture contextualization features that provided insights into the participants' socially constructed discursive actions and to create accurate micro-transcriptions. And the third phase of my data analysis included using Gee's (2014a and 2014b) methods of Critical Discourse Analysis to further connect micro-level discoursing (specific classroom level actions) with macro level discoursing to better understand how the participants' discourse sustains societal systems of classification and control and/or how the participants' discourse nurtured democratic narratives and revealed discursive enactments that may support the construction of democratic learning environments.

Phase One: Coding

I used an online transcription service (https://www.rev.com/) to provide initial transcripts of all viable digitally recorded audio and video data in a Microsoft Word format. I then uploaded each viable transcript into Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to manage and to analyze my data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020) linking each transcript to its audio or video episode. I chose to use Transana software because it allowed me to "integrate video, audio, text and image data in a single analysis" and to convert my video files to "an analysis friendly format…to support Conversation Analysis" (www.transana.com). Once each of the transcripts was linked to its specific audio or video episodes in Transana, I checked each transcript for accuracy with the audio/video recordings and made necessary revisions to the transcripts. I created an Excel document (Data Collection Overview) organizing my audio and video clips by date recorded, file name, length of file, teacher, whether it was loaded in Transana, whether it had been transcribed, and any pertinent description details that would help me to identify specific clips in the future. I began my analysis with 114 video-recorded episodes and 38 audio recorded episodes. Once the transcripts were linked in Transana, I began my first phase of coding analysis utilizing *in vivo* coding, process coding, and concept coding.

First Coding Cycle: In vivo, Process Coding, and Concept Coding

Believing that social reality is shaped by daily interactions among individuals as opposed to being something separate and individualistic (Cunliffe, 2008), I chose to use a process of *in vivo* coding and process coding to center my first cycle of coding analysis in the actual words of the speakers (in vivo coding) and to focus on how they were using language and other discursive enactments (process coding) when making meaning.

Because I wanted to stay as close as possible to the participants' actual words and discursive enactments to minimize my own biases and pre-conceptions towards definitions of democratic education and to privilege the participants' discourses, I chose to use participants exact words and phrases as the actual codes in my recording of data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020). Beginning my process of analysis with *in vivo* coding kept me "close" to the actual data and helped to limit the potential for my applying pre-existing categories to the participants' meaning and helped to minimize the potential for coding "towards" my preconceptions relative to democratic education—it kept me close to the participants' meanings and actions while coding (Charmaz, 2014). I chose to use *in vivo* coding and process coding as a means of grounding my analysis in the in-the-moment constructions among participants in order to focus on their emerging, interactional, relational meanings (Cunliffe, 2008), a micro-level process of analysis that enabled me to explore the dialogical nature of their meaning construction—how their meanings were being shaped by one another's meaning-makings (Cunliffe, 2008, Gergen, 2015).

Simultaneously, I chose to assign process codes to identified in vivo codes as a bridge between the actual words of the participants and larger themes or concepts, a process that enabled me to more accurately assign concept codes. Using process codes (or gerunds) as a distinctive step in my analysis helped to link "more static topics" with "enacted processes," an analytical step that "fosters theoretical sensitivity" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 245) and that furthered my analysis of how participants were using discursive enactments to construct meaning. Using a system of coding for gerunds (focusing on the discursive actions of the participants—what they were doing with their language and other discursive enactments) helped me to better understand how the identified *in vivo* codes connected to one another by helping me to identify sequences of

related discursive enactments within the *in vivo* codes (Charmaz, 2014). Coding for gerunds helped me to identify participants' interactions and the potential intentions and consequences of their actions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020), a process that helped me to better understand how they were co-constructing meaning and how their descriptions and explanations of their world were built through relationship—an analysis that is tied closely to a theoretical framing within social constructionism (Gergen, 2015).

      ***In vivo* Coding.** Because I was interested in identifying how participants discourse at Sunrise Community School, I began my analysis with coding for *in vivo* codes, a first cycle coding process that allowed me to break my data into individual segments (Saldana, 2016). This type of coding allowed me to privilege the participant's voice, something that I considered to be key to my research as the marginalization of "voice" can be an issue in classrooms.Coding with the participants' actual words could help me to better consider their perspectives (Saldana, 2016). Also, because I conceptualized discourse as action, I chose to use *in vivo* coding since it is a more action-oriented rather than descriptive coding process (Saldana, 2016). I used Microsoft Word to create charts for analyzing the clips/episodes and included columns for in vivo codes, speakers, message units, and concept codes (initially). As I read through the transcripts for the second and third times, I identified and recorded repeated phrases used by participants (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020), and I identified and recorded phrases that seemed to have significance towards my research questions.

      I had initially planned to examine the data sets using only *in vivo* codes and concept codes; however, once I had completed the *in vivo* coding process for several clips, I recognized that I was having significant difficulty in connecting the *in vivo* codes to larger concepts, in finding the main idea or what was most important, especially when analyzing the children's

discoursing; therefore, I chose to add process coding to my analytic process. I began doing the in vivo coding and the process coding in tandem, completing both types of coding for each clip/episode before moving to the next clip/episode.

Process Coding. I chose to add process coding to my analytic method as a bridge between *in vivo* codes and concept codes because process coding enabled me to identity what participants were "doing" with the language (or gestures, or tone, etc.) which helped me to identify implicit meanings and the ways in which participants constructed meaning and then acted upon the meanings (Charmaz, 2014). Like *in vivo* coding, process coding is action oriented, requiring me to choose gerunds for identifying codes for message units (Saldana, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). This coding process enabled me to focus on participants' discursive enactments limiting potential assumptions and judgments I could have made on behalf of my participants (Charmaz, 2014). I worked within the Microsoft Word charts that I had created independently from Transana at this stage of the analytical process identifying in vivo codes, grouping those codes by considering the discursive enactments of participants (thinking about the participants as discoursers discoursing) considering how they were using their discourse. Once I had linked in vivo codes with process codes, I then grouped the identified process codes within broader ideas or concepts moving my analysis to more symbolic meanings and interpretations (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020).

Concept Coding. Using Transana, once I had completed initial in vivo and process coding of the video and audio recordings and recorded the codes on the Microsoft Word charts I had created, I then re-read the transcripts in Transana and began grouping (electronically linking) the in vivo codes under electronically linked headings of related process codes. This created collections of linked in vivo phrases within and among transcripts in Transana, while also linking

in vivo codes with process codes and with time stamps, a process that was tedious and time consuming, but was necessary as it allowed me to better see how the in vivo codes and process codes were linked across my data sets. Once I had a complete listing of process codes within Transana, I then created a Microsoft Word document of all in vivo codes (from all my data sets) associated with each identified process code. For example, I electronically linked/grouped the following in vivo codes with the concept code of "being flexible": "we can do it another time"; "if you need to rest and relax, that's okay"; "I'm going to put the book down to hear all the stuffy stories". In this way, I not only had created a visual representation in Transana of linked in vivo codes to process codes, but I then was able to access the "codes" (both in vivo and process codes) within each audio and video recording within Transana and more easily link these codes to concepts.

Second Coding Cycle: Pattern Coding

In the first coding cycle, some initial concept codes emerged from the grouping of process codes; however, I was still struggling to significantly relate the emerging codes to my research questions. In an effort to relate the emerging codes to my research questions, I chose to use a process of pattern coding, a second cycle coding process (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020). Using the definitions of democratic education and a social efficiency model of education that I had articulated from the literature, I looked for patterns of those definitions within my complete data set. I went back to my process codes, re-read specific portions of individual transcripts in both Transana and in the charts I had created in Microsoft Word, and I grouped them on a continuum of "more democratic narratives" and "more traditional schooling narratives." Once I had identified where the process codes existed on this continuum, I created a chart with two separate columns, one labeled "social efficiency model/traditional schooling" and

one labeled "democratic education." I then placed the identified process codes under the appropriate heading taking into consideration definitions of democratic education and traditional schooling as detailed in chapters 1 and 2, and the context in which the process code had occurred within the data sets. From this process, groupings of process codes emerged that led to my being better able to make sense of the larger themes of my data. For example, the following process codes emerged as supporting a larger concept of "building community" which in turn supported "democratic education": addressing students' concerns; allowing space for unpreparedness; asking for help; being comfortable with ambiguity; being flexible; checking feelings; checking needs; encouraging self-reflection; interacting socially; knowing one another's needs; knowing students; students negotiating within groups; recognizing talking as problem-solving; respecting one another; respecting speaker; seeing multiple perspectives; teachers and students collaboratively problem-solving; entering the students' imaginative world; and working together. Moving from in vivo coding and process coding to concept coding to pattern coding within a theoretical framework of social constructionism enabled me to use a process of "analytic induction" grounding my conclusions in "theoretically valid connections" (Green, et al, 2020, p. 165).

In order to ensure that I had correctly identified and considered relevant discourses, I then re-examined all of my *in vivo* codes to see if there were additional representations (and associated process codes) that supported the final pattern codes that had emerged from my analysis (building community, questioning, and norming). I re-read transcripts and then additional portions of transcripts often checking associated in vivo and process codes and concept codes to ensure that the identified in vivo codes, process codes, and concept codes accurately captured the context of the recordings. Through this grouping and re-grouping of

codes, additional concept codes emerged that supported the above-mentioned pattern codes (building community, questioning and norming).

Phase Two: Micro-Transcription

I re-evaluated my data set in light of the pattern codes and associated concept codes that were constructed from my cycles of coding (building community, questioning, and norming) in an effort to choose the best transcripts for use in the next phase of my analysis (micro-transcription and critical discourse analysis at the micro and macro levels). Because I was interested in completing an analysis of language, gestures, expressions, body movements, and other contextual discursive cues, I chose to only review video recordings from my data set (as opposed to audio and video recordings) looking for examples that provided rich text relative to the identified pattern codes (building community, questioning, and norming) and associated concept codes.

Because of my large data set and because I had already coded each transcript, I began my review by re-reading each transcript of videos from my data set. I made a list of each video recording in my methodological journal, and recorded notes relative to the concept code/s supported by each video. I then re-watched those videos that contained evidence relative to the identified pattern codes and associated concept codes recording additional supporting evidence in my methodological journal. Through this review process, I found 41 videos that contained evidence relative to the three identified pattern codes (building community, questioning, and norming) and associated concept codes. I then re-read those transcripts looking for the video/s that contained evidence towards all three of the identified pattern codes; that contained evidence of teacher and student dialogue; and that could potentially provide rich evidence of the discoursing prevalent at Sunrise Community School as well as evidence towards how teachers

and students disrupted or maintained more traditional schooling while discoursing. I identified episode MAH00048 (hereafter referred to as episode 48) and MAH00106 (hereafter referred to as episode 106) for completing the micro-transcription and critical discourse analysis phases of my research.

Because I conceptualized learning as people's discursive enactments and reactions with one another, believing that it is through these interactions that individuals socially construct relationships within the context and with the content and events happening within that social context, I chose to use an Interactional Sociolinguistic Perspective when analyzing episodes 48 and 106 (Bloome et al, 2008). This perspective enabled me to understand how the participants constructed a shared narrative; how I as the researcher participated in constructing meaning within the shared narrative; and how the participants discoursed what counted as knowledge within this shared narrative (Bloom et al, 2008).

Interactional Sociolinguistic Perspective

Because I chose to conceptualize discourse as socially constructed, I analyzed the two identified episodes using an Interactional Sociolinguistic perspective. Framing my micro-transcriptions of the episodes through an Interactional Sociolinguistic perspective allowed me to examine the evolution of the discourse, particularly how participants built on one another's discursive enactments to make meaning (Bloome, et al, 2008). In this way, I was able to better identify the purpose of a participant's discourse; whether or not it was "taken up" by the other participants; and, to some extent, what the consequence was of a particular participant's discourse (Bloome, et al, 2008). The specific questions I used when examining the discourse were: what is happening in the discoursing; who is discoursing; how is what is happening and who is discoursing affecting one another; how is identity being constructed and what narratives

of identity are being constructed; and what happens as a result of the construction of these particular narratives (Bloome, et al, 2008). As part of my analysis, I also examined the discourse through three perspectives: the teacher's perspective, the students' perspectives, and my perspective as a researcher (Bloome, et al, 2008; Bloome, et al, 2005).

Identifying Message Units, Contextualization Cues, and Interactional Units. I began my process of micro-transcription by re-watching episode 48 and episode 106 creating a written record of the message units and the contextualization cues for each episode that marked message unit boundaries (Bloome et al, 2008). I use Bloome's definition of a message unit—"the smallest unit of conversational meaning" as it is bounded by contextualization cues (participants' changes in volume, rate of speaking, raised or lowered intonation, pauses) (Bloome, et al, 2005, p. 19). I included close descriptions of the language, gestures, expressions, body movements, and other contextual discursive cues found in the episode and identified what was happening and who was discoursing. I then grouped message units to identify how discourse was initiated, sustained, ended, and evaluated by participants (Bloome, et al, 2008).

In this way, I created a representation of the shared narrative that participants were co-constructing—identifying the message units; identifying who initiated the discourse; examining whether or not the other participants "took up" the initiated discourse; and how the discourse was evaluated by other participants (Bloome, et al, 2008). I then grouped the message units as to how the participants built on one another's discourses creating the interactional units that I used to organize the respective micro-transcriptions (Bloome, et al, 2008).

Once I had identified the message units, the contextualization cues, and the Interactional Units, I then examined the micro-transcriptions to identify typical IRE patterns (teacher initiation, student response, teacher evaluation patterns) (Bloome, et al, 2008). I marked

particular instances of where the typical IRE patterns were inverted (where the students initiated and the teacher responded) or adapted. This process supported my work in determining how discoursing was being used by participants to construct meaning by showing how the teacher and students "adapt [italics mine] extant conversational structures" (Bloome et al, 2008, p. 87). This process helped me to further analyze what and who is being acted upon through the discoursing. I recorded these patterns on a chart to include a written representation of how the IRE patterns played out across the entirety of the discursive text.

Identifying How Participants Constructed Meaning. Once I had completed the micro-transcription, I then answered the following question to detail what was happening within this discursive space: what are the signals that I notice relative to the shared narrative we are all constructing—first the teacher and the students, and then I as the researcher (Bloome, et al, 2008)? I returned to my earlier questions of what is happening; who is discoursing; what and who is being acted upon through the discoursing (Bloome, et al, 2008) and used evidence from the micro-transcription, from the analysis of the IRE patterns, and from the analysis of participants' discoursing personal philosophies, claims, and/or evidence to answer the questions in more detail. I then examined my responses to these questions considering my positionality as a researcher discoursing within this space and recorded my responses.

To better understand how knowledge was constructed within this space, I answered the following questions Bloome (2008) proposes: how do the teachers and students adapt conversational patterns that are in use; what is the shared sense about what they are collectively doing; and how have teachers and students created opportunities to construct knowledge (Bloome, et al 2008)? And finally, I used evidence from the above analysis to answer the following question: what narratives of identity are being constructed through discoursing and

what consequences do these narratives have (Bloome, et al, 2008)? (It is important to note that at this point of the process of analysis, I felt that I was not able to completely answer this question—this question needed to be further fleshed out through the critical discourse analysis that I conducted in phase 3 of my analysis).

After identifying the message units, contextualization cues, and interactional units as described above, I created a final written micro-transcription of both episodes using transcription symbols adapted from Bloome (Bloome et al, 2008). This process provided additional, multiple close reads of the video, the transcript, and the contextualization cues, and allowed me another review of the judgements I had made relative to the contextualization cues and interactional unit boundaries (See Appendices C & D). During this review process, I made necessary minor revisions to improve the accuracy of the message units, contextualization cues, and sets of interactional units.

Phase Three: Gee's Critical Discourse Analysis

After completing the micro-transcription mentioned above, I chose to further examine the identified video episodes using elements of Gee's process for analyzing discourse (Gee, 2014a; Gee, 2014b). This helped me to establish the trustworthiness of my initial findings using multiple measures of description and analysis. I was able to connect the micro level discoursing of participants with macro level discoursing found within the wider society and institutions and to better understand how participants were enacting identities within the context.

Connecting to Broader Discoursing

Because I was interested in determining how stakeholders' discourses either supported or disrupted more traditional school discourses (fairly broad questions), I chose to begin my analysis using "big picture" analytical tools (questions) from Gee's process of discourse analysis

95

that would help me to understand how stakeholders' foregrounded or backgrounded information (the significance building tool); how they constructed identity (the identities building tool); and how they constructed what counts as a social good and then distributed those goods or withheld them from others (the politics building tool) (Gee, 2014a).

I then continued my analysis using additional analytical tools (questions) recommended by Gee to understand how participants frame their discursive enactments through their stories or taken-for-granted theories about their worlds (the figured worlds tool); how participants discourse "socially recognizable identi[ies] and…activities" (the big D Discourse tool) (Gee, 2014a, p. 186); and how larger historical or current issues or questions frame participants' discursive enactments (the big C Conversations tool) (Gee, 2014a). While I began my analysis using the "tools" sequentially (reading through the entire transcription of the identified episodes looking for evidence for that particular tool), as my process of analysis deepened, I "moved among the tools" meaning that as a re-reading of the text prompted me to re-think or to re-analyze an earlier finding, I used the appropriate tool for deeper analysis and recorded the "new" finding (Gee, 2014a). These steps represented a more macro-analysis approach beginning with linking the text to "bigger picture" ideas.

After completing the above-mentioned steps of the analytical process for both episodes (episode 48 and episode 106), I then chose to examine how participants were using specific words or phrases in very specific ways to construct meaning within these contexts (the situated meanings tool) (Gee, 2014a).

Building Significance: The Significance Building Tool. I began this phase of the critical discourse analysis by re-reading the transcript for episode 48 looking for evidence relative to how participants built significance through their discursive enactments. Gee (2014a)

96

refers to this process of analysis as using the significance building tool. Specifically, I color-coded the main clauses using yellow highlighting and color-coded subordinate clauses using green highlighting. As I read through the transcript and highlighted the clauses, I recorded notes after each message unit explicating how significance was indicated by the main clause. In order to better explicate how significance was indicated by the main clause, I answered the following questions: what did the participant indicate was significant, and how? What choices did the participant make when using words and phrases? I also included notes relative to gestures, body positioning, and pauses participants used to build significance. For example, in the context of the beginning discussion with Forester about Lisa's not following the rules of the soccer game, I marked the following subject-verb spoken by the teacher "I think" as a major clause within the following sentence: "Right/I think she's probably upset about something." I recorded the following note relative to the significance that I believe the teacher was assigning to the message unit: significance indicated by using "right" as a verbal marker and by changing the narrative to the student's possible motivation for not setting down the ball. The teacher is moving the conversation towards the social/emotional signifying the importance of the other student's feelings. Looking at the participants' discoursing meaning in this way allowed me to tease out what was assigned significance by participants and how they discoursed agreement or adaptations or changes to what was discoursed as significant throughout the episode.

Building Identity: The Identities Building Tool. I continued my analysis reviewing the transcript for evidence of how participants treated one another's identities; for evidence of what identities participants recognized for others in relationship to their own; and for evidence of "how the speaker [positioned] others, what identities the speaker is inviting them to take up" (Gee, 2014a, p. 116). I recorded answers to the following questions: what are the particular

identities participants are enacting; what identity or identities are participants attributing to others; and how do these enactments and attributions help participants to enact their own identities (Gee, 2014a)? For example, considering the first two lines of the transcript (*Ms. Jennifer, Lisa won't set down the ball*), I recorded the following: Forester is enacting a role of student in need of an arbitrator of rules; by going to the teacher for arbitration, he is enacting an identity for the teacher as arbitrator of rules, as THE problem-solver in the classroom, and he is enacting a self-identity as rule-follower, and as in need of an arbitrator. I framed my inquiry around considering evidence of how participants viewed others and whether or not participants viewed others as different from themselves. Reviewing the episode through the lens of "identity" enabled me to gain insights into how identity construction shaped the discourse, specifically how the teacher and students purposefully disrupted or maintained identities ascribed by one another for one another.

Using and Distributing Social Goods: Politics Building Tool. After examining the episode for evidence of how participants built significance and identity, I then reviewed the transcript of the episode using the politics building tool recommended by Gee to find evidence of how participants constructed what counts as a social good and then how they distributed those goods or withheld them from others (Gee, 2014a). I examined each message unit in light of what participants were communicating "as to what is "normal,' 'right,' 'good,' 'correct,' 'proper,' 'appropriate,' 'valuable,' 'the ways things are,' 'the way things ought to be,' 'high status or low status,' or 'like me or not like me'" (Gee, 2014b, pp. 34-35). For example, for the above-mentioned discursive text (*Ms. Jennifer, Lisa won't set down the ball*), I recorded the following note when examining the lines through this lens of using and distributing social goods: Forester is communicating a perceived "right way" of playing soccer. He is also communicating a

perceived "correct" way of dealing with conflict—telling the teacher. He is positioning the teacher as the "holder" of the social goods (social capital), the individual who can address conflict. The idea of "social transformation" is central to my definition of effective democratic education, and this particular tool of inquiry allowed me to examine how participants may discourse perspectives; to consider how participants may discourse a politicized space; to find possible examples of how participants discoursed the "status quo" (or not); and how participants discoursed the "Other."

Moving in Figured Worlds: Figured Worlds Tool. In order to find evidence of how participants framed their discursive enactments through their stories or taken-for-granted theories about their worlds, I reviewed the episode considering possible assumptions participants made (within the context of their stories or taken-for-granted theories) and what stories or taken-for-granted theories about their worlds they may have invited other participants to take up or to assume (the figured worlds tool) (Gee, 2014a). Specifically, I answered the following question recommended by Gee: "what participants, activities, ways of interacting, forms of language, people…institutions and values are in these figured worlds?" (Gee, 2014a, p. 177). When examining the participants' figured worlds evidenced when Forester said, "Ms. Jennifer, Lisa won't set down the ball," I recorded the following notes: Forester seems to position Ms. Jennifer in a figured world of "teacher"—one who is an arbitrator of rules, enforcer of rules. In relation to Ms. Jennifer's eventual response of "So let's go talk to her and explain the rules and see if she still wants to play," I noted the following: Ms. Jennifer does not operate within the figured world of "teacher" as Forester has positioned her where students are expected to come to the teacher for resolution or where the teacher intervenes and sets the rules; she is operating from a figured world of "students as problem solvers." This tool of inquiry enabled me to connect and contrast

99

the local, social enactments of this particular classroom discourse with more traditional

enactments of "school" and "teacher" and the purposes of each (as discoursed by the

participants).

Enacting Broader Social Identities and Activities: Big D Discourse Tool. I then

continued my discursive review by connecting and contrasting the local, social enactments of the

participants' discoursing with broader social identities and activities by identifying how the

participants were discoursing broader socially recognizable identities and activities. Specifically,

I recorded evidence of the sorts of actions, interactions, values, beliefs, and environments (Gee,

2014a) enacted by participants within a specific, broader Discourse (the big D Discourse tool).

For example, I recorded the students' actions of tattling, bringing the issue to the teacher as

evidence of the connection to a broader, socially recognizable identity of the role of student. I

recorded evidence of the teacher enacting a broader social identity of "peer": sitting at the picnic

table with the students; engaging in an extended conversation with the students; and entering

their world, treating their concerns as valid and important as evidenced by her questions and

observations.

Enacting Broader Debates and Discussions: Big C Conversation Tool. After

reviewing the episode using the figured worlds tool of inquiry and the big D Discourse tool of

inquiry, I continued to examine the episode for evidence of how the participants' discoursing

connected or contrasted with larger societal discoursing by recording evidence of connections to

"broader historical or widely known debate or discussion between or among discourses" (the big

C Conversation tool) (Gee, 2014a, p. 191). I specifically responded to the following questions as

articulated by Gee: what issues, sides, debates, and claims does this communication assume

hearers or readers know; what issues, sides, debates, and claims do they need to know to

understand the communication in terms of wider historical and social issues and debates; can the communication be seen as carrying out a historical or widely known debate or discussion between or among discourses; which discourses (Gee, 2014a, p. 191)? For example, I connected the local, social enactments from this episode with larger claims and assumptions by recording the following: larger claim/assumption—in order to play a game, you need to follow the rules; larger claim/assumption—when we speak of "what's in someone's bucket," we are discussing social-emotional well-being.

Enacting Situated Meanings: Situated Meanings Tool. I then repeated this analysis in the same order, asking the same questions of the data for episode 106. When I concluded the review of the second episode (106) using the big C Conversation tool, I realized that participants had used language in very specific ways throughout both episodes, and I then decided to review both episodes using Gee's situated meanings tool identifying evidence of the specific meanings that participants would have to attribute to these phrases when used by one another within the specific context of the discursive enactments. I reviewed the episodes line-by-line recording answers to the following question: "what specific meanings do listeners have to attribute to these words and phrases given the context and how the context is construed" (Gee, 2014a, p. 159). For instance, my notes stated the following relative to Ms. Jennifer's discoursing "*Because I am pretty sure we can talk, we're going to talk to Lisa next*": "talk" in this instance is more than only verbalizing, saying something out loud. As used in this context it means "discussing" an issue, "talking through" a problem, perhaps even "resolving conflict."

Synthesizing Initial Findings

After examining the episode/s using the situated meanings tool, I synthesized my data by identifying how the figured worlds, big D Discourses, big C Conversations and situated

meanings found in the data were used by participants to build significance, identities, and "politics" (as defined by Gee as what counts as a social good) (Gee, 2014b, p. 140). For example, I recorded the following note relative to episode 106 when discussing how figured worlds were used to build politics: when the teacher enacted a figured world of "peer," she effectively shared her social capital as "problem solver." This process enabled me to make additional connections to larger frames of reference across my data sets and to identify additional evidence to how participants discoursed meaning.

Connecting Language and Context

My next steps of the critical discourse analysis took me closer to the language and grammar of the text connecting language and context as I considered how participants were using deictics to contextualize their language use and to signify assumptions (the deixis tool); how participants understand the speaker's intention when language was unclear or when assumptions were necessary to understand meaning (the fill-in tool); what a non-participant would find unclear about the language, particularly one who did not hold the same assumptions, beliefs, etc. (the making strange tool); why participants chose particular subjects and what they chose to say about those subjects (the subject tool); and how the participants used intonation to convey meaning (the intonation tool). These steps of analysis enabled me to remain truer to the participants' interpretation of the speakers' language; to make more authentic analytical claims about participants' co-constructed meanings; and to better understand the purpose of their discoursing. As in my earlier analysis, I began using these specific "tools" sequentially (reading through the entire transcription of the identified episode looking for evidence for that particular tool), and as my process of analysis deepened, I "moved among the tools" meaning that as a re-reading of the text prompted me to re-think or to re-analyze an earlier finding, I would use the

102

appropriate tool for deeper analysis and would record the "new" finding (Gee, 2014a). These steps represented a micro-analysis approach. For all steps of the critical discourse analysis, I specifically chose tools that would help me to identify evidence related to how participants disrupted or maintained traditional school discoursing.

Using Deictics: The Deictics Tool. In an effort to effectively contextualize the language used within the episode, I initially identified deictics (words whose referents are dependent upon context). I looked for pronouns, words that indicated place (e.g., here/there; this/that) and time (e.g., now/then; yesterday/today). Once I had identified the deictics, I further analyzed how participants were using language by answering the following questions: how did the deictics help to contextualize the language; how did participants use deictics to make assumptions about what is already known or "figured out"; and did participants use words that were "deictic-like," words whose meaning had to be understood from the specific context, and if so, what were the specific elements of meaning that had to be understood from context? (This last question is tied closely in my analysis to the evidence found through my using the situated meaning tool.) For example, I recorded the following notes relative to "Was she told all of those rules at the beginning": *she* ties to the context of the boys' conversation about Lisa's not playing by the rules and refers to Lisa; *those* ties to the specific rules just articulated by one of the boys about their game of soccer; and *beginning* is a deictic-like word that ties to the game the children were playing that was the impetus for the discussion with the teacher; the three deictics' referents (Lisa, Jake's specifically articulated rules, and the beginning of the game they were playing that caused the issue, respectively) are assumed by the teacher to be known to the boys because of the context of the conversation they have just been discoursing. This part of the analysis helped me to stay more

closely focused on the participants' use of words that must be contextualized in order to be understood and to remain truer to their interpretation of the words used by the speaker.

Making Meaning from Assumptions: Fill In Tool and Making Strange Tool. To further effectively contextualize the language of participants and to better understand what participants were trying to accomplish, I also examined their language (beyond only deictics) for unarticulated assumptions and information—the elements that listeners have to "fill in" in order to make sense of the speakers' meanings (the fill in tool) and to better understand what listeners thought speakers were trying to do with their language (Gee, 2014a). As part of this continued analysis of the inferences, assumptions, and knowledge that listeners would have to bring to bear when making meaning with the speakers, I stepped back from the text asking myself what needs explaining in this text in order for clarity, purpose, and meaning to be understood (the making strange tool) (Gee, 2014a). For the line, "Ms. Jennifer, Lisa won't set down the ball," I recorded the following: it is assumed by Forester that Ms. Jennifer knows that they were playing soccer and that she would know the rules of not touching the ball; it is also assumed by Forester that Ms. Jennifer can intervene as the teacher to enforce the rules; Ms. Jennifer would need to know why Lisa might not want to set down the ball; "clarity" requires an explanation of why not setting down the ball is problematic; Forester's intentions were seemingly to tell Ms. Jennifer so that Ms. Jennifer would intervene and would possibly tell Lisa to set down the ball; and an outsider would have to know that the students were playing soccer, and they would have to be familiar with the rules of soccer. This analysis kept me close to participants' intentions, assumptions, and discursive enactments and enabled me to make more authentic analytical claims about participants' co-constructing of meaning.

Making Meaning from Chosen Topics: Subject Tool, Intonation Tool. I also

examined what speakers chose to talk about and what they chose to say about those topics by

identifying the subjects of sentences; by determining why they chose those subjects and why

they didn't choose other subjects; and by noting what they chose to say about those chosen

subjects (the subject tool) (Gee, 2014a). Closely aligned to my analysis of the subjects chosen by

speakers, was my analysis of the intonation patterns of their speech—an analysis that also

indicated more salient information and less salient information through the participants' use of

content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and function words (determiners, pronouns,

prepositions, quantifiers) (Gee, 2014a). For example, for the discursive text "Okay, so when

you're ready, can you come find me, and then we can talk about it," I recorded the following: the

subject chosen by Ms. Jennifer is "you" in reference to Lisa; Ms. Jennifer wants Lisa to decide

when she is ready to talk about the situation and to take the initiative in finding Ms. Jennifer; Ms.

Jennifer then uses the subject of "we" in reference to herself, Jake, Forester, and Lisa as

indicated by her gestures of pointing at Lisa, herself, and then making a circling motion to

include Jake and Forester; Ms. Jennifer wants to include the boys in the next discussion with

Lisa (the discussion Lisa initiates); her intonation pattern makes "ready" salient—she puts a

stronger emphasis on "ready" than the other words, and the verbs "can, come, find, can, talk" are

made more salient through the intonation pattern identified (as content words are typically more

indicative of saliency than function words). This analysis enabled me to identify what was made

important by the speakers and further helped me to know the purpose of their discourse.

Saying, Doing and Designing

My final steps of the critical discourse analysis process enabled me to understand how

participants were building and designing meaning with language. Specifically, I examined what

participants were trying to do when speaking (the doing and not just saying tool); how participants used Germanic or Latinate words (the vocabulary tool); and why participants used grammar in the way they did (the why this way and not that way tool) (Gee, 2014a). These components of my analysis helped me to understand not only what meanings participants were trying to build towards but also what they were trying to do with their language.

Doing, Not Just Saying: The Doing and Not Just Saying Tool. Because I was interested in unpacking the complexity of the relationship between language and action, I chose to examine the episode in light of not just what the participants were trying to say, but also in light of what the participants were trying to do (the doing and not just saying tool) (Gee, 2014a). For the discursive text of "Okay, so when you're ready, can you come find me, and then we can talk about it," I recorded the following: Ms. Jennifer is acknowledging Lisa's agency putting the onus on Lisa to choose when further resolution of the issue occurs (or not). She is also engaging the boys in the future resolution of the issue (as indicated by her use of "we" and her gesturing towards them using a circling motion)—she is indicating that they will talk about the situation at a future time. This analysis enabled me to better understand not only the pictures of meaning participants' were building towards, but also, what they hoped to do with those co-constructed meanings.

Building Meaning with Vocabulary: The Vocabulary Tool. Because I was interested in better understanding how participants' discoursing disrupts or maintains traditional school discoursing, I examined the style of vocabulary being used in this classroom space—were participants invoking a more formal, "school" vocabulary that was predominantly academic (Latinate vocabulary), or were they discoursing more informally (Germanic vocabulary), and why and/or how were these choices made to affect their communication (the vocabulary tool)

106

(Gee, 2014a)? For example, for the excerpt of discursive text in Table 2, I recorded the following

comments relative to how Ms. Jennifer discourses: a preponderance of Germanic vocabulary is

being used throughout this section. Ms. Jennifer is enacting an identity of peer, using the

children's vocabulary to have this discussion (building her statements from theirs) in order to

problem-solve a resolution rather than to "decide" the resolution for her students; therefore, there

is a preponderance of Germanic vocabulary used. She is asking, not telling. She is engaging, not

directing. Her word choices support the conversation of a peer.

Table 3.3			
Micro-Transcription Excerpt: Episode 48			
32 33	Forester → Ms. Jennifer	I <u>am</u>, I <u>am</u>, <u>so good</u> <u>because</u>, <u>because</u> I <u>already</u> <u>started</u> ↓	Forester is sitting down, looking directly at the camera
34 35 36	Ms. Jennifer → Forester	Ri+ght, and <u>you play soccer a lot</u> with your Pop-pop and Jake you've been…	Ms. Jennifer uses open hand gesture pointing to Jake
37 38	Forester → Ms. Jennifer	unh-unh I have never been to play soccer with Pop-pop↓.	Forester [signaling disagreement] looks directly at camera, interrupts teacher and shakes head "no"
39 40 41 42	Ms. Jennifer → Forester	No?↑ <u>I've thought I've seen you playing soccer with him a lot of times</u> ↑ <u>at the soccer fields.</u>↓	
43 44	Forester → Ms. Jennifer	But, no, I just at soccer practice, I <u>only</u> do it <u>sometimes</u>. ↓	Forester looks at teacher, then looks down touching fingertips together.

Focusing on the vocabulary choices made by participants enabled me to see how and when they engaged as teacher to students or as peers in conversation.

Designing and Crafting Discourse: Why This Way and Not That Way Tool. In order to understand how participants were designing or crafting their discoursing, I also analyzed the discursive text through the lens of "why"—why were participants choosing one way of using grammar and not another as they discoursed (the why this way and not that way tool) (Gee, 2014a). For the discursive text referenced above in Table 2 "No? I've thought I've seen you playing soccer with him a lot of times at the soccer field," I recorded the following: Ms. Jennifer could have said, "That's not true. I've seen you playing lots of times" but by continuing a questioning tone, allowing space for her opinion to be incorrect (choosing the phrase, "I thought"), she leaves the door open for Forester to adjust his perspective based on evidence. If she had said "That's not true" the conversation would possibly have shut down—the teacher's opinion would be situated as the "right" opinion or interpretation. In this way, she leaves the door open for both perspectives or opinions to be considered. In this way, I was able to consider what the participants could have said, why they made the choice they did, and to consider how their choices helped them to communicate meaning.

Using Gee's (2014a; 2014b) process of critical discourse analysis provided me a means to better understand the purpose of the language-in-use of the participants allowing me to better understand the shaping of the discourse of the classrooms at Sunrise Community School. I was able to comprehensively link the discourses of the classrooms to larger societal discourses, thus allowing me to understand how their language-in-use disrupted (or not) the traditional schooling discourses of a social efficiency paradigm.

Establishing Trustworthiness

In order to credibly analyze the ways in which teachers and students discursively constructed the educational space that is Sunrise Community School, I considered issues of scope, depth, and multiple perspectives (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). By audio and video recording four full school days of discursive engagements among teachers and students at the school, I ensured a broad perspective and that multiple iterations of extended observations were available for analysis, thus effectively addressing issues of scope and depth. I utilized interviews, observations, field notes, and documents to provide multiple perspectives for triangulating my data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). And finally, I used the following methods to produce credible analysis: checking with participants; debriefing with peers; and keeping a methodological journal.

Checking with Participants

During my data collection, I took steps to remain true to what was actually happening in the discursive spaces audio and video recording full school days; checking in with participants throughout the day to allow them to further explicate what was transpiring in the setting, and to clarify particular discursive enactments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used this "checking-in" process throughout my time spent in the school being particularly aware that I was co-constructing meaning with participants and that I needed to ensure that the understandings I was mentally constructing reflected what was intended by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Debriefing with Peers

After collecting the data and checking in with participants, I further established the trustworthiness of my analysis by engaging in conversations with the chair of my committee and my methodologist to uncover my unintended biases, to explore the meanings of the data, and to

clarify my interpretations of the data and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I structured these conversations with these respective committee members to help me to make my analysis explicit and to explore aspects of my analysis that may have otherwise remained apparent only to me within my own reasoning; to test the findings that were emerging in my mind; to ensure the soundness of my methodology; and to help me to develop the next steps in my methodological design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Methodological Journal

Throughout my data collection and analysis, I kept a methodological journal (electronic and hand-written) to assist me in wrestling with issues related to my methodology, my next steps of analysis, challenges related to my decision-making processes and to effectively reflect on what was revealed by my data sorting through any preconceptions related to my data that I may have held (Charmaz, 2014). Within my methodological journal, I recorded and explored initial impressions related to my data and developed additional questions in order to choose the best direction for my continuing data analysis (Charmaz, 2014) while using it as a space to effectively outline and organize my findings.

<div align="center">

Ensuring Quality of Conclusions

</div>

I ensured the quality of my conclusions by implementing a consistent research process that remained stable across time and methods (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020). I identified my processes for collecting, analyzing, and displaying my data and maintained similar processes across data sources creating "meaningful parallelism across data sources" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2020, p. 305). I kept detailed records of my processes for collecting and analyzing data and wrote analytic memos that recorded my biases and assumptions and feelings related to my data (Miles Huberman & Saldana, 2020).

Establishing Validity

Gee (2014b) considers four constructs when examining the validity of a critical discourse analysis: convergence; agreement; coverage; and linguistic details. Because I recognize that a critical discourse analysis is always an interpretation, I focused on these elements when considering the validity of my findings, and I also recognize that my findings remain open to interpretation and further discussion and are subject to continued study in the field of education (Gee, 2014b).

Convergence

I examined my data across multiple questions (the specific questions detailed above in my discussion of the process of analysis used). I specifically examined the data to understand how and how often the answers to the questions aligned and whether they offered "compatible and convincing answers" (Gee, 2014b). My findings identified in chapter five represent the alignment of the answers across the data and relative to multiple questions within the process.

Agreement

Gee (2014b) recommends that a researcher establishes validity by checking whether the conclusions are supported by other researchers. As already detailed, I met with the chair of my committee and my methodologist throughout the process to discuss my conclusions, and I grounded my methodology and conclusions in Bloome's (Bloome, et al, 2008; Bloome, et al, 2005) and Gee's (2014b; Gee, 2014a) work, researchers recognized in the field of critical discourse analysis and micro-ethnography.

Coverage

Gee (2014b) further recommends that a valid analysis include discussion of the contextualization of the discursive exchange that is being analyzed. I contextualized the

discursive enactments through the use of teacher interviews and through an analysis of the school's website (prior to my study's beginning). I recognize that this particular construct was not addressed as fully in my research as the other forms of establishing validity, per Gee.

Linguistic Details

And finally, I analyzed my data looking at the grammatical structures constituting the language of the native speakers (Gee, 2014b). I considered sentence structure, deictics, and vocabulary to see what was privileged by participants in their speech, and I grounded my entire study (including my coding processes) in the actual words of the speakers. Using Bloome's (Bloome, et al, 2008; Bloome, et al, 2005) Gee's (2014b; Gee, 2014a) processes of analysis enabled me to center my research and to justify my conclusions within recognized frameworks of linguistic analysts.

Ethics and Consent

Approval for the study was given by the Illinois State University Internal Review Board and the school in which the study was conducted. Letters of consent and assent included the purpose of the research, the risks and benefits to participants, expectations of participants, and an opportunity to agree to participate or not. The letters contained the duration of the participant's participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, a description of foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participant, and a description of any benefits to the participants or any others that may be expected from the research. Consent was obtained from teachers and parents through letters of consent. Signed permissions were obtained from parents and/or legal guardians of minors involved in the study through letters of informed consent. Student assent was obtained through letters of assent. A statement of non-participation and of no consequence for not participating was included in the written statement. In the parental permission and student assent

forms, I stressed that participation in the study will in no way influence student grades. Both

breach of confidentiality and psychological risks were minimized by keeping data confidential

and secure (See Appendix A).

CHAPTER IV: DISCOURSES OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Because Sunrise Community School was founded to nurture democratic practices within an educational setting, I was first interested in identifying the discourses that were being used by teachers and students during the regular school day. Specifically, I was interested in determining how the discourses being used aligned (or not) with my definition of democratic education as an educating *through* democracy, recognizing it is a constructive process of engagement within community (Apple & Beane, 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 2004); as a space where students own their learning experience, share in decision-making, are grounded in a culture of nurture and respect, and enact agency (Dewey, 1916/2004; Apple & Beane, 2007; Mills, 2013); and as engaging student citizens in practices related to social transformation (Apple & Beane, 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 1916/2004; DuBois, 1986; Green, 1999; Knoester, 2012; King, 1968/2010). And I was interested in understanding how the discourses used by the teachers and students disrupted or maintained traditional schooling (traditional schooling as defined in chapter 1 as being characterized by dominant discourses: teacher-centered, teacher-directed discourses; authoritarian, control-focused discourses; and discourses that support the work of school being defined by the market-place and economic utility) (Apple & Beane, 2007; Lortie, 2002; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Kliebard, 2004). In this chapter, I will identify the discourses that are prevalent in the local context, and I will discuss how the discourses relate to one another, and how they exhibit a tension between traditional schooling and democratic education.

Prevalent Discourses of the Local Context

Through the first phase of data analysis, three prevalent discourses among the students and teachers emerged: building community; questioning; and norming. These discourses share some overlap among the *in vivo* codes and the process codes used to define them, and they

114

evidence a tension between discursive enactments that seemingly support traditional schooling discourses while working towards more democratic outcomes. Of particular interest is how the teachers sometimes used more traditional discourses (e.g., teacher-centered, teacher-directed discourses) to sometimes support moves towards more democratic discourses even while seemingly operating within more typical understandings of traditional schooling.

Building Community

My analysis revealed that teachers and students at Sunrise Community School build community through discourses of affirming, sharing decision-making, problem-solving, and considering multiple perspectives—discourses that are enacted across all three classrooms. A thread of respect (and an expectation for respecting the speaker) runs through the prevalent discourses related to community building.

Affirming

All three teachers use discourses of affirming to celebrate students' ideas (e.g., *very creative ideas* (episode MAH00069); *oh, that's a good idea* (episode MAH00026)) and to recognize well-done work in individual and collective ways (e.g., *Nice job, Braden. That was great.* (episode MAH00094). *It fits perfect in there*. (episode 11); and *Good eye, Jake* (episode 11)). The affirmative discourses were used by the teachers to positively support work of the students including, but not limited to, completing inquiry projects, building a zip line (sketching an idea for a different "way" of creating the mechanics of the zip line); and creating an imaginative world for stuffed animals (using items found in nature). Praising the ideas and work of the students (as opposed to praising conformity and/or rule following) supported classroom spaces where students enacted creating and doing with a shared purpose and shared meanings—

important components for creating democratic community that can effectively nurture transformative practices (Dewey, 1916/2004; Green, 1999).

Students in Ms. Jennifer's class also affirmed one another's individual and collective work as evidenced by their classroom interactions (episode MAH00069) (e.g., *I like all of them-I especially like that one and that one*; *They all look really, really neat*; *Very creative ideas*; *I know that you said that you thought Jake's, Lisa's and Noah's looked really neat, too* [said by Ms. Jennifer]). Students in Ms. Linda's class affirmed a student's suggestion (as part of the zip line construction process) by linking the suggestion to what had worked in a previous trial (*Yea, the splatter ladder. That worked last time (*episode MAH00026*)*).

In the final classroom meeting time of the afternoon, Ms. Jennifer also enacted a seemingly different, but related, type of discourse of affirmation by affirming a student's feelings while also sharing a different perspective. When it was Len's turn to share his perspective of his day, Len shaped his response around one exchange that had happened when he had not felt affirmed:

Ms. Jennifer: … Len, what was your favorite part? You had no favorite part of the day?

Len: Yeah, because there's no favorite part because everybody was yelling at me today.

Ms. Jennifer: Well, I don't think everyone was yelling at you today. I think there was one moment where you felt not good, and somebody got upset and had a louder voice than you. It happened one time today. And I know that's the part...

Len: Four times.

Ms. Jennifer: Four times. There were lots of other times of really great things, but I know those four times stick with us. When somebody gets angry or upset towards us, that's really hard to forget in our memory and in our hearts. So, I'm sorry that, that felt rough,

Len. I hope that later you think of something you'd like about today. Cause you had a lot of great moments that I saw (episode MAH00087).

In this way, Ms. Jennifer shared her perspective while also affirming the student's "great moments that [she] saw of his day." It is important to note that she did not ignore his statement and/or his feelings; she did not "tell" him how he should feel; and she did not correct him, telling him that he was "wrong" to feel that way. She opened the counter narrative of "Well, I don't think everyone was yelling at you today" using a questioning tone and emphasizing "everyone" leaving room for his interpretation and his feelings to remain possible. And she ends the counter narrative with an affirming statement: "Cause you had a lot of great moments that I saw." Ms. Jennifer is seemingly nurturing a space where a student's perspective is respected as authentic and valid. Ms. Jennifer took additional time to talk about this with the student and to validate his feelings and to affirm the "positive" from his day.

This discourse of *affirming* is centered in the teachers' beliefs related to nurturing a positive learning environment as evidenced in the teacher interviews that I conducted prior to beginning observations at the school. When describing how she partnered with a parent in re-establishing a relationship with a student who had felt marginalized when she corrected him, Ms. Gwen shared,

I just reassured him like, "I'm really happy that you're here. I enjoy you being here.

These are the things that I really appreciate about you and our relationship.

I love that you're sarcastic and that you get my sarcastic jokes" (Interview, 8/19/20).

(It is interesting to note that Ms. Gwen situated sarcasm in an affirming discourse in this instance for this student as a means of connection.)

Ms. Jennifer shared how the entire school worked together to support learning around one another's love languages when she shared,

Last year, we as a whole school, the teachers, we all talked beforehand about how we can create community right away with our classes so that they get a sense of each other and they can find some connections with each other despite their age difference, and their difference with their classes here… and through this I also was talking to the families about and saying here are some activities you can do at home to help get a sense of what your child's love languages would be, and what they're not, so that way throughout the year when they're upset, when they need comfort of some sort, we can know what's the best way to help somebody. (Interview 8/19/20).

Ms. Gwen also emphasized the importance of affirming discourses extending to the families. This was seen by Ms. Gwen as a means for strengthening the bond between herself and the students and as a means of pushing back against more traditional discourses of what is "wrong" with a student. She states,

I also think that parents need to be told that they're doing a great job, and that their kids are really wonderful. This is where I have had, actually, a lot of parents cry and that makes me sad because I'll say, "It's okay. It's totally fine. I think your kid's great. I think you're doing a really good job. I know that your kid is this way, but there's also these great things about ... I love your kid because of these reasons." A lot of times they start crying, and that makes me really sad. They're like, "My daughter has never had a teacher that was going to see past her anxieties, to see this other part of her." I would say, "That's really sad because she's really wonderful. You just have to look past those behaviors and try to figure out what those behaviors are. So, I would agree with you and it must be so

118

hard to hear constantly from teachers, 'Your child is this way and needs this and da-da-da-da-da-da-da,' and to not hear, 'Your kid is great. Your kid is funny, and creative, and they do this thing, and it makes me laugh.'" So, I try to not just talk to the parents about all the negative things. I'll share the positive things with them, too, because I think that the parents hurt just as much if not more when their kids are hurting, right? (Interview, 8/19/20).

Ms. Linda emphasized the importance of an affirmative discourse as part of nurturing community when working with families to help two students to work through conflict:

Because it was more about the parent helping the child understand and work on some social skills and how to communicate, even just things like greeting one another, body language and how you're presenting yourself. So we talked about what we do at school and like how when you turn your body away from somebody, what does that tell the person? So I know the parents also worked through that with their kids and what that means in that specific incident (Interview, 8/21/20).

Through these examples, we see that teachers and students use an affirming discourse through their words, their body language, and with families to create and to sustain community, community that is sensitive to the feelings, actions, and words of all stakeholders (Noddings, 2005).

Sharing Decision-making

The teachers contextualized a shared decision-making discourse in different ways within the teacher interviews I conducted. Ms. Linda spoke to the importance of students being part of the decision-making process by stating,

119

I always felt as a teacher that I should be a facilitator or a guide for students in their

learning. I was never big on like getting up in front of the class and telling them what to

do. I've always believed in giving kids choice and helping them discover their learning,

which is what we do here at Bloom (Interview 8/21/20).

Ms. Linda uses a more authoritarian discourse of "giving" kids choice when contrasting the more

traditional discourse of "telling [students] what to do" with "helping them discover their

learning." From a social constructionist perspective, students always have choice—they may

choose to enact it at different times in different ways (Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002); however,

within the context of the conversation, Ms. Linda may have simply meant setting up the

curriculum so that students could choose which path they wanted to pursue in their own learning.

This is similar to how Ms. Jennifer discussed shared decision-making around curricular choices

when she shared,

For me, I would say the most important thing is what the students are interested in…The

students, like I said, they pick the general topics, and then we vote on which one we do

first (Interview, 8/19/20).

Both Ms. Jennifer and Ms. Gwen situate a shared decision-making discourse within

relationships with families, relationships that positively nurture the school community. Ms.

Jennifer described a complex situation involving one of her students, his family, his school

community, and a larger professional community coming together to affirm and to support the

student through a challenging time when he was struggling with focusing and attention issues,

particularly related to using the bathroom in a timely manner:

They would come in to use the bathroom and get very distracted by all kinds of things,

forget they had to use the restroom, and then have an accident, and they would feel really

upset with themselves. That was the thing was they were getting really down on themselves, and having a lot of negative self-talk, and self-reflection, because they felt stupid, or they felt like "Why can't I just remember this? You've told me this. I said I would do this" (Interview, 8/19/20).

After trying cues, self-talk, and other strategies unsuccessfully, Ms. Jennifer engaged the student's family to identify the best next steps for addressing the situation. The parents observed their student's distractibility during the meeting; discussed his feelings during the meeting with the student; and chose a course of action with Ms. Jennifer. The successful plan they mutually decided upon involved going to the pediatrician and getting medication; employing a light system in the bathroom to help him to remain focused; talking with the other students about how best to implement the system; engaging in occupational therapy and playgroup therapies; and nurturing an accepting, non-threatening environment among his classmates.

Ms. Gwen spoke to the difference between collaborating with parents and partnering with parents when she shared,

> … I would say that I don't know that to me [that] collaborating is quite the word in my relationship with the parents that I work with, but it's more like a partnership…when certain situations come up, I'll spend a lot of time either texting the parents or I'll meet with them in-person and we'll talk over what had happened. I get their perspective and I will say like, "So, what do you think I could have done differently or what do you think she needs in this particular situation?" (Interview 8/19/20).

Later, in the same interview, she returned to the idea of parents as partners and emphasized the importance of their having a say in what is happening in the school contrasting this with a more traditional perspective:

So, I think that's why to me it was important to think about the parents as a partnership

and not as a collaborator because I feel like many of the parents like myself come from a

really traditional education background because they're not all educators, but they all

went to public school. Or if they went to a private school, the teaching model that they're

used to is still very, very traditional. I feel like if the parents had a say in it, then we will

be doing a lot of things that we normally wouldn't be doing (Interview, 8/19/20).

In this way, through partnering with families, Ms. Jennifer and Ms. Gwen invite the

families into the process of deciding what is the best course of action for their student while

leaving room for them to critique how the situation is handled. This continuous construction and

reconstruction of what is best for a member of the school community leaves space for the

transformative practices that can lead to deeper levels of understanding of democracy,

democracy defined as the continuous construction and reconstruction of what is best for each

member of the community (Dewey, 1992/2004; Dubois, 1986; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Green,

1989; King, 1968/2010).

All three teachers often gave their students opportunities to work in groups during the

course of the week of classroom observations. Within those groups, students often worked

independently of the teacher, negotiating tasks through a process of shared discussion and

decision-making (e.g., *what do you guys think*; *what do we want to change the captions to*; *okay,*

okay…so I think we're good with that).

During whole-class engagements designed to effectively "set-up" the group work,

teachers often structured the discussions around ideas of shared decision-making (e.g*., what do*

you think; *I think that's the part you need to decide*; *then once you have a decision, you can start*

collecting your materials and actually making your setting; *we haven't decided that yet--we're not that far yet*).

The assignments and negotiated group-work spaces evidenced a tension between more traditional schooling discourses and more democratic discourses. For example, teachers sometimes enacted a more normative discourse of teacher-as-decision-maker (e.g., *would you like to choose your partners, or would you like me to choose them for you?*; *but I've reserved the right to say no*), while also enacting discourses that support more democratic ways of being (e.g., *you need to talk with your team about how you're going to make it so they know what to help with too*; *I think that's up to your group to decide*; *do you both agree with that?*; *so what do you think would be* better?) Students sometimes enacted more normative discourses of teacher-as-decision-maker (e.g., *I mean, I think that's okay, but I don't know*) while also enacting more democratic discourses that supported shared decision-making (e.g., *what do you guys think?; okay-we both get two…does that sound fair?*).

Even when students were negotiating within more traditional school discourses (e.g*., and then I get to do the next three ones*), the resolution was chosen by a more equitable decision-making process (e.g., *Okay, we both get two…does that sound fair?*). Students in one classroom sometimes asked for clarification of the shared decision-making process operating within a sense of "right/acceptable" versus "wrong/unacceptable" ways of negotiating their decisions (e.g., *I mean, I think that's okay, but I don't know; are we supposed to use pencils?*) while remaining focused on the logistics of the assignment.

Problem-solving

"Problem-solving" at Sunrise Community School is situated in social interactions and in authentic inquiry (Dewey, 1992/2004; Gergen, 2015; Holquist, 2002). All three teachers

recognize conversation ("talking about it) as an important step in addressing concerns related to social interactions. In sharing her concerns related to students' socialization in her classroom, Ms. Gwen referenced multiple conversations that she has had with her students collectively and individually over the course of the school year about including one another in various classroom interactions and pointed to the need to continue these discussions over the course of the remaining school year (episode 1). When discussing how her students were going to structure their groups for working on an assignment, Ms. Gwen engaged them in conversation reminding them of the "lots and lots of talks about…feeling like you don't fit in" in which they had engaged and encouraged them to consider those discussions in how they chose group members and in how they interacted within their group settings (episode 1). Ms. Linda also referenced discussion as a means of addressing the problems her students were having with "perspective taking" during the morning and afternoon circle times of reflection stating that they were "going to talk more about that" (episode 4 Community). And Ms. Jennifer referenced talking as a means of problem solving how they could "be gentle with each other" (episode 7 Conversation); of problem solving the issues that one student was having with understanding the rules (MAH00048); and of how she planned to talk with all of the involved students to resolve the situation once the offended student was ready to talk (MAH00048). It is important to note that all three teachers not only allowed necessary classroom time for these discussions, but they all prioritized classroom time for the sake of talking through problems and issues that arise.

The teachers privilege problem-solving as a key element of Sunrise Community School, as a major tenet of their teaching philosophy and closely link it to student agency. Ms. Gwen contrasts an emphasis on problem-solving with an emphasis on rote memorization by stating,

In my class, I have a lot of kids with learning differences or who have a lot of stuff,

confidence issues [and I]…say, "It's okay that you can't memorize, that you don't know

your multiplication table. Can you figure out what it is? Then that's fine. It's more

important that you can problem solve and communicate and be a leader" (Interview,

8/19/20).

Ms. Jennifer and Ms. Linda continue this narrative of the importance of problem-solving, link it

to student agency, and situate it within the students' play. Ms. Jennifer describes the process of

trial and error used by the students when they were painting a piece of furniture for their

classroom that they had decided was needed for organizing their school materials:

…we came up with this idea together as a class, and then I decided it's our idea, they can

decorate it too, so we'll paint it. We did this two times, because the first [time] we painted

it, it was the wrong paint for the surface of this furniture, but I still was like, "Let's paint

it. It's not going to stick, but let's keep painting." They were just totally in it, and I love

that that's how it is most of the time here, is that when we can actually get into an activity

they are in it, and I don't have to stop them to say, "You know what? We have to go to PE

in two minutes. Put it all away. We've got to go."

And then, like I said, we do have a schedule and we stick to it as best and as much as

we need to, but if they're in it, and there is a ton of learning and benefits going on in this

experience they're having we can keep going, and they did. I remember one girl during

that time she said something about ... I don't want to say it the wrong way, but it was

something along the lines of "Everything that we make is beautiful because it comes from

our hearts and that's what makes it beautiful."

Ms. Jennifer continued her discussion:

125

They had that first experience with the paint and this piece of furniture, and then when they got the paint that was actually going to stick we still had a great time, but they were much more detailed, and they were much more particular about what colors they were using and where they were putting the paint. I guess what I'm trying to say from that experience is that it was still joyful, and it wasn't anything that felt forced, and it wasn't anything that felt so rigid, which I feel like a lot of children are asked to do very structured, rigid things that they don't actually want to do, and I think that's really sad because it seems strange to me that just because they're younger they don't have so much control in doing the things that they enjoy and that they like, especially, when they have so much energy, and they're so interested about the world. There's a lot to explore, and I'm really grateful that I get to experience that with them here, and just through that painting experience I was like we need to do that with everything, so if we're ever going to work with clay we need to just mess around with clay without any agenda, and without needing any end product, just to get used to how it feels and how much force you have to put in to mixing the clay, and kneading it, or anything like that before we actually want to make something with that. (Interview, 8/19/20).

Ms. Jennifer shares another instance of how the "work" of school was situated in the students' authentic concerns during their play, work that has lasting benefits related to student agency (Noddings, 2013; 2005):

Seeing a student I had last year, who I had for two years, get up in a tree for the first time when he had wanted to be in that tree for so long, but he didn't have the upper body strength yet to pull himself there. Some students were helping. We had a really big storm and a bunch of big branches fell. They were like logs, like long branch logs, and they

126

would prop it up against the tree, and they would hold it at the base, and he would try and

climb up there, and he's hanging onto it at one point because he was scared, but he still

wanted to keep going, just needed a little break. Everybody was encouraging him, and

then when he got up there I had not seen his face light up like that except for when he

was in that tree for that first time. I don't know. It's just being able to be a part of those

experiences with them just fills me up, I guess. He felt so accomplished, and then that

tree was like nothing. He went in that tree as often as he could, if there was a spot in the

tree he was up there (Interview, 8/19/20).

Ms. Linda continues to situate the problem-solving in authentic situations through her students' play by sharing,

Yeah, one of the biggest things is the recess actually. I love it because you see the kids,

especially at the beginning of the year, they're bored and you're just kind of like, "Well,

boredom is the best time for great ideas," and you see just how they develop in their play

and all the problem solving that they have to do either with each other, or even just

figuring out how to... Last year, the kids were making some stick fort and even just

problem solving that where no one's directing them. They're just out there and they're

learning through their play and stuff. I love watching that (Interview, 8/21/20).

When chatting with Ms. Linda's students at lunchtime, I learned that they equate play,

creativity, and inquiry with problem solving. For example, when I asked Clarissa about what was

different about Sunrise Community School, she responded:

I would say that it's really fun and you get to be really creative, and we get an hour of

recess. You have a specific time where we have to be creative, to do the activity. So

it's fun doing that. It's called Inquiry. We get to learn a lot from our experiences when

127

we play outside. Because we get in like problems, and then we figure out ways how to

fix them (episode 2 lunch interview).

When I asked Ione to think of some of the problems that the class has been thinking

about this year, she responded:

Okay, first inquiry like, we did a little internet thing where we, it was called survival.

And camping was like the topic…and we did a website about how to tell kids how to

have fun outside, not in like a controlive (sic) way, but like, you know how some kids,

whenever they go outside, they had no clue what to do. We gave him a few ideas, and

then we made a website for everybody on the planet to see (episode 2 lunch interview).

It is important to note that the students' "inquiry problems" referenced in the above

exchange were rooted in authentic discussions, and their "work" was linked to the broader global

community. The tone used by the students throughout the exchange indicated confidence, a sense

of purpose, and a sense of agency related to problem-solving authentic problems. It is perhaps

through situating problem-solving within authentic contexts as chosen by the students that

teachers at Sunrise Community School most closely approach educating through democracy for

they are nurturing a constructive process of engagement within community (Apple & Beane,

eds., 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 2004) while co-creating a space where students own their

learning experiences, share in decision-making, and respect and celebrate one another's enacting

agency (Dewey, 1916/2004; Apple & Beane, eds., 2007; Mills, 2013).

Considering Multiple Perspectives

Teachers at Sunrise Community School endeavor to create a learning environment where

students are encouraged to consider others' perspectives and to consider alternative narratives.

This perspective-taking is a major component of decision-making when resolving conflict and

building relationships at Sunrise Community School and is modeled by the teachers in their interactions with students and parents.

The teachers consider multiple perspectives when working through issues with the students and their families. When describing how she involves families when certain situations arise during the school day, Ms. Gwen shares,

> So, when situations come up…I'll spend a lot of time either texting the parents, or I'll meet with them in-person and we'll talk over what had happened. I get their perspective, and I will say like, "So, what do you think I could have done differently or what do you think she [their student] needs in this particular situation?" (Interview, 8/19/20).

She recognizes that a parent's perspective gives her more knowledge about a student, helping her to build a stronger relationship with the student. Ms. Gwen describes the benefit of considering a parent's perspective by sharing a time when the parent's perspective helped her to negotiate a conflict that had arisen in the school setting:

> So, to me, I wouldn't have known that if his mom hadn't told me what had happened and helped me understand that he is the way he is in these kind of situations. So, I really see all of that as a partnership where we talk to each other and we share things with each other, so then I have more knowledge, and then I know how to help the kids and interact with them and continue to build my relationship with them (Interview, 8/19/20).

Ms. Linda describes engaging parents and students in dialogue to negotiate a conflict that had arisen between two students and that was affecting the learning of the classroom:

> We had a couple students that were kind of struggling with their friendship and we had to meet with both parents and we worked together to come up with a solution for that conflict…We also met with the girls…We do the restorative justice sort of practices. So

we met with the kids separately and then we brought them together, so that they could share how they were feeling. The girls came up with what they would do to help the situation. Then we also met with the parents too, so that they knew and what their feelings were about it and the next steps for them to do and work on at home (Interview, 8/21/20).

Ms. Jennifer continues this narrative of engaging parents and learning from one another's perspectives by sharing how she approaches working with families to strengthen the learning of her students. She shares the following with families when dialoguing about what would be best practice for their child's learning:

You're working with myself, the professional of early childhood, but I'm not a parent of your child. You know them in that regard, and I know the professional side of it. Let's work together to help ensure your child is growing and developing in ways that's best for them, and if there is an area that they need support in that we could point that out to each other, we can have a conversation about it, when it arises, not just when we have conferences once every semester (Interview, 8/19/20).

The teachers also encourage and model perspective-taking during the regular school day. Ms. Jennifer models a discourse of perspective-taking when negotiating issues that arise among the students. When told, "Jake says that we look stupid…" (episode 18), Ms. Jennifer responded, "Oh, wow. I wonder why he feels like that. I will talk to him about it, Lisa. Thanks for telling me" (episode 18). In this way Ms. Jennifer creates a culture of looking for the reason for the behavior encouraging her students to think about the other's feelings that may have initiated the behavior. She did not qualify his behavior to Lisa even though Lisa may have been operating within more typical social norms of labeling this behavior as "bad." (Hence, the need to tell the

130

teacher.) Earlier in the day when two students had rushed to her side to share that another student wasn't playing by the rules, Ms. Jennifer pointed them to deeper understandings of why the student was acting in a particular way by stating, "Lisa has played soccer a lot less than both of you—she doesn't know all of the same rules" (episode MAH00048). By encouraging her students to take the perspective of the student on whom they are "telling," she was modeling an understanding of the world through others' eyes, to consider the narrative that may be framing the others' understandings of the world. Reflecting upon the social growth she hopes to nurture in her students during interactions at school, Ms. Gwen shared that she reflects upon "at what point do you start to step outside of yourself" and how she encourages her students to do this in social situations (Interview, 11/2/20). Ms. Linda spoke of the challenges that sometimes occur among her students during the circle reflection time, a time when students are asked to hold themselves and one another accountable to the goals they had set during the morning circle time. When asked how she created a sense of community among her students, she shared that she does:

> a lot of like the restorative circle stuff at the beginning. We talk a lot about the questions that we ask and the kids share. We did, like, understanding each other's feelings, especially that perspective taking which I'm going to do more of next week actually because they're having trouble...We're going to talk more about that (Interview, 11/4/20).

Ms. Linda provided an example of how she nurtures perspective-taking during their reflective circle time. When one of the students had inaccurately described his earlier behavior, the other students provided a counter narrative of what had happened. Ms. Linda shared that she spent time in their reflection time "trying to get [him] to see the perspective" of the other

students. And she shared "…in my mind I was trying to stop him from, to stop and think about what others are saying, because I feel he isn't doing that" (Interview, 11/4/20).

The teachers situate dialoguing with parents and students as a means of talking through one another's perspectives, learning from each other's perspectives, and reaching a conclusion that is grounded in understanding how the other feels about the situation. This type of discoursing is indicative of teaching through democracy and leads to transformative practice, practice that gets at the heart of constructing and reconstructing community for the betterment of all of the members (Dewey, 1992/2004; Green, 1989).

Questioning

A discourse of questioning is used at Sunrise Community School to check for understanding; to check needs and feelings of students; and to scaffold instruction. It is important to note that teachers and students sometimes enacted a more democratic questioning stance when working together, while simultaneously enacting more dominant, traditional discourses, and some established and worked towards goals that were aligned to more traditional dominant discourses.

Checking for Understanding

Teachers and students used a discourse of checking for understanding of meaning and checking for understanding of instructions (a discourse that will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion related to "norming" later in the chapter).

Checking for Understanding of Meaning. Checking for understanding took different guises across the three classrooms and was framed by the content and/or type of instruction being enacted. When working with her students on a project of creating headlines and captions, Ms. Gwen asked the following questions to check for understanding and to clarify what the

students were not understanding about the content: *So, do you understand the difference? That makes sense? (using a questioning tone) What's the core of the problem? You want to know the difference between a headline and a caption? Do you know what I mean when I say "obscure"? What do you mean when you say that?* (episode MAH00108). In this way, Ms. Gwen enacted discourses that helped to clarify the concepts being discussed or that helped to clarify meaning between the students and her.

Ms. Linda engaged her students in a discussion related to their inquiry question: how can we protect an endangered species in our area? (episode 27). She began checking for understanding by asking, "What do you already know about this topic?" Ms. Linda pushed her students to share additional insights by continually asking, "What else do we know?" In this way, she prompted her students to go deeper in their thinking allowing significant time for them to discuss and engage with the topic. She further checked their understanding related to the topic by then asking, "What do we need to know about this topic?" (episode 28). And finally, she checked their understanding relative to the research process by asking, "What are some ways that we can figure out our answer?" (episode 29). She continually used the pronoun "we" evidencing a shared responsibility, a shared knowledge, a shared sense of agency around the discussion related to protecting endangered species.

Ms. Jennifer tended to focus her checks for understanding and meaning on the students' social-emotional well-being as well as on their more immediate needs for help with various tasks. For example, when students complained about another student's response related to the rules when they were playing together (episode MAH00048), Ms. Jennifer refocused the discussion to "we're just going to see what's in Lisa's bucket", and "was she told all those rules?" thus, drawing their attention to understanding a possible reason for the student's reaction

to them. When a student asked for help, Ms. Jennifer checked what the student knew and/or had tried by stating, "Let me see how you tried to, and then I can see how to help" (episode 12 Nature Journal), thus checking the student's understanding and supporting the student's sense of agency. It is important to note that her students were primarily engaged in free exploration and problem-solving authentic issues that arose during their play and during their engagement time of creating settings (homes) for their stuffed animals. Their "work" was primarily self-directed.

Checking for Understanding of Instructions. Lessons at Sunrise Community School were primarily discussion and/or activity based with a limited number of "assignments" that are more typically associated with school—for example reading textbooks and answering comprehension questions; therefore, the giving and receiving of instructions was often enacted in a more wholistic, purposeful manner. However, a continuum between traditional, normative enactments and goals of giving and receiving of instructions and democratic enactments and goals existed within this discourse. This particular prevalent discourse will be discussed in detail later in the chapter relative to "norming."

Checking Needs and Feelings

Both Ms. Gwen and Ms. Jennifer used questioning to support the social-emotional learning of their students by checking their needs throughout the school day as warranted by particular situations and interactions. When a student expressed frustration during the completion of an assignment at "not being able to draw," Ms. Gwen prompted her to go deeper into her feelings by asking, "How are you feeling right now about your drawing?" and "So what are you frustrated about?" and "Are you actually upset?" (episode MAH00106).

Ms. Jennifer routinely connected her discussions with students to what they needed—the

needs that grew out of who they are and what they were feeling. The following table (4.2) lists *in*

vivo statements that provide evidence of this emphases:

Table 4.1
Questioning Discourses Supporting Social Emotional Learning

- *But when he's ready, and he comes out, can we be sure to invite him to play to show him we care?*
- *Forester and Jake, is there something going on?*
- *Would you like to talk?*
- *So I wanted to check first, would you like to talk about that so we can help you feel better and understand the game?*
- *So would you like to talk right now about it or do you want some space first?*
- *Oh, wow! I wonder why he feels like that?*
- *What's in Lisa's bucket?*
- *So do you want to talk or to have space?*
- *So, I talked to the other people and said, "When you're done can you give Len a turn?"*
- *So I wanted to check first, would you like to talk about that so we can help you feel better?*
- *So, would you like to talk right now about it or would you like some space first?*
- *Space? Okay, so when you're ready, can you come and find me?*
- *Does she know the rules?*
- *Okay, was she told all those rules at the beginning?*

It is important to note that the above-mentioned exchanges were prompted by the students

themselves. They brought issues and/or students' needs to Ms. Jennifer's attention, and she

responded with the questions listed above. Ms. Jennifer's students acted autonomously

throughout the day, choosing their activities, choosing their interactions, and would come to her

for support when they felt it was needed and/or warranted.

Scaffolding Instruction

All three teachers used a questioning framework as an instructional strategy alternatively

leading students to articulate their own understandings; to frame prescribed social outcomes

determined by the teacher (to be discussed in greater detail in the later discussion related to

"norming,"); or to design instruction to make connections to nature and/or to other meanings constructed during play and prior lessons that would inform their current work. The teachers' use of questioning as an instructional strategy in the classroom supported a culture of democratic discourse even when used to move students towards more prescribed outcomes by the teachers. It is important to note that for all three teachers, the questions asked were the "instruction." They did not elaborate with additional text and/or references—the students' responses to their questions were the bulk of the "instructional" time.

When Ms. Linda enacted a questioning discourse to discuss the students' understanding relative to endangered species in the local area, she guided the students to articulating their own understandings of the topic by enacting a series of questions rather than by telling the students information about the endangered species in their area. She began by posing a question: how can we protect an endangered species in our area? She then asked, "What do you already know about this topic?" She spent considerable time allowing students to continue to discuss the topic by repeatedly asking, "What else do we know?" She then moved them deeper into her "lesson" by asking, "What do we need to know about this topic?" And she completed the questioning by asking, "What are some ways that we can figure out our answer?" She did not add to or correct their responses (episode 27).

Ms. Gwen used questions to scaffold instruction relative to prescribed social and/or instructional outcomes which she had previously articulated. When discussing the students' planning of their projects, she linked their failure to understand the instructions and/or goals of the project to their behavior while using a questioning framework to guide the discussion (episode MAH00110). She began linking the students' confusion to what she meant by the term "plan" to their behavior by asking, "So, before I talk to you about that, why do you think you're

confused?" When a student responded, "Probably because we didn't listen," Ms. Gwen then

prompted further discussion by asking, "So, what do you think you could've done differently?"

After further discussion by the students, Ms. Gwen continued linking their questions to their

behavior by asking, "And, if you were confused, instead of walking around the tree, what should

you have done?" And finally, Ms. Gwen linked this conversation to the morning's goal setting

through the following exchange with a student :

> Ms. Gwen: And Madison, what was one of your goals for today?
>
> Madison: Ask for help.
>
> Ms. Gwen: Yes, and why do you think you made that goal?
>
> Madison: Because I don't really ask anyone for help, ever.

Ms. Gwen then used questions to guide the students to name their behavior and to articulate how

she would like for them to handle future similar situations:

> Ms. Gwen: So, what had happened here, then?
>
> Student: Then we just kind of sat here.
>
> Ms. Gwen: Right.
>
> Student: I thought you were doing something else.
>
> Ms. Gwen: Okay, and I understand. That's totally fair. What do you think you could do
>
> next time if you needed my attention, but I looked like I was busy?

Ms. Gwen continued the conversation asking the students to articulate words they could have

used to ask for help, and then circled back to the initial confusion related to what she meant by

planning by stating/asking:

> Ms. Gwen: Yep. Could've done that too. Okay? All right, so let's figure out. So, you're
>
> confused about what I mean when I say make a plan. Am I understanding that correctly?

…Okay. So, the planning part then, is to figure out what you need to actually be doing.

So, what do you think you need to do right now? You need to look through photos, okay?

In this way, Ms. Gwen used a scaffold of questioning to imply and/or to reference already established norms of behavior: listening to her instructions; not walking around a tree (essentially, not being "off-task"); and asking her for help. Madison's goal of "asking for help" could also have been a teacher-articulated/teacher-imposed goal (based on prior conversations)— one that the teacher may have shared as something that Madison needed to address. Thus, Ms. Gwen used a democratic discourse of questioning to lead to more prescribed, normative outcomes of following directions and asking the teacher for help.

Ms. Jennifer designed the day's instruction by considering questions posed to students in prior lessons. She connected the lesson to the children's own explorations and interests. When describing the context of the day's lesson (students creating their own habitats for their individual stuffed animals), she described how she contextualized the prior lesson through scaffolding questions:

> Sometimes when we were learning about chipmunks, and we went on a nature walk, they made their own chipmunk habitat and we practiced: If you were a chipmunk and a predator came, what would you do as a chipmunk, based on what we learned? Or what if you were a chipmunk and another chipmunk approached what would you do? If it was time to hibernate what would you do? (Interview, 11/5/20).

Then, when reviewing the habitats the groups of students created for their own stuffed animals, she used questions to scaffold meaning (e.g., And where's the setting, here? What setting did you make? Anything else you want to tell us about their adventures?) and to draw out individuals to discuss their work in more detail (e.g., *And Lydia, what's your stuffy's adventure?*) (episode 69).

By scaffolding their instruction through questioning, the teachers established a learning environment that nurtured dialogue, an environment where the teachers and students enacted discourses as peers rather than as teacher and student; however, in some instances, the questioning was used to lead students to prescribed answers or to the teacher's way of knowing or doing. Ms. Gwen discusses her reasoning relative to why it is sometimes necessary to scaffold instruction towards prescribed outcomes by stating,

> I feel like, especially working with the older kids…It's like there are blinders, the world gets narrower and narrower like, "I'm interested in video games." …I feel like with the older kids, it's time to say, "Okay. So, you have an idea of the world. So, it's time for me to show you other things that you may not even know of" (Interview, 8/19/20).

In this way, Ms. Gwen gets at the tension that exists between designing instruction that arises solely from the questions generated by students (a seemingly more democratic instructional enactment) and instruction that is designed to lead to intended outcomes, outcomes that may stretch the students' knowledge beyond the questions they may more typically raise, outcomes that may lead to a wider perspective, a wider knowledge of the world (a necessary tenet for developing democratic paradigms). This is the tension between teaching *through* democracy and teaching *for* democracy—a tension that exists for all teachers interested in nurturing democratic education, a tension between emphasizing the process or the outcome, perhaps teaching democracy through undemocratic means to achieve democratic outcomes (Noddings, 2013). Ms. Jennifer describes her perspective of teaching through this tension when describing her process of designing instruction around questions by stating,

> …we [Ms. Jennifer and her students] have a running list of just broad topics of interest, and then we vote on them, and then we have our list of questions that go within each

topic, and then group off those questions in different categories. We did the human body last year because they had tons of questions about specifically scabs, which for some reason it came up. They really wanted to know about scabs and how those form.

She addresses her role in this process by sharing,

…really it's what are you [the student] interested in, and how can I help answer the questions you have about this topic, or enrich this topic for you. Maybe it's not the question, maybe they really like babies, and what can I do to help make that come alive in this classroom for you, or make it so it's a space where you have materials and access to information about babies (Interview, 8/19/20).

Ms. Linda captures the spirit of the teachers at Sunrise Community School when describing her own process of instruction by stating,

I've learned a lot over the years, and also just in life, I think, because I've had to adapt and adjust from moving all the time. I just feel in learning new things, new cultures and all that stuff, I just want kids to learn that way. They just get in and ask questions and find the answers and adapt when things aren't working right. That's big for me too because that happens a lot, I think, knowing that I don't know everything. So there's some things I don't know. I always share with the kids that we're all learning together. Sometimes I'm going to make mistakes. Sometimes things aren't going to work and we're going to have to adapt and adjust to make things right, or to make things better (Interview, 8/21/20).

Adapting, adjusting, broadening horizons, asking questions, finding the answers, adapting, adjusting—all from a perspective of wondering, not knowing, taking risks— making mistakes, making things right, making things better, adapting, adjusting…this is democratic education…this is teaching through democracy…this is constructing and reconstructing

community for the betterment of all its citizens (Biesta, 2019; Dewey, 1992/2004; Green, 1989; King, 1967/2010).

Norming

This tension between the discourses that are seemingly more democratic and those discourses that support more traditional, normative enactments of schooling was evidenced within the prevalent discourses of Sunrise Community School. I have chosen to use the word "norming" to describe the process of discursively enacting more traditional, normative schooling discourses. This word captures discursive moves towards more traditional outcomes, those outcomes that are often associated with dominant schooling discourses around control and teacher-as-leader/decision-maker. Norming, in this sense, can be viewed as conforming to larger social expectations of our prevalent schooling system. It is important to note that teachers sometimes enacted democratic discourses towards more traditional or normative ends in some discussions (e.g., self-reflection and goal setting in established circle times that led to more normative outcomes). It is also important to note that some of the normative discourses used during the school day seemed to be focused on moving the students towards the type of democratic community the teachers were seeking to enculturate among their students. The discourse of norming was evident in discourses of setting goals and self-reflecting; enacting roles; and giving instructions.

Setting Goals and Reflecting on Self

Students and teachers in the (elementary) and (middle school/high school) classes at Sunrise Community School set goals for each day and held one another (and themselves) accountable to those goals at the end of each day through established circle times. While the format of the circle time remained focused on moving the students towards democratic

141

discourses (sharing accountability, discussing outcomes as a group), normative discourses supporting a social efficiency model of education were often used by the students (e.g., *being productive*; *to slow down*; *not interrupting*; *to be aware of my tone*; *to be mindful of my tone*; *to be aware of volume*; *to be more charming*). These normative discourses were primarily focused on outward behaviors rather than more internal, intrinsic motivations (e.g., goals related to caring, being globally minded, their role in nurturing community beyond only how they used their tone).

Enacting Roles

Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School used normative discourses (while negotiating democratic discourses) enacting roles as "teacher" and "student." In episode MAH00106, Eloise enacts normative discourses of assignments as "jobs" and her drawing as "bad" because "[she's] not good at art." She links her frustration to the fact that "the drawing is an important job," one that she feels she has not done well and ascribes her "failure" to not being "good" at art. In response, Ms. Gwen enacts the role of "teacher" (as the authority) telling Eloise "You're not allowed to say, 'I'm not good at art,'" and she tells Eloise, "You're feeling frustrated because it doesn't look the way you want it to…So then that's what you say instead. Try it again." In this way, Ms. Gwen endeavors to move Eloise towards more democratic discourses (away from "I can't" towards potentially agentive discourses) while enacting normative discourses of authority and ascribing emotion to a student. (This particular episode will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter as part of the discussion related to the critical discourse analysis phase of the research.)

When two brothers decided to work together as partners, Ms. Gwen enacted normative discourses while working towards democratic goals of helping them to see each other's

perspectives and helping them to engage productively while working together. Ms. Gwen enacts the role of "teacher" in a normative sense by establishing herself as the decision-maker by stating, "I'm willing to give it a try" when referencing their proposed partnering for the project (episode MAH00111), and by assuming the role of primary speaker as the teacher. She enacts her role of teacher using normative discourses of ascribing actions and ascribing emotions as detailed in the following exchange:

> Ms. Gwen: I think one of the issues that the two of you have is you push his buttons, and then you get angry, and then the two of you…[crosstalk 00:04:06 student interjects] -wait it's my turn to talk…So, if Jim asks you to stop?
>
> Amos: Stop.
>
> Ms. Gwen: Okay. And instead of you like whining at him, you know, or being like, ugh, Amos. You need to just cut to the chase and say, Amos, please stop this because it's bothering me. Okay? Because I think part of what happens is he pushes your buttons, but you are not straightforward with him which then eggs him on. Straight up and say, could you please stop this, this is bothering me. But at the same time, even though he's your younger brother, you don't need to baby him, you don't need to-
>
> Jim: But I don't baby him.
>
> Ms. Gwen: Okay, it's my turn to talk. You don't need to be nagging at him. Right? So if you kind of like push each other's buttons then it becomes [inaudible 00:04:56] So I'm willing for you two to work on it. What are you going to focus on?

Even though the brothers are assuming the role of passive listeners (a more normative "student" stance) throughout much of the exchange, the older brother "pushes back" disagreeing with the identity of "babying" that Ms. Gwen has ascribed to him, a "student" stance that is more

in line with democratic discourses. The final word choice is somewhat negotiated between Ms. Gwen and Jim:

> Ms. Gwen: Okay I'm sorry if you disagree with that. If it's not babying then maybe nagging is a more appropriate word?
>
> Jim: I'm a very controlling person.
>
> Ms. Gwen: Is that more of an appropriate word?
>
> Jim: Yes.
>
> Ms. Gwen: Then I take back that word babying, because you're right, [inaudible 00:05:40] it's more about nagging.

During discussion times with her students (episode 26), Ms. Linda enacted a more normative discursive teacher role when giving instructions (e.g., *we're going to practice-the person who raises their hand is going to speak*) while also providing a justification for the instructions that moved the discourse to a more democratic teacher stance (e.g., *so we're not speaking over each other*). In another instance (episode 27), Ms. Linda stated, "We're not going to make comments about what other people say, because then that doesn't make people feel safe to share." In this way, she moved her students towards more democratic discourses of "not speaking over each other" and "making people feel safe to share" while enacting a more normative teacher role of giving instructions, establishing classroom procedures.

Ms. Jennifer's students enacted normative student roles through discourses of "asking permission" and "telling the teacher." Her students routinely asked permission throughout the day (e.g., *Can we go by that building to get some moss? Can we do something? Can I climb the tree that's in the bushes?*), and they brought concerns about one another's discourses to her attention (e.g., *Jake said that we looked stupid; Lisa won't set down the ball; Everybody else is*

playing other things). When responding to her students' bringing concerns to her attention, she enacted a democratic discourse by modeling how to respond to more normative discourses. For example, she responded, "Oh, wow! I wonder why he feels like that?" when told that "Jake said that we looked stupid" (episode 48), thus moving her students to consider his perspective, to think about the reason for the discourse.

Giving Instructions

And finally, normative discourses were sometimes used when setting parameters for and in discussing the work of the students. When Ms. Gwen discussed the project on which her students were working, she prefaced the instructions by stating, "What I would like for you to do…" and "I want you to write the question and then the answer," thus situating the work of the students within her expectations and chosen outcomes (episode MAH00101). When scaffolding the sharing of their work she instructed her students to "Choose an accomplishment that you want to share; then have a back-up in case that's already been shared; and decide who is going to share it-who's going to share it and what you're going to say." While explicitly telling the students how they will present their work is a more normative discourse, it is important to note that the "accomplishments" which the students would be sharing were situated in democratic discourses of caring for the community garden and reaching collective goals (episode MAH00101).

Both Ms. Linda and Ms. Jennifer set the day's agenda for their students in limited ways (e.g., *so today we're going to continue our investigation of our central question; I think [visiting] the great tree will have to be next week*) while allowing the students to choose the general structure of the time given to each activity and allowing the students to structure the activities as they moved through the day. In other words, Ms. Linda and Ms. Jennifer utilized normative

discourses in limited ways when giving instructions about the day's agenda and primarily

situated the giving of instructions within student choice and agency. When beginning the

discussion relative to the local endangered species, Ms. Linda enacted democratic discourses

when explaining the structure of the discussion by stating, "Okay, so anything you say is

justified, because we're just at the beginning stages, there's no right or wrong answer or

question," while also using more normative discourses (*we're going to practice raising our

hands*) to ensure that turn taking and not making comments about other's statements were

happening (episode 27). During her students' nature journal time, Ms. Jennifer framed the

agenda for the text of the journal writing (describing the weather, asking them to record the

question that they wanted to answer on their nature walk)—a more normative discourse, while

encouraging them to choose their own question, accepting their choice of the amount of time

they wanted to spend on their journal writing, and gently suggesting a structure to their journal

writing (e.g., *I think it would be wise to do at least one drawing*)—all more democratic

discourses (episode 19).

Connections

Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School work to create a learning

environment that supports democratic discoursing—one that is characterized by modeling how to

care for one another; by engaging in open-ended, authentic dialogue; by providing opportunities

to practice caregiving; and by confirming the best in others (Noddings, 2005). By enacting

discourses of affirming, sharing decision-making, and problem-solving, teachers and students

build community situating meaning-making within social processes emphasizing students'

engagement in social problems unique to their experiences (Dewey, 1991/2004). By enacting a

questioning discourse when scaffolding instruction, and by continuously checking one another's

needs and feelings through questioning, teachers and students nurture an environment that is open to renewal, where open-ended solutions are privileged, and where foregone conclusions are discouraged.

The enacted discourses of Sunrise Community School nurture an agentive, participatory democracy—one where community members live democracy when making decisions, co-constructing transformative practices for the good of all its members, a "good" that is defined by the community members (Apple & Beane, 2007; Dewey, 1991/2004). Ultimately, these enacted discourses can create a broad, rather than restrictive, classroom environment that gives community members practice in shaping their world of school, and thus, eventually shaping the world around them (Boyte & Finders, 2016).

However, the teachers and students have been enculturated within hegemonic messages of control and conformity within larger societal discourses (Giroux & McLaren, 1989), and this tension between democratic discourses and hegemonic discourses is evident in their discursive enactments. Even when teachers and students at Sunrise Community School privilege democratic discursive enactments, they sometimes enact more normative discourses of control and conformity to more traditional roles of "teacher" and "student." The students in particular continually situated the teachers as the decision-makers even when teachers endeavored to step away from that particular identity—an identity that will be more fully explored in chapter five.

CHAPTER V: DISRUPTION/MAINTENANCE OF TRADITIONAL DISCOURSES

Because our American schooling system promotes agendas supporting free market competition and individualization, it is likely to promote segregation and inequality making it antithetical to promoting ideals of democracy and freedom; therefore, it is crucial that traditional discourses of this schooling system be disrupted to critique the status quo and to work towards shared goals and a mutually beneficial ideal of "good" for each member of the school community (Apple & Beane, eds., 2007; DuBois, 1986; Fitch & Hulgin, 2018; Freire, 1985, 23rd ed.; Green, 1999; King, 1967/2010; Meens, 2016). If we are to experience a deeper democracy, an authentically democratic discourse in schools must be enacted by educators and student citizens to effectively disrupt governmental policies that marginalize some and privilege others and to enact systemic change as student citizens continually enact democratic discourses as their communities broaden as they age. Disrupting traditional schooling discourses calls for enacting agentive discourses that place the student at the center of the decision-making process and that move beyond hegemonic messages of "schooling" where the transmitting of existing societal norms and preparing children for future jobs is privileged.

Nurturing purposeful knowledge grounded in what is important to the student; supporting communities of practice where shared decision-making and shared construction of knowledge is privileged and where teachers focus on student voice, choice, and participation; and using an inquiry approach across the curricula and classroom engagements create a school environment that can effectively disrupt traditional schooling discourses (Apple & Beane, 2007; Dewey, 1991/2004; Green, 1989; hooks, 1992; Love, 2019; Noddings, 2013). In my first processes of coding, I found that teachers and students were building community through enacting affirming discourses, and through enacting discourses of shared decision-making and problem-solving. I

148

found that they were enacting discourses of considering multiple perspectives and were regularly enacting discourses of questioning in multiple ways. And I found that they were enacting more normative discourses aligned with traditional schooling such as setting goals towards control and conformity and enacting more traditional roles of "teacher" as decision-maker and "student" as follower.

Because I was not only interested in identifying the enacted discourses of participants but in also identifying how their discourses disrupted traditional schooling discourses (or not), I chose to use a process of critical discourse analysis of participants' discourses. Using my initial findings as a guide, I chose two exchanges where building community, considering multiple perspectives, questioning, and norming were evidenced. I then used a process of critical discourse analysis at the micro and macro levels to better understand whether or not the discursive enactments disrupted traditional schooling discourses. (see Appendix A.)

The first episode (episode MAH00048) was taken from Ms. Jennifer's class. In the exchange, Ms. Jennifer helps three of her students to resolve a conflict that had arisen among them during their play. The three students had been playing soccer, and one of the students had held the ball with her hands prompting the other two students to express concern over her not following the rules. Ms. Jennifer engages with the students, leading them to deeper understandings of one another through a process of questioning, encouraging multiple perspectives, and affirming one another's ways of learning.

In the second episode (episode MAH00106), Ms. Gwen discourses with a student who has effectively "shut down" over the student's frustrations related to the work she has been asked to complete. Ms. Gwen endeavors to lead the student to better understandings of the true cause of her frustrations with the required work, and works to lead the student to better understandings of

149

how to handle future frustrations. I found that teachers and students in both classrooms disrupted and maintained traditional school discourses through their discursive enactments.

Disrupting Traditional School Discourses

Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School disrupted traditional school discourses of teacher-centeredness and management/control through enacting discourses that evidenced a student-centeredness; that supported students as decision-makers and problem-solvers; and that encouraged considering the perspective of the other. Both teachers and students supported a student-centeredness by enacting peer identities; focusing on social emotional well-being; and building discourses from student-initiated conversational turns. Student agency was supported by supporting personal responsibility and by supporting students as problem-solvers and resolvers of conflict. And finally, students were encouraged to observe one another, to practice self-observation, and to consider one another's perspectives as a means of resolving conflict.

Student-centered Discursive Enactments

Teachers and students disrupted traditional teacher-directedness, teacher-centeredness by enacting peer identities with one another; by privileging social-emotional discursive enactments; and by building upon student-initiated conversational turns.

Enacting Peer Identities

Teachers and students discoursed an identity of "peer" with one another (even when sometimes operating within a figured world of SCHOOL or TEACHER) as indicated by how they discoursed physical proximity, disagreement, and the importance of one another's opinions or suggestions. Teachers enacted peer identities with their students by physically positioning themselves next to students and at eye level; by engaging in extended conversations built upon

150

the students' conversational turns; by entering the students' world of problems and issues as seen from the perspective of the students; and by treating their concerns as valid and important as evidenced by their questions and observations.

Teachers sat on the same level with students when discoursing. For example, when Forester brought his concern of Lisa's not following the rules to Ms. Jennifer, Ms. Jennifer began responding to Forester while standing, but then she moved to the picnic table and sat at the student's eye level throughout most of the remaining discourse (episode 48 0.00:41.6). When Ms. Gwen saw that Eloise had quit working on her drawing for the assignment, Ms. Gwen squatted down beside Eloise and remained seated beside her throughout the exchange (episode 106 0.00:01.6). Through this positioning during discoursing, the teachers assumed more of a "peer" stance and opened spaces for conversation.

Teachers and students discoursed disagreement as peers with one another. When Ms. Jennifer discoursed Forester's extensive experiences with playing soccer with his Pop-pop, Forester discoursed disagreement (*I have never been to play soccer with Pop-pop* line 30). Ms. Jennifer evaluated his statement citing evidence while leaving room for his statement to remain valid (*No? I've thought I've seen you playing soccer with him a lot of times at the soccer fields* lines 31-33). Forester discoursed a compromise (*But no, I just at soccer practice, I only do it sometimes* lines 34-35) to which Ms. Jennifer discoursed agreement with the compromise (*Okay, sometimes* line 36). When Ms. Gwen prompted Eloise to rephrase her comments related to her assignment (*Okay, what can you say instead* lines 31-32), Eloise chooses not to answer the question and repeated her own opinion in her own phrasing (*It looks bad* line 33). Ms. Gwen continued the discussion from the point Eloise had established (*Why does it look bad* line 34) honoring her (Eloise's) disagreement with the teacher's (Ms. Gwen's) directive. In this way,

teachers respected the discursive enactments of their students by acknowledging their students'

statements, by following the students' discursive moves, in effect discoursing as peers rather

than as the sole decision-makers expecting students to simply follow. In this way, the teachers

and students opened a dialogue as opposed to the teachers shutting down the conversation,

telling the students how they would behave.

In episode 48, students indicate a comfort level with the teacher that is seemingly

indicative of their being able to interact as peers with one another and the teacher. For instance,

in lines 6-7 after Ms. Jennifer asks *Forester and Jake, was there something going on that made*

Lisa respond like that, Jake recounts in lines 9-20 a sequential, unemotional, factual rendering of

the events leading up to the issue seemingly unconcerned about blame being assigned—his tone

and body language indicated that he was comfortable with sharing "what is" without worrying

about consequences of blame or "being in trouble":

Table 5.1			
Micro-Transcription Excerpt: Episode 48			
8	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	Lisa was holding the ball↓	Forester sits down at the table; Jake remains standing Begins message unit using student's name; ends with a downward intonation pattern
9 10	Ms. Jennifer → Jake	Right.↓ With her hands↓	Verbal marker Fast rate of speech, downward intonation ends the message unit

Table Continues

Table Continued

11	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	Yeah |	Message unit signaled by new speaker and ended by short pause
12		and you can only kick↓	Begins after short pause and ends with a downward intonation
13		a+nd she was only taking a break↑	Begins with a drawn out vowel and ends with a raised intonation
14		and <u>you</u> <u>can't</u> <u>hold</u> <u>the</u> <u>ball</u> <u>when</u> <u>you're taking a</u> <u>break</u>↓	Begins with a faster rate of speech, emphasizing can't and ball and break; ends with a downward intonation
IU 3: Suggesting a Different Perspective			
15	Ms. Jennifer → Jake	Okay.|	Okay used as verbal marker. Ended with short pause
16		Was she told all of those rules at the beginning↑	Beginning of message signaled by beginning again after a short pause and ended with a raised intonation similar to a question
17	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	No+	No+ (uses an elongated vowel to signal end of message unit)
18		<u>We only said set it down</u>	
19		<u>over and over,</u>	Uses hand movement in a circular "over and over" expression marking this message unit
20		<u>like 54 times.</u> ↓	Drop in intonation marks end of the message unit

After Jake articulated his own lived experience with soccer (*I play soccer like every day at my house, every after day school I get my ball out of my garage and I kick it around with my grandpa and just kick it and I play* lines 56-61), Ms. Jennifer picks up the conversation where Jake took it, and she brings it back to Lisa's perspective (*Yeah, and I can tell, I can tell that you have a lot of experience with that, and I could be wrong, but I think Lisa doesn't. I don't think she has the same soccer experience as you* lines 62-66). By taking up the conversation where Jake took it, she is modeling respect of the speaker, and she is continuing to ground the conversation in being a peer rather than a teacher, being a facilitator, rather than a teller/director. She is acknowledging that her opinion may be wrong. Throughout the conversation, Ms. Jennifer built her statements from the students' statements, her own word choices supporting the conversation as a peer (e.g., *Right…and you play soccer a lot with your Pop-pop…* lines 34-36). By entering and sustaining the conversation in this way, Ms. Jennifer was able to establish an environment where "blaming" could be removed from the conversation and where the students were better able to move from someone's "being in trouble" to understanding the others' motivations and needs.

Ms. Jennifer considered students' opinions and suggestions as equal to her own as evidenced by Ms. Jennifer's changing the course of the discussion with Lisa because of Jake's suggestion (line 69). As a result of Jake's suggestion, Ms. Jennifer moves the conversation from the original intent (*So let's go talk to her and explain the rules and see if she still wants to play* lines 59-61) to whether she would prefer space first (*Would you like to talk about that so we can help you feel better and understand the game or do you want some space?* Lines 75-78). Ms. Jennifer also involves the boys in the continued resolution of the issue by discoursing that when

Lisa is ready to talk, she will engage them (*Yeah, so when she comes to me, I'll come find both of you* lines 101-103).

Focusing on Social-Emotional Discursive Enactments

Student-centeredness and a teaching-beyond-the-marketplace values of traditional schooling were also supported by teachers and students by their focusing on social-emotional well-being while discoursing. Teachers provided necessary time for the conversations to move towards supporting the social emotional needs of the students (approximately 4 minutes and 22 seconds for episode MAH00048 and approximately 5 minutes and 20 seconds for episode MAH00106), and they privileged social-emotional discursive enactments when discoursing. Ms. Jennifer centers the social-emotional and the importance of meeting individual needs in her teaching philosophy by sharing,

> [I] talk about the difference in us as people with the fact that we are all people, and that we're here to support each other, but that our needs are very different because we're individual people in this group of people that are working together. If I get a cut, I need a Band-Aid. It doesn't mean everybody gets a Band-Aid just because I get one. (Interview 8/19/20).

Ms. Jennifer discusses how enacting a social-emotional discourse throughout the school community is important to the school community by describing how the students and teachers learned one another's love languages as a means of supporting one another (discussed also in chapter 4). She shares,

> Once we identified everybody's top two [love languages] we played a lot of games to practice in remembering, "Hey, Ms. Jennifer's top two are time and touch," or so and so's are acts and gifts, and then we graph those in a few different ways and had the different

graphs around our rooms, so then if somebody was in the peace tent, upset, we could

check their name and see what's a really good way to help them. Because maybe they're

upset, and a hug would feel good to me, but a hug to them right now would not, but

maybe a card, a gift, would feel really, really helpful and beneficial (Interview, 8/19/20).

When Forester discoursed a concern related to rule-following to initiate the conversation recorded in episode MAH0048 (*Ms. Jennifer, Lisa won't set down the ball* lines 1-2), Ms. Jennifer immediately discoursed a narrative related to the social-emotional well-being of the "accused" student by replying *Right, I think she's probably upset about something* (lines 4-5). Ms. Jennifer then scaffolded the conversation towards the social-emotional by discoursing a concern for what had or had not been shared with the student relative to the game (*was she told all of those rules at the beginning* line 16); her lack of experience (*I'm pretty sure, pretty sure she has not played a lot of soccer like both of you* lines 21-23); and her needs (*Lisa needs very clear rules so she knows how to play games* lines 42-43). Ms. Jennifer discoursed the purpose of the discussion as *we're just going to see what's in Lisa's bucket* (line 68), a phrase that relates to social-emotional well-being as used by the students and Ms. Jennifer on a daily basis. Finally, she linked the initial concern of rule-following to the social-emotional by discoursing *so let's go talk to her and explain the rules and see if she still wants to play* (lines 59-61).

When Eloise discoursed a social-emotional concern in episode MAH00106 by shrugging her shoulders, responding inaudibly or not at all, Ms. Gwen discoursed a narrative of social-emotional concern by repeatedly focusing the narrative on the student's feelings (e.g., *yes, so how were you feeling)*. For both teachers, the social-emotional well-being of the student was more important than whether or not he or she was following directions/rules or whether he or she was completing an assignment.

Building upon Student-Initiated Conversational Turns

In more traditional school settings, the dialogue of the classroom is often guided by agendas established by individuals outside of the classroom experience (e.g., school boards, district committees, principals, curricula authors), and the teacher often establishes the flow of the conversation towards goals established by textbook agencies, district mandates, or her own foregone conclusions (Apple & Beane, 2007; Giroux & McLaren, 1989). Within these more traditional settings, the classroom discourse is often structured around the teacher's leading and the student's responding to the teacher's agenda resulting in typical IRE patterns (teacher *i*nitiation, student *r*esponse, teacher *e*valuation) (Bloome, et al, 2008). Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School did not always discourse these more typical IRE patterns, and in some instances they discoursed sustained dialogue that built upon *student*-initiated conversational turns. In episode MAH00106, the IRE pattern indicates a sustained dialogue including student-initiated and teacher-initiated interactional units with multiple instances of responses from both teacher and student. Prior to the teacher's discoursing an evaluative narrative in the following indicated sequence, the IRE pattern indicates a sustained dialogue in which the student ignores teacher-initiated interactional turns choosing to continue the discourse in her own way:

Table 5.2			
Micro-Transcription Excerpt: Episode 106			
8	Ms. Gwen →	Okay so |	Use of verbal marker "okay so"
9	Eloise	<u>what can you say instead of</u>...	Spoken with an increased rate of speed; interrupted by student

Table Continues

Table Continued

10	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	I don't know what to say↓	Said evenly with no specific intonation and/or inflection or emphasis; ended with a downward inflection
11	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay ↓	Use of verbal marker "okay"; downward intonation;
12		So+↑	"So" spoken as drawn-out, upwards inflection—questioning stance taken by the teacher
13		let's focus on your feelings↓|	Begun with "let's"; ended with downward intonation
14		instead of saying a blanket statement that you can't draw↓	Message unit begun with "instead" and ended with a downward intonation
IU 4: Reaffirming Identity			
15	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	I can't draw↓	Begun with "I"; ended with downward intonation
IU 5: Challenging Identity/Checking Feelings			
16	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay |	Throughout exchange, teacher remains squatted in front of student, alternately looking at

Table Continues

17		so here's some things that you could say instead↓	Message unit begins with "so" and ends with a downward intonation;
			student and to the horizon; uses an even emphasis on words; conversational volume; pauses to allow student to respond;
17		so here's some things that you could say instead↓	Message unit begins with "so" and ends with a downward intonation;
18		Instead of saying you can't draw ↑	Message unit begins with "instead" and ends with an upward inflection
19		you can say something like	Message unit begins with you and continues through the suggested words; the teacher provides ending with a downward intonation;
20		"I'm feeling frustrated with my drawing	
21		because it's not turning out	
22		the way I want it to be" ↓	
23		Is that how you're actually feeling↑	Message unit begins with "is" and continues through an upward intonation
24	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▼I don't know ↓	Student moves her head while emphasizing words (nodding somewhat for emphasis); student continues drawing/shading on her paper.

Table Continues

Table Continued

			Message unit ends with a downward intonation
IU 6: Checking Feelings			
25	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay ↓|	Use of verbal marker "okay"
26		then how are you feeling↑	Teacher leans forward and looks her more directly in student's eyes. Message unit ends with an upward intonation
IU 7: Expressing Identity/Acknowledging Identity			
27	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▲ Frustrated.	Student's volume increases; looks directly at teacher; straightens neck; emphasizes the first syllable of the word "frustrated" using vocal tone, volume, and head-nod.
28	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	So what are you frustrated about↑	Spoken with an increased rate of speed; ends with an upward intonation
29 30	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Because | the drawing is an important task↑	Student pauses slightly Student ends message unit with a slightly upward intonation

Table Continues

Table Continued

IU 8: Challenging Identity/Feelings			
31 32	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay ↓ what can you say instead↑	Use of the verbal marker "okay"; Ends with an upward intonation
IU 9: Affirming Identity/Feelings			
33	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	It looks ba+d↓	Repeatedly looking from paper to teacher; increased volume; raises shoulders in a shrugging motion. Uses a drawn out vowel emphasis and ends with a downward intonation
34	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Why does it look bad↓	Ends with a downward intonation
35	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Because it's <u>bad</u> and I can't draw and I'm not good at <u>art</u>↓	Message unit begun with "because" and continues through "art"; Emphasizes "bad" and "art" Student uses left hand to gesture on each word of "and I'm not good at art." Ends with a downward intonation

Table Continues

36	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay↓	Use of verbal marker "okay"
37	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	I'm not good at art↓	Student restates and hunches over, shakes head.

In episode MAH00048, when Ms. Jennifer expressed a student's familiarity with soccer as being a result of his having played soccer with his grandparent, the student challenged Ms. Jennifer's interpretation of his lived experience by countering *I have never been to play soccer with Pop-pop.* Ms. Jennifer then discoursed a questioning perspective grounded in evidence that allowed room for the student's opinion to remain considered even when enacting an evaluative narrative: *No? I've thought I've seen you playing soccer with him a lot of times at the soccer field.* In this way, she respected the direction that the student took the conversation by building on his discourse; and allowed room for his opinion to be correct while providing evidence to justify her evaluation of the discourse. Her questioning tone also allowed room for her opinion to be wrong.

For both episodes, students initiated the teacher/student interactions. Forester initiated the conversation with Ms. Jennifer by expressing a concern that another student was not following the rules (episode MAH00048). Eloise discoursed through body language that she was not going to work on the assignment as given prompting the discoursing between Ms. Gwen and her (episode MAH00106). In this way, the teachers sometimes privileged the conversational turns of the students and sometimes continued the conversation within a framework of the students' intended outcomes. Situating the classroom discourse within a framework of student-initiated and student-sustained dialogue supports student agency and orients the conversation towards the

students' concerns and goals. In this way, community is built addressing students' concerns, thus centering transformative discourses within authentic needs of the classroom community (Dewey, 1916/2004; Green, 1999; hooks, 2003; Love, 2019).

Supporting Agency

Teachers and students disrupted traditional teacher-directed, teacher-centered discourses of control by enacting discourses supportive of agentive discourses. Positioning students as decision-makers and problem-solvers (often positioning them as co-decision makers and co-problem solvers with the teacher) supported a classroom environment where students' decisions and opinions were privileged.

Supporting Personal Responsibility

In her early conversation with Forester and Jake (episode MAH00048), Ms. Jennifer leads them towards understanding the motivations related to their behavior by asking them to articulate their own role in the situation (*Forester and Jake, was there something going on that made Lisa respond like that?* lines 6-8)*.* She could have asked the boys to articulate why they thought Lisa may have responded the way that she did, but by asking "was there something going on…," she led them to consider their own role in the situation. Before she allowed them to make additional judgements about Lisa's actions, she asked them to consider their own. In this way, she supported agency by encouraging them to consider their own responsibility in the situation.

Ms. Jennifer again supports personal responsibility in her conversation with Forester and Jake when, after listening to Jake list the rules of the game, she asked whether those rules had been shared with Lisa (*Was she told all of those rules at the beginning?* lines 19-20). In this way, Ms. Jennifer was shifting the conversation from what Lisa did or did not do (the main issue as

163

seen by the boys at the beginning of the conversation) to what the boys' roles were in the situation. Jake takes ownership for what they did not do and shares what they said (*No. We only said set it down over and over like 54 times.* lines 21-24). However, Ms. Jennifer did privilege social emotional well-being over personal responsibility when Forester enacted an identity of being somewhat responsible and somewhat not responsible at the same time for the situation (*When I see Lisa I will tell her I'm sorry and I didn't do it* lines 71-73). She emphasized that no one was "in trouble" and that they were going to focus on Lisa's social emotional well-being (*Oh, no one's in trouble, Forester, no one's in trouble. We're just going to see what's in Lisa's bucket* lines 74-76).

Supporting Students as Problem Solvers and Decision-Makers

After guiding the boys towards articulating their own roles in Lisa's response, Ms. Jennifer positioned the boys as co-problem solvers with her by using "we" as the subject of the independent clause putting a collective stance on how they were going to next proceed (*Because I am pretty sure we can talk, we're going to talk to Lisa next* lines 25-26). In this way, she continued to disrupt the teacher identity Forester had ascribed to her (within his figured world of "School" and "Teacher") as the arbitrator of rules, as the resolver of conflict, and she focused the conversation on how they would proceed taking Lisa's perspective into account (*I'm pretty sure, pretty sure she has not played a lot of soccer like both of you, so I don't think she knows the same rules as you do lines* 27-31). By positioning herself within the "we," she is removing the idea that the boys have done something wrong for which they need to make amends, and she is moving the conversation towards a "collective conversation" narrative where an understanding of perspectives and motivations can guide how the conflict is resolved.

Ms. Jennifer continues this collective conversation narrative by using "us" as the subject of the clause in lines 67-69 making the conversation with Lisa a collective effort effectively joining the boys as the problem resolvers and positioning them as the "explainer of rules" with her (*So let's go talk to her and explain the rules…*). She is moving the conversation from a tattling situation to one, where as a team, the teacher and students explain together. If Ms. Jennifer had left the statement at "talking to" Lisa and at "explaining the rules," the conflict could have remained unresolved from Lisa's perspective; however, Ms. Jennifer positioned Lisa as a decision-maker, as the "decider" by continuing the statement to include whether or not Lisa would still want to play (*So let's go talk to her and explain the rules and see if she still wants to play* lines 67-69). She continued to position the boys as co-problem solvers (conflict resolvers) effectively moving them away from tattling narratives by including them in the social emotional work of the conflict resolution (*Oh, no one's in trouble, Forester, no one's in trouble. We're just going to see what's in Lisa's bucket* lines 74-76).

The conversation among Ms. Jennifer and her students developed from a tattling narrative (*Ms. Jennifer, Lisa won't set down the ball* lines 1-2) to an emotionally supportive narrative (*Lisa, we came to talk to you about some of your problems with the soccer game, but Jake brought up a good point. He said you might not be ready to talk* lines 78-80) ultimately resulting in Lisa's being offered an opportunity for making a decision grounded in the social emotional realm (*So I wanted to check first—would you like to talk about that so we can help you feel better and understand the game, or do you want some space* lines 82-87). In this way, Ms. Jennifer not only took Jake's suggestion of offering Lisa space to guide/change the course of the conflict resolution, but she positioned Lisa as the "final say" as to whether or not the conflict resolution would continue at that moment or not. After Lisa chose "space," Ms. Jennifer

indicated that Lisa would choose the timing for and would initiate the continuing of the conversation (*Okay, so when you're ready, can you come find me*…lines 95-97). Importantly, Ms. Jennifer extended the morning choice time to accommodate Lisa's need for space (*We have about probably three minutes left that we can do some extra time. We can do like ten minutes if you need some extra time* lines 104-107). She included the boys and Lisa with herself as those who would continue to resolve the conflict (*And then we can talk about it* line 98). Ms. Jennifer pointed at each student and made a circling hand gesture to indicate who she was referencing as "we." A more traditional teacher approach would have positioned the teacher as the subject of the sentences (e.g., *When I think you're ready, I will come and find you, and I will talk with you about what happened*.) The conclusion of the complete exchange evidences a type of resolution (even prior to Lisa's continued discussion) by Jake indicating that Forester and he will help Lisa (*Me and Forester will probably tell Lisa about the rules* line 111). As indicated by the complete exchange, the discourse moved from tattling (relative to the student's not following the rules) to helping that student to better understand the rules. When students enacted identities of problem-solvers, conflict resolvers, and decision-makers, the discourse moved from following rules, checking rules, upholding rules to unpacking motivations and to supporting one another's social emotional well-being. By thanking the boys in line 110, Ms. Jennifer signified the importance of the boys' contribution turning the discourse from tattle-telling to, in essence, thanking them for setting up a scenario where they could talk with Lisa and see how she feels and to help her fill her bucket. Importantly, when students enacted these identities, a discourse that began with the teacher's social capital being "rule enforcer," "arbitrator of rules" (as positioned by the students) ended with the students' social capital being "social emotional well-being" and the teacher being positioned as a co-facilitator/co-decision maker.

Supporting students' agentive discourses supports the real work of the democratic

classroom—helping students to wrestle with the larger existential questions related to the type of

person they will become (Noddings, 2005). Wrestling with the "why" (the motivations) relative

to one another's actions can lead students and teachers to deeper dialogue, dialogue that frames

empathetic commonalities when endeavoring to understand (Noddings, 2005). When teachers

and students engage in agentive discourses within school, students learn ways of engaging with

one another where individual backgrounds and experiences are considered as a means of

understanding and to resolve conflict, not as a means of separateness (Noddings, 2005). And

transformative practices that can lead to the betterment for all of the classroom community's

citizens can be effectively nurtured.

Perspective-taking

Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School disrupted traditional school

discourses of teacher-centeredness and management/control through enacting discourses that

encouraged considering the perspective of the other as well as self-reflection. Using questions to

scaffold the discourse encouraged students to be observers of one another and of themselves and

to then consider the observed perspectives when enacting identities of conflict resolvers and

decision-makers. In this way, students were encouraged to consider the elements that may have

guided the others' discourse as well as to consider their own perspectives and choices made.

Being Observers of One Another and of Selves

By scaffolding discourse through questioning, modeling empathetic and engaged

listening, teachers enacted identities of "peer" and of "active listener" and encouraged students in

observing one another and in self-reflection. In episode MAH00048, Ms. Jennifer responded to

Forester's accusation (*Ms. Jennifer*, *Lisa won't set down the ball* lines 1-3) with a stated

observation (*I think she's probably upset about something* line 5) and followed immediately with a question related to what could have caused Lisa to be upset (*Forester and Jake, was there something going on that made Lisa respond like that* lines 6-8). In this way, Ms. Jennifer was engaging the boys' in critical self-reflection linked to observing Lisa's behavior and possible reasons for her responding the way that she did. After Jake shared what Lisa had done and had contextualized her actions within the rules of the game as understood by Forester and him (lines 9-17), Ms. Jennifer then asked a question to link Jake's comments to Lisa's perspective (*Okay. Was she told all of those rules at the beginning* lines 18-20).

After establishing that Lisa had not been told the rules at the beginning, Ms. Jennifer leads the conversation towards gathering more evidence of Lisa's perspective by articulating the next step in the process of resolving the conflict among the students (*Because I am pretty sure we can talk, we're going to talk to Lisa next* lines 25-26). She further contextualizes the situation by offering her own observations of Lisa's soccer experience and links her observations to the boys' experiences (*I'm pretty sure, pretty sure she has not played a lot of soccer like both of you, so I don't think she knows the same rules as you do* lines 27-31).

Once Jake articulated his own experience compared to Lisa's (*I play soccer like every day at my house* line 56), Ms. Jennifer picks up the conversation where Jake had taken it, and she brings it back once again to Lisa's perspective as she, Ms. Jennifer, understands it (*Yeah, and I can tell, I can tell that you have a lot of experience with that, and I could be wrong, but I think Lisa doesn't. I don't think she has the same soccer experience* lines 62-66). In this way, she modeled respect for Jake's self-reflection while linking it to Lisa's perspective (as Ms. Jennifer understands it to be). Engaging in critical self-reflection specifically for the purpose of

168

measuring how my actions may affect another is a key consideration for a citizen of a healthy democratic community (DuBois, 1986; Green, 1989; King, 1967/2010; Love, 2019).

In episode 106, Ms. Gwen leads Eloise towards self-reflection by asking her to articulate her feelings (*Okay. Are you, How are you feeling right now about your drawing* lines 4-6). After enacting a more traditional teacher identity of "one who tells" and/or "one who problem solves for the students," by providing words for Eloise to use to describe her feelings (e.g., *Here's [sic] some things you could say instead* line 17), Ms. Gwen leads Eloise back to self-reflection (*Is that how you're actually feeling* line 23).

Considering the Other's Perspective

It was not only enough to observe others and to self-reflect, but students were also supported in their work of negotiating new understandings that could come from observing and self-reflecting. When Ms. Jennifer offered a counter-narrative to Forester's claim that he had not played soccer with his Pop-pop (line 38), she did so as a wondering, stating the counter narrative in terms of an opinion rather than as a fact (*I've thought I've seen you playing soccer with him a lot of times at the soccer fields* lines 41-42). Because she stated this in a questioning tone using raised inflections, she allowed space for her opinion to be incorrect leaving the door open for Forester to adjust his perspective based on evidence. If she had said, "That's not true," the conversation would possibly have shut down—the teacher's opinion would have been situated as the "right" opinion or interpretation of the evidence. In this way, she left the door open for both perspectives or opinions to be considered, thus allowing Forester the necessary space to reconsider his opinion in light of evidence. After considering her statement, Forester offered a compromise (*But no, I just at soccer practice, I only do it sometimes* lines 43-44), thus, recognizing the correctness of her opinion offered with evidence. Forester could have stayed

"true" to his perspective and said, "No, I don't play with Pop-pop" as a defensive statement, but because Ms. Jennifer left room for both perspectives, a potentially more accurate interpretation of "never" was made. And in turn, Ms. Jennifer accepted the compromise of "sometimes" acknowledging Forester's perspective (*Okay, sometimes* line 45).

Ms. Jennifer leaves space for considering other evidence and for continuing self-reflection by keeping the conversation in a questioning tone, approaching the conversation as a peer rather than as a "teacher" (*I think what I'm trying to say is…* line 46). She encourages the boys to consider Lisa's experience as contrasted with their own (*…that Lisa has played soccer a lot less than both of you. You've played soccer a lot more, she's only played it a little bit so she doesn't know all of the same rules* lines 47-49). And she then assumes more of a teacher identity by telling them what Lisa needs (*…and Lisa needs very clear rules so she knows how to play games* lines 51-52), but she effectively sets up the discourse for Jake to make connections to his own level of experience (*I play soccer like every day at my house, every after day school*…lines 56-57).

Maintaining Traditional School Discourses

Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School maintained traditional school discourses of teacher-centeredness and management/control through enacting teacher-centered discourses; enacting teacher-as-decision-maker and problem-solver discourses; and positioning assignments or tasks as "jobs" requiring socially acceptable outcomes.

Enacting Teacher-centered Discourses

Both teachers and students enacted teacher-centered discourses by supporting outcomes established by the teachers and by privileging the teachers' perspectives . Even though both episodes began in discourses initiated by students, both teachers moved the discoursing towards

pre-determined outcomes (as determined by the teachers), outcomes that may in themselves have been more disruptive to traditional school discourses but that manipulated the discourse towards the teachers' goals. The privileging of the teacher's perspective in episode MAH00106 led the teacher and the student towards enacting and maintaining more traditional school identities (e.g., teacher as the giver/teller and the student as the receiver/listener). In episode MAH00048, the teacher moved the discourse towards pre-determined interpretations of one particular student's understanding and interactions with the other students.

Supporting Outcomes Established by the Teacher

In episode MAH00106, the teacher guided the conversation towards the social emotional (*How are you feeling right now about your drawing* lines 5-6). When the student persisted enacting an identity of someone who cannot draw, the teacher gave her words to say to lead her away from that identity and to articulate how she (the teacher) believed the student was feeling (*Okay. So here's [sic] some things you could say instead. Instead of saying you can't draw, you can say something like, "I'm feeling frustrated with my drawing because it's not turning out the way I want it to be*" lines 14-22). The teacher guided the discourse towards a more social-emotional outcome by focusing on the crux of the student's issue being gaining control of emotions (lines 101-116) while the student's continued statements remained focused on the crux of the issue being her inability to draw (lines 15, 35, 37 and 86).

The teacher in episode MAH00106 was discoursing an outcome of the student's gaining control of her *feelings* about her drawing skills while the student's desired outcome as discoursed in the exchange is control of her drawing skills. This difference in intended outcomes resulted in an ongoing disconnect between the teacher and the student throughout the exchange. In a more student-centered exchange, the discourse (as guided by the student's stated observations related

to her drawing ability) may have resulted in more agentive discourses where the student's practicing of her drawing skills was encouraged and supported as a means of enacting agency. It is important to note that by focusing on the student's discourse, the exchange could have moved in the direction of how practicing drawing skills could lead to the student's feeling less frustration about her feelings related to her drawing skills.

The teacher's focus on social-emotional outcomes in episode MAH00106 is a disruption to more traditional school discourses; however, by leading the discourse to her intended outcomes (e.g., "control of feelings" being seen as the crux of the problem) the conversation remained in more teacher centered/teacher directed traditional discourses of the teacher's opinion and direction being the most important part of the discourse (as perceived and enacted by the teacher).

Privileging the Teachers' Perspective

Adhering to the teacher's intended social-emotional outcomes in episode MAH00106 led the teacher to making assumptions grounded in her own perspective, thus determining "appropriate" responses for both the teacher and the student (e.g., *Okay, so what can you say instead* line 9; *so here's [sic] some things you could say instead* line 17); *Nope-you're not allowed to say*…lines 38-40). Instead of following and adapting to the students' discursive moves, she led the student towards her (the teacher's) perspective of accepting frustration as a social good worth pursuing (e.g., lines 17-23, 42-44, 50-54, and 56-62). The teacher labeled the student's perspective as "negative self-talk" (e.g., lines 58-60) and endeavored to lead the student away from that perspective towards articulating feelings (feelings as ascribed and articulated by the teacher). While the teacher's endeavoring to move the student away from negative self-talk could be seen as a positive support of a growth mindset, the student seemed to remain within her

constructed identity of a bad artist and seemingly shut down when forced to take on the teacher's perspective.

Throughout the discoursing, the teacher endeavored to lead the student towards separating her (the student's) feelings from her self-ascribed identity—leading her towards stepping outside of the situation, to viewing the situation from outside of her (the student's) own perspective of being bad at art (perspective-taking that can lead towards growth mind-sets), but also requiring her to view her feelings as separate from her self-ascribed identity. While the teacher was endeavoring to move the student away from saying something about who she is as a person (e.g., *I'm bad at art*), to saying something about the work itself (e.g., *I'm frustrated because the work doesn't look the way I want it to*), for the student, her feelings were synonymous with the identity she was enacting of being a bad artist, and she seemingly shut down throughout the exchange when she was repeatedly told an interpretation of the situation from the teacher's perspective. The student remained in a place of "knowing" she is bad at art when measuring her performance against the internal standards she had set for herself for what makes art "good" or "bad," and in this way, she continued to enact an identity of being a poor artist throughout the exchange—there is no evidence that the student chose to enact another identity (changing her perspective) of an empowered, persistent individual by the end of the exchange. She continued to enact discourses that indicated her disengagement from the conversation (e.g., giving one-word responses, shrugging, speaking at inaudible levels, not responding), and she remained focused on the core of the problem being her drawing skills (line 86).

The student's perspective of the issue remained fixed for most of the conversation on the drawing's being an important task (line 30); her inability to accomplish the task because she

"can't draw" and she is "bad at art" (lines 33 and 35 and 37); and her inability or unwillingness to articulate the situation from the teacher's perspective (lines 10, 24, 33, 35-37, 41, 45, 49, 55, 63, 66, 74, 86, 121, 132). The teacher's perspective of the issue remained fixed in how negative self-talk would affect the student's ability to persist and in how the student's naming of her feelings would give her control of the situation. Deficit language was used by both the student and the teacher to frame their perspectives (e.g. *I can't draw* line 15; *I'm not good at art* line 35; *you were in the pit* line 97; *you can't say that about yourself* line 143).

In lines 101-116, an interesting dichotomy remained within the teacher's perspective. On the one hand, she privileged encouraging the student to spend time with her feelings, to recognize them, to prioritize them—all important disruptions of more traditional school discourses of management and control. On the other hand, she seemed to indicate that all of this work related to feelings has an end-goal of controlling emotions, a more traditional view of school behavior. Both the student and the teacher ultimately privileged the teacher's perspective of the situation as evidenced by the teacher's extended articulation of her perspective of the situation (lines 42-54; 56-62; 67-80; 81-86; 87-90; 93-100; 101-116; and 133-139) and the student's parroting of the teacher's perspective by the end of the discourse (lines 120, 123, 129, and 135).

While the teacher in episode MAH00048 did not assume the teacher identity of arbitrator of rules assigned to her by the student who initiated the conversation, she did guide the discourse toward pre-determined interpretations (as interpreted by her) of one of the student's responses to the other children, that student's ability levels, and that student's understanding of rules. When Forester initiated the conversation stating that one of the students (Lisa) would not set down the ball (line 2), the teacher responded with her own interpretation of Lisa's actions/response to

Forester (*I think she's probably upset about something* line 5) and immediately asked what had been happening to make Lisa respond in that way (lines 6-7). The teacher expanded the discourse to include a discussion of her (the teacher's) opinion that Lisa had not played soccer as much as the boys (line 23), how she did not know the rules (line 24, 38-41), and how she needs to know the rules to play games and to listen effectively (lines 42-46). The teacher in episode MAH00048 used the privileging of her perspective to guide the discourse to more democratic outcomes (e.g., using conversation and perspective-taking to resolve conflict), but she began, sustained, and ended the discourse within a framework of her (the teacher's) perspective of the situation (e.g., something had upset Lisa, Lisa's lack of knowledge of the rules had prompted the conflict, they needed to talk with Lisa to see if she still wanted to play) and there was no discussion of Lisa's understanding the situation from the boys' perspective. The teacher's initial assumptions left clarifying questions unanswered (e.g., Why did the teacher immediately assume that something had happened to cause Lisa to be upset? Did Lisa know the rules and choose to hold the ball anyway? Is this why she hung back from talking with the boys and the teacher?). In this way, the teacher supported more traditional discourses of privileging the teacher's perspective or opinion as the correct interpretation of the situation even while discoursing democratic outcomes.

Enacting Teacher-as-Decision-Maker and Problem Solver Discourses

Teachers and students enacted teacher-centered discourses by ascribing decision-maker and problem-solver identities to the teacher. In episode MAH00106, the teacher began the exchange enacting an identity of a co-problem solver with her student sitting down beside her student and using inclusive language (*let us* lines 2, 3, and 13). However, the teacher enacted a more traditional role of "teacher" as decision-maker and problem-solver by not accepting the student's statements (e.g. *Okay. So what can you say instead* line 9) and by telling the student

what to say about her (the student's) feelings (*Instead of saying you can't draw, you can say something like "I'm feeling frustrated with my drawing because it's not turning out the way I want it to be"* lines 18-22). In this way, the teacher ascribed an identity for the student of a "frustrated individual" and told her the reason for her frustration (*…it's not turning out the way [you] want it to be* lines 21-22) effectively choosing an identity for the student to enact and determining the "solution" to the issue. When the student continues to enact an identity of a disengaged individual (answering inaudibly, staring at the ground, looking away), the teacher tells her what to say (*So then that's what you say instead of saying you're not good at drawing* line 47) and instructs her to "try it again" meaning to restate the words that the teacher has given her to verbalize her feelings (line 48). In this way, the teacher was enacting a problem solver identity (verbalizing the solution as she—the teacher—saw the solution) and was enacting a decision-maker identity (telling the student how she—the student—should resolve the problem). By deciding that the student's feelings were a problem, and by telling her how to resolve that problem, the teacher denied the student the opportunity to sit with her feelings, to enact agency in solving the problem, and to accept her feelings as valid. When the student continued to articulate that the core of the problem (as the student saw it) was her drawing skills, the teacher decided for the student that the core of the problem was not her drawing skills, but her feelings (lines 84-90), and the teacher then proceeded to problem-solve for the student on how to successfully deal with her feelings (lines 101-116). The didactic tone used throughout the exchange, the emphasis on the teacher's interpretation of the situation, and the enactment of the teacher's resolution of the "problem" (as defined by the teacher), were discursive enactments that supported more traditional discourses of management, control, and teacher as decision-maker and problem-solver identities.

The teacher's enacting identities of decision-maker and problem-solver seemingly grew

from a place of concern that the student was enacting negative self-talk (lines 58-61) and that this

negative self-talk would result in the student's eventually believing these things about herself

(line 73). Ultimately, the teacher's concern seemed to be rooted in the student's not persisting in

her own future problem solving (line 69). While this concern and the intended teacher outcomes

seem to be supportive of agentive student identity-construction, by doing the work for the

student, the teacher impeded more agentive outcomes. Throughout the exchange, there was a

tension between the teacher's enacting a more traditional teacher identity of telling, of phrasing

the situation in her own words, of giving an "either/or obvious choice for answers" and her

enacting a more democratic teacher identity of teaching towards social emotional learning, and

of taking the time to focus on working through frustrations. The teacher operated within a

figured world of "teacher" as being the individual who "teaches," who moves a student along the

continuum of learning, and who provides ways of solving problems for the student while also

privileging social-emotional well-being. The student's responses situated the teacher within the

more traditional conceptualization of the teacher's word being the "correct" word (as indicated

by her eventually parroting the words given her by the teacher to express her own feelings and

ways of being in this exchange).

For this particular teacher, setting boundaries for the students (while a more teacher-

centered, seemingly less agentive discourse) seemingly serves to help to establish the type of

community of respect that she is trying to model for the students—perhaps a teaching *for*

democracy rather than a teaching *through* democracy. She describes a particular situation in her

classroom when a student went beyond what she interpreted as acceptable behavior by sharing,

177

One of my students, he just got into this thing with a friend of his and he just took it

overboard. So, I had to stop him and I was like, "You can't. You need to stop do[ing]

whatever ..." whatever he was doing at the time. "Your friend had asked you to stop and

either you didn't hear him or you chose not to hear him, but you need to stop. You cannot

do that" (Interview, 8/19/20).

But it is important to note that she then centered the situation within a social-emotional

framework, privileging the importance of the social-emotional, by sharing that the student's

mother spoke with her about the reprimand, shared the motivation behind her son's actions, and

that she (the teacher) talked with the student reassuring the student that she was not upset, that

she liked him and cared about him, that his actions had not changed the way she felt about him as

a student (Interview, 8/19/20). This tension between telling and guiding, teaching for democracy

and teaching through democracy, is an ongoing tension for a teacher wanting to nurture

democratic community. The constant construction and reconstruction of what is best for the

community of learners is challenging work and is made more challenging when agency is

considered. A teacher working to build democratic community must continually ask herself if the

discursive enactments of the classroom nurture agency or diminish agency—that is a viable

litmus test when choosing to establish boundaries for students. For if a teacher nurtures agency,

she will choose to co-construct the boundaries with the students.

Positioning Assignments as Jobs with Socially Acceptable Outcomes

Traditional school discourses positioning assignments or tasks as "jobs" requiring

socially acceptable outcomes were maintained through the student's discursive enactments in

episode MAH00106. In episode MAH00106, the student labeled her assignments as "an

important task" (lines 29-30), a task that she believed she could not complete because of her

inability to draw (lines 35, 37). The student measured herself against an internalized belief system of what makes a drawing "good" or "bad," (socially acceptable) and she decided that she is a "bad" artist (lines 35-37). She situated being able to draw and being "good" at art as important commodities for "successfully" completing the assignment. Throughout the exchange, the student remained focused on her drawing skills as being the crux of the problem while the teacher endeavored to lead her towards naming her emotion as a means of gaining an objective perspective. This fixation on the assignment as an important job and her inability to successfully complete her assigned job was at the heart of the disconnect between the teacher's discourse and the student's acceptance of the teacher's discourse. The student valued a well-done drawing. The teacher valued control over feelings of frustration. For the student, her feelings were her identity—she did not separate her feelings of being a "bad" artist from the task at hand. The successful completion of the "job" was significantly tied to her student identity, and she remained fixed on her self-ascribed identity of a bad artist—an identity grounded in her perceived inability to successfully complete the task (*Because it's bad, and I can't draw, and I'm not good at art* lines 35-37). The student seemingly discoursed from a perspective of drawing skills and ability being innate, something one could or could not do. A more agentive discourse where drawing skills and ability were positioned as learnable, as able to be practiced and improved, would have countered the "I-can't-because-I-am-not-able" discourse that the student enacted throughout the exchange.

Connections

Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School are part of a student-centered community where students and teachers often enact peer identities, where social-emotional discursive enactments are privileged, and where classroom discourse is guided and built upon

179

students' discursive enactments. This student-centeredness disrupts traditional schooling discourses where the demands of the market-place, for-profit initiatives masquerading as curricula development, and teacher's agendas often establish the discourse of the classroom (Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Green, 1999).

Further disruption of the status-quo of American schooling is disrupted by the teachers' and students' attention to agency—students are encouraged to take personal responsibility and to take an active role in problem-solving and decision-making. Too often, democratic education is seen to be an educating for democracy, as an enculturation into the historical understandings of a particular form of government rather than as a process of living and being (Green, 1999; Love, 2019; Noddings, 2013). This nurturing of agentive discourses creates a framework whereby student citizens actively engage in democracy—this supports a learning through democracy rather than only learning about or for democracy (enacting democracy at a later date, as an adult citizen) (Biesta, 2006).

Agentive discourses at Sunrise Community School are closely linked to observing and understanding the perspective of the other. Personal responsibility is closely linked to the teachers' and students' considering how their perspective and the perspective of others shapes and impacts their continued discoursing. While the teachers did not necessarily intentionally connect perspective-taking to larger world considerations, their constant perspective-checking throughout the day establishes perspective-taking as a habit, a way of being. It is this sort of habit-forming, democratic practice that can effectively disrupt entrenched ways of being. For if I am habitually considering the other, and the impact my actions have, I am more likely to consider what is best for every member of the community and to disrupt systemic inequities that do not consider the other (Dewey, 1992/2004; King, 1967/2010; Green, 1999).

But teachers and students (and families) at Sunrise Community School are products of the American schooling system through their discursive enactments within the larger society; therefore, tensions exist between their desired democratic outcomes and some of their practices within the school environment. Students sometimes continue to position the teacher as the arbitrator of rules, the resolvers of conflict, the giver of solutions—a discursive positioning that is common in traditional classrooms. The teachers sometimes shape the discourse towards their intended outcomes, a process that can be used to move towards democratic enactments, but that also establishes the teacher as the agentive entity and that often privileges the teacher's perspective. And students sometimes continue to position themselves within the discourse of the market-place—assignments are seen as important tasks with prescribed outcomes that fit or do not fit within socially acceptable standards of accomplishment. In these ways the traditional discourse (often undemocratic) of schools is maintained.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

Because Sunrise Community School was founded to nurture democratic practices within an educational setting, I was interested in identifying the discourses that were being used by teachers and students during the regular school day. I was also interested in understanding how the discourses used by the teachers and students disrupted or maintained traditional schooling discourses. Specifically, I was interested in determining how the discourses being used aligned (or not) with my definition of democratic education as an educating *through* democracy, recognizing it as a constructive process of engagement within community (Apple & Beane, eds., 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 2004); as a space where students own their learning experience, share in decision-making, are grounded in a culture of nurture and respect, and enact agency (Dewey, 1916/2004; Apple & Beane, eds., 2007; Mills, 2013); and as a space of engaging student citizens in practices related to social transformation (Apple & Beane, 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 1916/2004; DuBois, 1986; Green, 1999; Knoester, 2012; King, 1967/2010).

Research Question One: Discourses of Sunrise Community School

Teachers and students built their learning community through discourses of affirming, sharing decision-making, problem-solving, and considering multiple perspectives. They enacted discourses of questioning— checking for understanding of meaning and of following directions while also checking needs and feelings— and teachers scaffolded their instruction around questioning. Teachers and students enacted normative discourses, discourses that supported more traditional outcomes often associated with dominant schooling discourses around control and teacher-as-leader/decision-maker.

Building Community

Teachers and students shaped their learning community around discursive enactments of affirming, sharing decision-making, problem-solving, and considering multiple perspectives. Affirming discourses were used to praise work and ideas; to support students' chosen identities while encouraging them to see others' perspectives; and to engage families in the work of supporting students' chosen identities rather than only considering the teachers' perspectives.

Sharing decision-making was evident within their school community as students shaped the curricula by choosing topics for discussion and working within autonomous groups to complete projects as guided by group members. Teachers, students, and families worked together to choose best steps for addressing the needs of members as they arose. Problem-solving discourses were closely linked to discourses of shared decision-making within this school community. Often, the decisions to be made were grounded in inquiry related to social problems that were unique to their daily experiences and were negotiated through conversation (Dewey, 1991/2004). Students' "problems" authentically arose during their work and play and were negotiated as needed. Families were often included in the problem-solving process.

Undergirding these discourses related to building community (affirming, sharing decision-making and problem-solving) is a discourse of perspective-taking. This is the thread that makes a cohesive whole of building community at Sunrise Community School as teachers, students, and families engage in sharing perspectives, shaping decisions based on shared perspectives, and constructing identities in response to shared decision-making and problem-solving in community (Dewey, 1916/2004; Apple & Beane, 2007; Mills, 2013).

Questioning

Teachers at Sunrise Community School enacted questioning discourses. Teachers used questioning to check for students' understanding of meaning and to check for their understanding of directions. And they scaffolded their instruction through questioning. It is important to note that the questions were most often the instruction—additional texts were not typically used, and the "instruction" fluctuated and was shaped by the students' responses to the questions asked.

Norming

Indicative of the complexity related to educating through democracy are the norming discourses enacted by teachers and students at Sunrise Community School. When students set goals in the morning reflection time and then reflected on the completion of those goals at the end of the day, they often set the goals and measured the goals using more traditional, normative discourses related to behavior (e.g., *being productive*; *to slow down*; *not interrupting*; *to be aware of my tone*; *to be mindful of my tone*; *to be aware of volume*; *to be more charming*). Students often situated the teachers as the decision-makers, and teachers sometimes moved students towards their (the teachers') intended outcomes and sometimes imposed particular identities on the students while questioning towards intended outcomes.

Research Question Two: Disrupting-Maintaining Traditional Schooling Discourses

Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School disrupt and maintain traditional schooling discourses. Their discursive enactments of affirming, sharing decision-making, problem-solving and considering others' perspectives are an enacting of democracy, enacting a constructive engagement within community (Apple & Beane, 2007; Biesta, 2006; Dewey, 2004). They are creating a space where students own their learning experience, share in decision-making, are grounded in a culture of nurture and respect, and enact agency (Dewey, 1916/2004;

184

Apple & Beane, 2007; Mills, 2013). They are moving towards educating through democracy going beyond simply enacting random, sporadic democratic discourses.

Their discursive enactments of affirming disrupt traditional schooling discourses. Praising ideas and work, supporting individual's perspectives while encouraging them to consider multiple perspectives, and engaging families in a holistic approach to the work of supporting students' identities and perspectives is using democracy to do the work of school or educating through democracy. It is supporting classroom spaces where students, teachers, and families enact creating and doing with shared purposes and shared meanings—important components for creating democratic community that can effectively nurture transformative practices (Dewey, 1916/2004; Green, 1999).

Sharing decision-making within community nurtures agency as defined by Boyte and Flinders (2016) as "the capacity of individuals to act with others in diverse and open environments to shape the world around us" (130). Within their school community students shape the curricula by choosing topics for discussion and working within autonomous groups to complete projects as guided by group members. Teachers, students, and families work together to choose best steps for addressing the needs of members as they arise. In this way, through the enactment of shared decision-making, teachers and students and families of Sunrise Community School continuously construct and reconstruct what is best for the community. They do not only discourse how to make decisions about future concerns and issues—they engage in decision-making about current daily concerns and issues that arise within their school family. Community members at Sunrise Community School negotiate a balance in their decision-making between individual needs and concerns and the concerns of the broader community. In this way, they continuously construct and reconstruct what is best for members leaving space for the

transformative practices that can lead to deeper levels of understanding of democracy, democracy defined as the continuous construction and reconstruction of what is best for each member of the community (Dewey, 1992/2004; Dubois, 1986; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Green, 1989; King, 1968/2010). Time and space for communicating during the decision-making process are privileged within this school community effectively linking individuality and social community through communication (Dewey, 1991/2004). Considering the perspective of others supports the other's construction of a chosen identity within a discursive exchange and, therefore, may also begin supporting what may be best for that individual within the community.

Scaffolding instruction around questioning is also evidence of educating through democracy. Building on the students' responses often led the resulting discussion in flexible ways towards what was of importance to the students. This type of flexible discussion can lead towards more critical considerations; however, the conversations often were directed by the teachers to outcomes established by the teachers. This represents the complexity of educating through democracy.

Although teachers and students enact discourses that disrupt traditional schooling discourses, they also maintain such discourses through normative enactments. Even though they enact more democratic discourses (e.g., helping students to see from another's perspective), by questioning towards their own prescribed outcomes, the teachers support a more traditional perspective of the teacher as decision-maker. Even if the prescribed outcome is democratic and is seen to be for the common good, the process of teaching towards prescribed outcomes can be problematic for educating through democracy and may result in less transformational growth of the community rather than more. For when teaching towards prescribed outcomes, we may still be in danger of educating towards hegemonic outcomes, outcomes that are valued by the

186

dominant culture. And teaching towards prescribed teacher approved outcomes can shape what is of importance to the students, thus shaping their learning towards continued hegemonic messages. The process of checking for understanding of meaning and understanding of directions can also lead towards more hegemonic messaging when shaped by the teachers' prescribed outcomes.

The norming discourses enacted by teachers are sometimes used towards more democratic ends but also used towards more normative, traditional schooling outcomes. Students often situate the teachers as the decision-makers, and teachers sometimes push back against that identity (asking students to consider and to enact decision-making discourses) while also moving students towards their (the teachers') intended outcomes. Teachers sometimes impose particular identities on the students while discoursing towards intended outcomes. While those outcomes are often more closely aligned with educating through democracy (e.g., helping students to see other's perspectives, considering other ways of enacting discourses, encouraging students to enact agentive discourses), the processes used of questioning towards intended outcomes and assigning identities to students are more normative discourses. Sometimes teachers intentionally enact identities of decision-maker justifying those enactments as necessary for moving students towards necessary social goals. Again, this is representative of the complexity of educating through democracy. When teachers and students have been enculturated within a hegemonic social order through more traditional schooling, they may unconsciously "fall back" into those habits even when moving towards intentions of creating a greater good for all community members. Sometimes, the teachers structure discussion through more normative discourses (e.g., leading students to the discussion points the teachers felt were important) but then supported student agency within the discussion (e.g., asking students their thoughts, leading

187

them towards seeing other students' perspectives). It seems that the larger social discourses of teacher as decision-maker, conformity to social mores deemed acceptable, and student as passive listener are often in conflict with more democratic enactments of students as agentive citizens. It is important to note that this tension exists at a school founded to nurture democratic practices— even when seemingly moving towards democratic outcomes, teachers and students sometimes enact more traditional, normative discourses.

Teachers and students disrupt traditional teacher-directedness, teacher-centeredness by enacting peer identities with one another; by privileging social-emotional discursive enactments; and by building upon student-initiated conversational turns. Teachers and students disrupt traditional teacher-directed, teacher-centered discourses of control by enacting agentive discourses. Positioning students as decision-makers and problem-solvers (often positioning them as co-decision makers and co-problem solvers with the teacher) supports a classroom environment where students' decisions and opinions are privileged. And teachers and students at Sunrise Community School disrupt traditional school discourses of teacher-centeredness and management/control through enacting discourses that encourage considering the perspective of the other as well as self-reflection. Using questions to scaffold the discourse encourages students to be observers of one another and of themselves and to then consider the observed perspectives when enacting identities of conflict resolvers and decision-makers. In this way, students are encouraged to consider the elements that may have guided the others' discourse as well as to consider their own perspectives and choices made.

However, indicative of the complexity related to educating through democracy, while teachers and students disrupt traditional schooling discourses, they also maintain traditional schooling discourses of teacher-centeredness and management/control through enacting teacher-

centered discourses; enacting teacher-as-decision-maker and problem-solver discourses; and positioning assignments or tasks as "jobs" requiring socially acceptable outcomes.

Connections

Like Mokkoken (2012), I found that students sometimes enacted more normative discourses to comply with socialization norms, particularly norms they perceived to be the teacher's role; however, my research also revealed that in this school founded to nurture democratic community, transformative discursive enactments occur when teachers push back against identities of "teacher as decision-maker" or "teacher as problem-solver." My research extends Mokkoken's (2012) study also focusing on the processes of identity construction rather than only on the outcomes of constructed identities. In my research, when teachers nurtured agentive discursive enactments, the "normative" language of the classroom moved from top-down, authoritarian discourses to language supporting shared perspectives, thus creating transactional spaces supporting discursive enactments that support democracy—students enacted identities as citizens practicing democracy.

My research also extends Payne's study (2018) of what shapes the preparation of teachers towards more democratic outcomes by providing evidence of the educating through democracy that occurs when teachers and students focus on student voice, choice and participation. In other words, my research provides evidence of the processes and outcomes of teachers endeavoring to enact democratic pedagogies (as defined by Payne), particularly how these democratic pedagogies are co-constructed with their students.

And finally, my research provides an example of how school can be, a discourse that is prevalent in the literature related to democratic education (Apple & Beane, 2007; Dewey, 2004; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Gutmann, 1999; Knoester, 2012; Meier, 2002/2017). While much of

the literature related to democratic education focuses on the structure of school and the needed shared governance among stakeholders, my research provides evidence of how simple (and how complicated) nurturing democracy can be within the smallest discursive enactments between and among students and teachers. Teachers and students can enact identities as democratic citizens within their conversation, regardless of state mandates, federal initiatives, mandated curricula, and other authoritarian measures designed to limit, rather than support, agency. My research moves the discussion of democratic education, to what schools can be, to the level of the social construction of meaning, to the discourse of the classroom, to the transactional space between and among individuals—the space where meaning is made, the space where transformation is possible, the space where democracy is enacted or not. Thus, school must first be a place of conversation, a place where discursive enactments that nurture democracy are encouraged at the most micro-level of discourse.

Educating through Democracy

Educating through democracy as defined by my research is a paying attention to and developing the transactional space, the socially constructed meaning made in relationship. It is acknowledging students as citizens, not as future citizens. And it is a paying attention to the purpose of the conversation, the meaning and messaging of the politics of the moment. When defined in this way, democratic education can happen in any classroom regardless of mandated curricula, mandated federal and state initiatives, or the politics shaping local decision-making at the school board, district, or building level. When educators educate through democratic discursive enactments, tensions will always be evident between those enactments and discursive enactments that support hegemonic messaging of the dominant culture. The process of

endeavoring to enact more democratic discursive enactments is itself a disruption of traditional schooling and is critical to nurturing democracy within a society.

The Importance of the Transactional Space

Educating through democracy occurs within the smallest discursive enactments, the space where the coordination of meaning occurs within interactions, within relationship (Biesta, 2014). For that space is shaped by the context of the moment, by prior learning shaped in relationship, and is inherently agentive (able to be changed as new knowledge is constructed in new situations). It is shaped by the other (particularly by the other's perspective) and is discursively enacted. Therefore, within this understanding of how meaning is socially constructed, educating through democracy is seen not as a recipe to be followed, but as a way of discursively enacting a theoretical understanding that informs the construction of identities of democratic citizens (Quay, 2016). Educating through democracy shapes the community, not within an individualistic paradigm, but within a learning space where the community actively constructs and reconstructs what is best for its citizens within that context within that moment. Thus, a teacher who is interested in educating through democracy will co-construct a learning space with her students where conversation is supported and celebrated; where assumptions are challenged within conversation; where an interest in others' perspectives is nurtured; where a dialogical space is opened to consider "what could be"; and where time and space are allowed for reconstructing previously held opinions and ideas (Gergen, 2015). Teachers and students at Sunrise Community School accomplished this in many ways shaping their days around conversation; supporting discourses that nurtured perspective-taking; and by scaffolding instruction around questions. Within this framing, supporting democracy becomes more than social studies content; it becomes an identity, a discursive enactment of democracy, a way of being in relationship.

The Importance of a Social Constructionist Perspective

Therefore, educating through democracy must be considered, researched, and supported by a social constructionist framing. To do so leads the researcher and/or educator to an understanding of educating *through* democracy rather than *for* democracy, to conceptualizations of democratic education as something that nurtures student citizens rather than treating students as future citizens only. Considering democratic education through a social constructionist lens leads educators to a more agentive positioning—in spite of racist, socially unjust mandates enacted by the dominant culture, a teacher and her students can co-construct a democratic ethos within her classroom community within the smallest discursive enactments. Likewise, if a social constructionist framing is not used when considering democratic education, then inauthentic, flawed conclusions may be reached for seemingly democratic outcomes may be achieved through undemocratic means—the process shaping the outcomes may be ignored. A social constructionist framing enables us to consider the purpose of the enacted discourses, the perspectives underlying that purpose, and the discourses shaping the language of the moment that may or may not lead to democratic enactments within that dialogical space.

A social constructionist framing of democratic education moves us beyond discussions of the importance of student agency, student voice, and democratic pedagogies to the processes of how agency, voice, and democratic pedagogies are discursively enacted and co-constructed, thus moving our discussion from the theoretical to the practical. A social constructionist framing of democratic education shows us that the most micro-level discursive enactment may nurture democracy or not within the transactional space between individuals. And a social constructionist framing of democratic education helps us to better understand how individuals are always co-constructing meaning within community—that an individualistic paradigm is a

mis-understanding of how meaning is made. A social constructionist framing of democratic education requires us to re-evaluate the idea of a "self-made individual" and to call into question a "democracy" founded on self-determination and capitalistic goals that focus on individual success. This framing of democratic education helps us to better understand the discursive enactment of democracy as a constant constructing and reconstructing of the meaning of the common good for all citizens within community. This in turn re-shapes understandings of what school should be. Democratic schools are not places where shared governance and democratic principles are discussed as goals for future citizens, where students are "allowed" voice, or "given agency." A social constructionist framing of democratic education shows us that students are voices, are agents, are citizens and the discursive enactment of voice, agency, and citizenship is the right of every individual within community. Therefore, if we are to push back against systems of repression and systemic injustices, we must reframe democratic education through a social constructionist lens.

Student Citizens

Educating through democracy creates classroom communities where student citizens discursively enact democracy. This should be the purpose of schooling in developing a healthy, sustainable democracy; however, American schooling has instead situated democracy as a content topic instead of a way of being and as a goal for future living instead of a daily enactment. But when students are positioned as future citizens and are treated as non-citizens throughout much of their schooling, disenfranchisement from the larger social community and non-democratic habits of being and thinking result (France, 1998). Unfortunately, many teachers view democratic education as teaching democratic principles "in didactic form—from specific learning objectives to easily measured items on a test" (Noddings, 2013, p. 22); therefore, the

193

authentic discursive enactment of democracy is unknown or ignored within those classrooms and a correct answer on a test relative to democracy means (to many teachers) that their students have mastered an understanding of democracy.

A social constructionist framing of democratic education enables us to frame classroom communities as spaces for enculturating citizens in ways of discoursing democracy. Within these communities, instructional strategies, conversations, and other discursive enactments are critiqued through a lens of authentic inquiry when students are positioned as citizens. In other words, student citizens' authentic issues, problems, and wonderings are treated as the work of school, and classroom community members practice authentically addressing the concerns of the members and have practice in constructing the community for the good of its members. This process of citizen engagement is critical to enculturating democracy and to creating societies that can effectively address social injustices and racist hegemonic messages for the daily practice of sitting with, considering others' identities, positionality, and cares within a critical consideration will do more for furthering a shared sense of community than any didactic teaching and framing of "democratic principles" could ever hope to accomplish.

Situating Purpose in a Democratic Space

Educating through democracy requires the classroom community members to consider and to critique the purpose of the language, the politics framing the discursive enactments of its members. When building a democratic classroom community, the citizens of that classroom space must consider not only what is affirmed, but why it is affirmed; not only what is being questioned, but why it is being questioned; and not only what an individual's perspective may be, but why that perspective has been enacted in that context for that moment and how it may shape the community's understanding. By discussing and critiquing the purpose within a

transactional space, student citizens gain understanding in how to effectively enact democracy for the betterment of all citizens within their community, and they come to better understand their own perspectives and roles in shaping communal transformation. Discursive enactments that remain outside of critique support the status quo and keep school communities entrenched in yesterday's paradigms.

Considering purpose enables classroom community members to enact a spirit of inquiry towards political ends, for purpose undergirds politics—when we purpose we choose, and when we choose, we act politically. A social constructionist framing of this process helps us to see how the smallest discursive enactment is a choosing and, therefore, a political act. Thinking of discursive enactments in this way helps an educator to see the value and high importance of conversation, of nurturing opportunities for student citizens to engage in agentive discourse— discourse that must not only be considered, evaluated and critiqued within the others' perspective, but also within framings of purpose. Nurturing a spirit of inquiry and scaffolding classroom instruction through questioning can lead to critical discursive enactments and can establish normative discourses that support democracy, thus transforming traditional, normative discourses that support conformity to the dominant culture.

Tensions Enacting Democracy

A framing of democratic education through a social constructionist lens leads us to recognize both the simplicity and the complexity of enacting discourses that support democracy within classroom communities. This framing leads us to understand that it is not enough to desire and to teach towards democratic outcomes, and it is not enough to consider what a student citizen should learn about democracy. A social constructionist framing can help us to understand the tensions an educator encounters when having been enculturated in educating *for* democracy

when endeavoring to educate *through* democracy. When we consider democratic education through a social constructionist lens, we acknowledge that an educating through democracy rather than an educating for democracy is necessary. We acknowledge that we are enacting democracy (or not) in the smallest of discursive enactments. This can be encouraging to a teacher who is endeavoring to support criticality within systems of oppression and conformity—this work can be supported through conversation in spite of mandated curricula and federal and state initiatives that are undemocratic; however, it can be overwhelming to consider how to nurture conversation within scripted curricula and within societal expectations of control and conformity, particularly related to mandated testing initiatives and to behavior expectations. Likewise, supporting student citizens in choosing among activities and topics for discussion is a more democratic discursive enactment; however, if the activities and topics are scaffolded towards teachers' outcomes, then educating through democracy is hindered.

A social constructionist framing positions democratic education as the discursive enactment of democracy—a framing that centers the work of school as the co-construction of identities as democratic citizens and away from prescribed outcomes for future citizens. This is tension-filled work within a system of schooling designed to support prescribed outcomes. Educating through democracy engages the teachers and students in co-constructing their learning and moves the focus away from the teacher's outcomes and towards the community's desired outcomes. Teachers who have been enculturated within this prescribed outcomes-based system may rely on "knowing what's best for my students," thus limiting the transformational dialogical potential of discursive enactments among community members.

Limitations of My Research

My findings among participants are supported by the literature related to democratic

education and social constructionism (Creswell, 2005; Woodley, Fagan, & Marshall, 2014);

however, some limitations to my research exist (Creswell, 2005). My data collection occurred

during a school year affected by the Covid pandemic and most of my audio and visual recordings

occurred outside as Sunrise Community School elected to hold class outdoors throughout the

pandemic. Because of natural elements and because of students and teachers wearing masks, a

small number of discursive enactments were rendered inaudible within the audio and video

recordings. (I have indicated those words and/or sentences in the transcripts of each recording.)

While I amassed a large number of audio and video recordings, my data collection occurred

within a small window of time (4 consecutive school days), and thus, provides a limited view of

the discursive enactments of the Sunrise Community School members. My data collection

occurred within a small school that is comprised of three teachers' classrooms; therefore, my

research is limited in number of participants. Additionally, my research occurred in a private

school funded by tuition dollars; thus, my research was limited to students able to afford the cost

of the tuition or who could secure a scholarship to attend the school.

Implications for Practice

My research offers a means of investigating the disruption of the prevalent traditional

schooling system in order to deepen the authentic practice of democracy (Apple & Beane, eds.,

2007; Dewey, 2004; DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985, 23rd ed.; Green, 1999; hooks 1994; Love,

2019; Noddings, 2013; Tampio, 2018; Woodson, 1988). Focusing on the discursive enactments

of teachers and students in classroom settings supports agency of teachers and students by

narrowing the focus from social programs and state and federal initiatives to the meaning being

created in relationship within classroom settings. Specifically, processes of critical discourse analysis provide an effective means of examining social issues and concerns because the many approaches within CDA provide flexibility and a multiplicity of angles from which to view the discursive enactments of participants (Gursel-Bilgin, 2020).

My research provides a means of examining the classroom context, content, and power relationships by considering how they are discursively constructed by teachers and students and provides a means for teachers to examine their own practices in light of how educating through democracy may or may not be supported in their own discursive enactments with students (Britzman, 1991). In this way, educating through democracy becomes a moment-by-moment, discursive-enactment-by-discursive-enactment consideration rather than remaining at the level of theory and state and federal initiatives (which are virtually non-existent relative to authentic practice of educating through democracy). By encouraging teachers to examine their discursive enactments through a process similar to my current research, teachers may become aware of their agency in crafting democratic spaces. They may better understand whether they are positioning students as citizens rather than as only future citizens. And they may become more aware of how the traditional schooling system perpetuates hegemonic messages that promote agendas supporting free market competition and individualization, and are likely to promote segregation and inequality, thus making it antithetical to promoting ideals of democracy and freedom (Apple & Beane, eds., 2007; DuBois, 1986; Fitch & Hulgin, 2018; Freire, 1985; Green, 1999; King, 1968). If teachers are to have time to participate in this type of reflection, professional development in schools will need to change to focus on allowing time and space for teachers to do this type of work.

Implications for Future Research

Examining democratic education through a social constructionist lens is imperative to furthering conversations related to the field of democratic education. This framing within a critical discourse analysis allows the researcher to consider the transactional space where meaning is socially constructed to examine the participants' purposes and possible perspectives that inform their discursive enactments. In this way, the researcher is able to better understand how democratic education (or, as discussed in my research, an educating through democracy) is enacted or not.

Future research should include a replication of my methodology on a larger scale within a public school setting across multiple grade levels and multiple classrooms. This additional research could be beneficial to the field in identifying discursive enactments that more consistently support educating through democracy with a larger number of students and teachers participating. Examining classrooms within a public school setting (particularly in juxtaposition to the research I have conducted with a school founded to nurture democratic education) can be beneficial to the field in identifying potential ways teachers and students are discursively enacting democracy (or not) within schools that may be operating within stronger systems of control and mandated curriculum.

I would also like to focus future research on more closely examining how teachers and students actively participate in dialogue within a critical pedagogy, specifically examining how teachers' discursive enactments may silence or support students' discursive enactments of democracy (Giroux & McLaren, 1986). In other words, I would like to more closely examine how student voice is supported or silenced within a social constructionist framing of educating through democracy within a particular school context. In addition, I would like to focus

continued research related to creating dialogic classrooms, creating classrooms where the entire structure of school is a relational process (Gergen, 2015). This would include researching teachers' and students' relationship building processes, collaborative learning and writing, as well as evaluation processes—all within a social constructionist framing of educating through democracy (Gergen, 2015). This continued research could have practical implications for moving the field forward in thinking about and implementing ways of educating through democracy.

Concluding Thoughts

A social constructionist framing of democratic education helps us to better understand how educating through democracy can occur in the smallest of discursive enactments, thus disrupting traditional schooling discourses. Central to this disruption is the type of dialogical space found at Sunrise Community School. Teachers and students are working together to craft a learning space based on dialogue and shared understandings respecting one another's differences and individual talents (Dewey, 1916/2004; Noddings, 2013). By grounding their instruction in dialogue, teachers and students are approximating Dewey's transactional space, a space where the coordination of meaning occurs through interactions, a space where the process of learning is as important as the content (Biesta, 2014). Believing that meanings formed in dialogue are always subject to the other's interpretation and subsequent discursive enactments (Gergen, 2015), we recognize the construction of these meanings as ever changing, ever fluid as participants' experiences grow and adapt as they share their experiences with others and as larger social and political discourses shape their experiences and subsequent meaning-making. This is the potential of a dialogic classroom—to nurture spaces where students come to understand from the other's perspective, where new meanings are constructed in relationship, and where a

constant construction and reconstruction of the "greater good" ("good" as defined by the community members) for all members of the classroom community occurs (Gergen, 2015). By framing our understanding of democratic education within a social constructionist perspective, we understand that in order to support democracy, schools must become dialogical spaces where there is a free exchange of ideas; where nurturing engaged relationships is a primary focus; where teachers set aside their status to encourage collaboration with and among their students; and where all aspects of the classroom community become collaborative (Gergen, 2015). Even when teachers and students within the examined school community were not discussing issues of social struggle or transformation, they were endeavoring to enculturate students in dialogical habits that support this work.

Framing democratic education within a social constructionist perspective brings us to a point of considering the purpose of school. Reconsidering and re-evaluating the purpose of school is a disruption of traditional schooling, and one that undergirds the founding of Sunrise Community School. School as dialogical spaces where new perspectives, ideas, and ways of being are constantly considered and nurtured or school as the transmitter of already established mores and social constructions—this is what an educator must consider when deciding their own philosophical paradigm. An educator must consider the danger to democracy when the meaning of "common good" is fixed, transmitted from one generation to the next, and supposedly built on an "ideal" that may or may not exist and that may represent systems of oppression and capitalistic frameworks that exploit some and advantage others (DuBois, 1986; Freire, 1985; King, 1967/2010; Love, 2019; Woodson, 1988). But dialogical, transactional school spaces can nurture discursive habits of being that are agentive and transformative, habits that serve student citizens well for today (not only for tomorrow) and that encourage a practicing of democracy in

the smallest of discursive enactments by both teachers and students. I believe these discursive habits supporting educating through democracy must be nurtured by today's educators in order for today's student citizens to effectively enact participatory democracy, a democracy that supports and amplifies marginalized voices; that centers and celebrates diversity; and that names, counters, and ends systemic injustices (hooks, 1994; King, 1967/2019; Love, 2019).

REFERENCES

Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum* (3ʳᵈ ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Apple, M. (2013). *Can education change society*. New York and London: Routledge.

Apple, M. W., & Beane, J. A., Eds. (2007). *Democratic schools: Lessons in powerful education* (2nd ed.) Heinemann.

Bartlett, T. (2012). *Hybrid voices and collaborative change*. London and New York: Routledge.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. New York: Anchor.

Biesta, G. (2006). *Beyond learning: Democratic education for a human future*. London & New York: Routledge.

Biesta, G. & Lawy, R. (2006). From teaching citizenship to learning democracy: Overcoming individualism in research, policy, and practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 36(1), 63-69.

Biesta, G. (2010). This is my truth, tell me yours: Deconstructive pragmatism as a philosophy for education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 42*(7), 710-727. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2008.00422.x

Biesta, G. (2014). Pragmatising the curriculum: bringing knowledge back into the curriculum conversation, but via pragmatism. *The Curriculum Journal, 25*(1), 29-49. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2013.874954

Biesta, G. (2019). What kind of society does the school need: Redefining the democratic work of education in impatient times. *Studies in Philosophy and Education 38*, 657-688.

Bloome, D., Power Carter, S., Morton, Christian B., Otto, S., & Shuart-Faris, N. (2005). *Discourse analysis and the study of classroom languages and literacy events: A micro-ethnographic perspective*. Mahway, New Jersey, London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bloome, D., Power Carter, S., Morton, Madrid, S., Christian B., Otto, S., Shuart-Faris, N., Smith,
M., Goldman, S., & Macbeth, D. (2008). *Discourse analysis in classrooms: Approaches
to language and literacy research.* New York and London: Teachers College Press,
Columbia University.

Boyte, H. & Finders, M. (2016). A liberation of powers: Agency and education for democracy.
Educational Theory 66 (1-2), 127-145.

Britzman, D. (2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. Suny Press.

Bruce, B. (2018). Community as curriculum: Nurturing the ecosystem of education. *Schools:
Studies in Education, 15(1),* 122-139.

Buck, C. & Fisher, B. (2008). Alain Locke, "The Presentation of the Democratic Ideal," in
Christopher Buck and Betty J. Fisher, ed. and intro., "Alain Locke: Four Talks
Redefining Democracy, Education and World Citizenship," *World Order* 38, no. 4
(2008): 23–28.

Buxton, C., Kayumova, S., Allexsaht-Snider, M. (2013). Teacher, researcher and accountability
discourses: Creating space for democratic science teaching practices in middle schools.
Democracy and Education 21(2), 1-10.

Campo, S. (2016). Nurturing democratic education in community schools: the role of leadership.
Kappa Delta Pi Record, 52(4), 168-169.

Cap, P. (2019). Discourse studies: Between social constructionism and linguistics. A critical
overview. *Topics in Linguistics, 20*(2), 1-16.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi,
Singapore, and Washington D.C.: Sage.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage: Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington, D.C., Boston.

Creswell, J. (2005). *Educational research*: *Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Pearson Merrill Prentiss Hall: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Columbus, Ohio.

Cunliffe, A. (2008). Orientations to social constructionism: Relationally responsive social constructionism and its implications for knowledge and learning. *Management Learning, 39*(2), pp. 123-139.

Deweese-Boyd, I. (2015). There are no schools in utopia: John Dewey's democratic education. *Education and Culture 31*(2), 69-80.

Dewey, J. (1991). *How we think*. New York, Prometheus Books.

Dewey, J. (1916/2004). *Democracy and education*. New York, Dover Publications.

Dewey, J. (1927/2008). *John Dewey: Essays, reviews, miscellany, and the public and its problems, Volume 2 1925-1927*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale.

DuBois, W. (1986). *W.E.B DuBois: writings*. (N. Huggins, Ed.). The Library of America.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3rd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.

Fallace, T. (2015). *Race and the origins of progressive education: 1880-1929.* New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Fitch, E. Frank, & Hulgin, K. (2018). Privatizing benefit and socializing cost: Market education

    as rent seeking. *The Urban Review 50,* 773-794.

Flinders, D., & Thorton, J. (2004.). *The curriculum studies reader* (2nd ed.). New York:

    Routledge.

France, A. (1998). Why should we care: Young people, citizenship, and questions of

    responsibility. *Journal of Youth Studies, 1*(1), 97-111.

Freire, P. (1985). *Pedagogy of the oppressed (23rd ed.)* New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, power, and liberation.* Westport,

    Connecticut, London: Bergen and Garvey.

Galbin, A. (2014). An introduction to social constructionism. *Social Research Reports, 26*, 82-

    92.

Gee, J. (2014a). *How to do discourse analysis: A toolkit* (2nd ed.). London and New York:

    Routledge.

Gee, J. (2014b). *An introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method* (4th ed.). London and

    New York: Routledge.

Gee, J. (2015). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (5th ed.). London and

    New York: Routledge.

Gee, J. (2016). Discourse analysis matters: bridging frameworks. *Journal of Multicultural*

    Discourses, 11(4), 343-359.

Gergen, K. (1994). *Realities and relationships: Soundings in social construction*. Harvard

    University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England.

Gergen, K. (2015). *An invitation to social construction* (3rd ed.). Sage: Los Angeles, London,

    New Delhi, Singapore, Washington, D.C., Boston.

Giroux, H., & McLaren, P. (1986). Teacher education and the politics of engagement: The case for democratic schooling. *Harvard Educational Review, 56*(3), 213-238.

Goodlad, J. (1994). *Educational renewal: Better teacher, better schools*. San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gordon, M. (2016). Why should scholars keep coming back to John Dewey? *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48(10),* 1077-1091. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2016.1150800

Green, J.M. (1999). *Deep democracy: Community, diversity, and transformation.* Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield.

Green, J. et al. (2020). Studying the over-time construction of knowledge in educational settings: A microethnographic discourse analysis approach. *Review of Research In Education, 44*, pp. 161-194.

Gursel-Bilgin, G. (2020). Critical discourse analysis: An effective tool for critical peace education informed by Freirean dialogue. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research, 15(2),* 25-40.

Gutmann, A. (1999). *Democratic education* (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hantzopoulos, M. (2015). Sites of liberation or sites of despair: The challenges and possibilities of democratic education in an urban public school in New York City. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 46*(4), 345-362.

Holquist, M. (2002). *Dialogism: Bahktin and his world* (2nd edition). London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. New York, London: Routledge.

hooks, B. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. New York, London: Routledge.

Hopkins, N. (2018). Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, and the school curriculum. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary, and Early Years Education, 46(4),* 433-440. DOI: 10.1080/03004279.2018.1445477

Irwin, J. (2012). *Paulo Freire's philosophy of education: origins, developments, impacts and legacies.* London and New York: Continuum.

Kendi, I. (2017). *Stamped from the beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in America.* Bold Type Books.

Kliebard, H.M. (2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum: 1893-1958* (3rd ed.). New York and London: Routledge.

Kloss, D. (2018). Informality and heterarchy in American progressive education: The peachtown model. *Schools: Studies in Education,* 15(1), 65-85.

King, M. (1968/2010). *Where do we go from here: Chaos or community.* Beacon Press: Boston.

Knecht, D. (2018). Schooling for and with democracy. *Schools: Studies in Education, 15*(1), 9-36. DOI: 138.087.237.178

Knoester, M. (2012). *Democratic education in practice: Inside the mission hill school.* New York and London: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Laursen, R. (2020). Does the combination of professional leadership and learning management systems signal the end of democratic schooling? *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership, 5*(2), 342-374. DOI: 10.30828/real/2020.2.2

Lester, J., Lochmiller, C., & Gabriel, R. (2016). Locating and applying critical discourse analysis within education policy: An introduction. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 24(102),* 1-10.

Lindlof, T.R., & Taylor, B.C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Little, T. & Ellison, K. (2015). *Loving learning: How progressive education can save America's schools.* New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Lortie, D. (2002). *Schoolteacher* (2nd ed.). Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational reform*. Boston: Beacon Press.

McDermott, J. ed. (1981). *The philosophy of John Dewey: Two volumes in one*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Menand, L. (2001). *The metaphysical club: A story of ideas in America.* New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Meens, D. (2016). Democratic education versus Smithian efficiency: Prospects for a Deweyan ideal in the "neoliberal age". *Educational Theory 66* (1-2), 211-226.

Meier, D. & Gasoi, E. (2017). *These schools belong to you and me: Why we can't afford to abandon our public schools*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Meier, D. (2002). *The power of their ideas*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Merriam, S.B., Courtenay, B.C., & Reeves, P.M. (1997). Ego development in the face of death: How being HIV-positive affects movement through Erikson's adult stages of development. *Journal of Adult Development*, *4*(4), 221-235.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved February 11, 2022, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy

Michelli, N., & Keiser, D. (Eds.). (2005). *Teacher education for democracy and social justice.* New York and London: Routledge.

Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2020, 4th ed.). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook.* Sage: Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington D.C., Melbourne.

Mills, D. (2013). Conversations for change: A conversation with Rachel Roberts-director Phoenix Education Trust. What is a democratic education and what is its capacity for learning and social transformation? London. https://www.eudec.org/Interview+on+democratic+education+with+Rachel+Roberts

Mills, H., & Donnelly, A. (2001). *From the ground up: Creating a culture of inquiry.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Mokkoken, A. (2012). Social organization through teacher talk: Subteaching, socialization and the normative use of language in a multilingual primary class. *Linguistics and Education, 23*, 310-322.

Neem, J. (2018). Does the common core further democracy? *Democracy and Education, 26(1),* 1-4. https://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/vol26/iss1/11/

Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*, 2nd ed. Teachers College Press.

Noddings, N. (2013). *Education and democracy in the 21st century*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Payne, K. (2018). Democratic teachers mentoring novice teachers: Enacting democratic practices and pedagogy in teacher education. *Action in Teacher Education, 40(2)*, 133-150. https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2018.1424052

Phillips. N. & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of social construction.* Thousand Oaks, London, and New Delhi: Sage Publications: International Educational and Professional Publisher.

Postman, N., & Weingartner, C. (1969). *Teaching as a subversive activity: A no-holds barred assault on outdated teaching methods-with dramatic and practical proposals on how education can be made relevant to today's world*. New York, NY: Delta.

Quay, J. (2016). Not 'democratic education' but democracy and education: Reconsidering Dewey's oft misunderstood introduction to the philosophy of education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48(10),* 1013-1028. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2016.1174098

Reich, K., Garrison, J., and Neubert, S. (2016). Complexity and reductionism in educational philosophy: John Dewey's critical approach in 'democracy and education' reconsidered. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *48(10*), 997–1012, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2016.1150802

Rogers, R. (2018). *Reclaiming powerful literacies: New horizons for critical discourse analysis*. New York and London: Routledge.

Rogers, R. & Wetzel, M. (2013). Studying agency in literacy teacher education: A layered approach to positive discourse analysis. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 10(1),* 62-92. DOI: 10.1080/15427587.2013.753845

Sim, J. (2017). How ideological differences influence pre-service teachers' understandings of educational success. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *42(9)*, 125-141. http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2017v42n9.8

Soder, R., Goodlad, J. & McMannon, K. (Eds.). (2001). *Developing democratic character in the young.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Souto-Manning, M., & Cheruvu, R. (2016). Challenging and appropriating discourses of power: Listening to and learning from early career early childhood teachers of color. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 49*(1), 9-26.

Tampio, N. (2018). A democratic critique of the common core English language arts (ela) standards. *Democracy and Education 26* (1), 1-7.

Van Dijk, T. ed. (2011). *Discourse studies: a multidisciplinary introduction* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, and Washington, DC: Sage.

Webber, G., & Miller, D. (2016). Progressive pedagogies and teacher education: a review of the literature. *McGill Journal of Education 51(3),* 1061-1079.

West, C. (1999). *The Cornel West reader*. Basic Civitas Books.

Wilson, T. & Carlsen, R. (2016). School marketing as a sorting mechanism: A critical discourse analysis of charter school websites. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *91(1),* 24-46, DOI: 10.1080/0161956X.2016.1119564

Woodley, C., Fagan, S., & Marshall, S. (2014). Wadawurrung dya baap ngobeeyt: Teaching spatial mapping technologies. *Campus-Wide Information Systems, 31(4),* 276-287. DOI 10.1108/CWIS-10-2013-0059

Woodson, C. (1988). *The mis-education of the Negro*. Trenton, N.J. & Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press.

Zhao, G. (2007). Behind the pedagogy: Classroom discourse and the construction of the self. *Teaching Education 18(1),* 1-14. DOI: 10.1080/10476210601151508

APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION

Data Collection and Analysis Timeline, Winter 2020-July 2022

Month	Task	Analysis
January 2020	• Defend proposal • Update IRB • Confirm approval from school board •	
August 2020	• Confirm permissions from individual teachers • Conduct electronic or face-to-face interviews with teachers; audio and video recordings of interviews	• Transcribe interviews • Code transcriptions from interviews • Expand field notes from interviews • Code field notes from interviews
October 2020	• Confirm approval from school board • Obtain signed letters of consent, permission, and assent	• Continue coding transcriptions and field notes from interviews
November 2020	• Conduct classroom observations for one week of sequential days; Audio and video recording of classroom instruction and interactions • Member checks	• Transcribe field notes • Code field notes • Transcribe interviews • Code interviews • Compare categories • Write memos • Peer debriefing • Full time data analysis
December 2020-December 2021	• Peer debriefing	• Full time data analysis • In vivo, process, concept coding • Micro-analysis: transcription • Micro and macro analysis: critical discourse analysis • Writing dissertation
January-June 2022	• Peer debriefing	• Writing and revising dissertation
June 2022	• Dissertation Defense	• Dissertation Defense

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

(These open-ended questions will be asked of each participating teacher during separate sessions. Each individual session with each teacher will be approximately 45-60 minutes in length. The session may be audio and/or video-recorded. It will occur at the convenience of the interviewee and will occur at a location of the interviewee's choice.)

1. What is your teaching background?

2. Why did you choose to be a part of Sunrise Community School?

3. What do you value in your work with students and families? Can you tell me about a time you collaborated with a family or families?

4. What is important to you when you're thinking about curricula? About the learning environment? About working with families? Can you tell me about your process for planning your lessons?

5. What role do stakeholders (teachers, students, families) play in the development of the curricula and the learning environment? Can you tell me about a time you collaborated with a family or families?

6. What role do you have in the community? How does that inform the work you do with Bloom Community School? Can you tell me about a time when your work with the school intersected with your community work or vice versa?

7. What experiences have you had with the school?

APPENDIX C: MICRO-TRANSCRIPTION EPISODE 48

Micro-Transcription of Episode 48 Ms. Jennifer, Jake, Forester, and Lisa

Key: (adapted from Bloome et al, 2008, p. 75)

↑ = rising intonation ↓ = falling intonation <u>Stress</u> = vocal stress ▼ = less volume ▲ = more volume <u>Uttered with increased speed</u> | = short pause … = interruption Vowel+ = elongated vowel *Nonverbal behavior or transcriber comments for clarification purposes in italics*

Line	Speaker	Micro-Transcription	Contextualization Cues
Interactional Unit (IU) 1: Sharing the Issue				
1	Forester → Ms. Jennifer	Ms. Jennifer ↓	Beginning of the message unit marked by student's saying teacher's name and ended with a dropped intonation
2		Lisa won't set down the ball ↓(0:00:23.5)	Said evenly with no specific intonation and/or inflection or emphasis; begun by stating student's name; ended by a dropped intonation
3	Ms. Jennifer → Forester and Jake	It looks like she is no+w ↑ (0:00:27.0)	Teacher slows her sentence using a drawn out, questioning tone on the word "now";
4		Right ↓	Use of verbal marker "right"
5		I <u>think</u> she's probably upset about something↓	Slight emphasis on "think"; ended with a downward intonation

Table Continues

			Ms. Jennifer walking towards the students and sitting down at the picnic table; teacher is sitting, students are standing
IU 2: Unpacking the Issue			
6 7	Ms. Jennifer → Forester and Jake	Forester and Jake↑ was there something going on that made Lisa respond like that?↑	Names used in address; upward intonation Begun while teacher is walking towards students-the end of the message unit is signaled by her sitting down and raising the intonation pattern (associated with a question)
8	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	Lisa was holding the ball↓	Forester sits down at the table; Jake remains standing Begins message unit using student's name; ends with a downward intonation pattern
9 10	Ms. Jennifer → Jake	Right.↓ With her hands↓	Verbal marker Fast rate of speech, downward intonation ends the message unit
11 12 13	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	Yeah | and you can only kick↓ a+nd she was only taking a break↑	Message unit signaled by new speaker and ended by short pause Begins after short pause and ends with a downward intonation Begins with a drawn out vowel and ends

Table Continues

216

			with a raised intonation;
14		and you can't hold the ball when you're taking a break↓	Begins with a faster rate of speech, emphasizing can't and ball and break; ends with a downward intonation
IU 3: Suggesting a Different Perspective			
15	Ms. Jennifer → Jake	Okay.|	Okay used as verbal marker. Ended with short pause
16		Was she told all of those rules at the beginning↑	Beginning of message signaled by beginning again after a short pause and ended with a raised intonation similar to a question
17	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	No+	No+ (uses an elongated vowel to signal end of message unit)
18		We only said set it down	
19		over and over,	Uses hand movement in a circular "over and over" expression marking this message unit
20		like 54 times. ↓	Drop in intonation marks end of the message unit
21	Ms. Jennifer → Jake and Forester	Because I+ am pretty sure we can talk |	Drawn out "I" ; faster rate of speech; short pause marks end of message unit
22		we're going to talk to Lisa next. I'm pretty sure, pretty sure	Continues faster rate of speech; emphasis on Lisa—no pause or break between "…talk to Lisa next" and "Im

			pretty sure, pretty sure"
23		she has not played a lot of soccer like both of you↑,	Slight emphasis on "she"; rising intonation on "like both of you"
24		so I don't think she knows the same rules as you do↓.	Moving back to her opinion, end of message unit signaled by dropped intonation
IU 4: Connecting Boys' Experience with Lisa's Experience			
25	Forester → Ms. Jennifer	I am, I am, so good because |	Sitting down, looking at the camera (seemingly "aware" of the camera);
26		because I already started ↓	Message unit signaled by student's self-assessment; short pause signals end of message unit Stating reason for being good signals message unit; drop in intonation signals end of message unit
27	Ms. Jennifer →	Ri+ght	Drawn out "right" signals message unit
28	Forester	and you play soccer a lot with your Pop-pop and Jake you've been…	Hand gesture open and suggesting the word "and"; increased rate of speech on "you play soccer a lot"; hand gesture towards Jake Interrupted mid-sentence
29	Forester →	unh-unh	Forester [signaling disagreement with]

	Ms. Jennifer		looks directly at camera, interrupts teacher and shakes head "no" marking message unit
30		I have never been to play soccer with Pop-pop↓.	End of message unit signaled by dropped intonation
31	Ms. Jennifer → Forester	No↑	Message unit signaled by raised intonation similar to that associated with a question
32		I've thought I've seen you playing soccer with him a lot of times ↑	Increased rate of speech; rising intonation across message unit; end of message unit signaled by a raised intonation
33		at the soccer fields.↓	This end of message unit signaled by drop in intonation
34	Forester → Ms. Jennifer	But | no | I just at soccer practice |	Looking away from teacher and camera; slowed rate of speech; pauses
35		I only do it sometimes. ↓	Rate of speech increases slightly signaling the beginning of the message unit, and emphasis on "only" and "sometimes"; end of message unit signaled by emphasizing "sometimes" and downward intonation
36	Ms. Jennifer →	Okay sometimes↓	Downward intonation marks end of message unit

Table Continues

Table Continued

	Forester and Jake		
IU 5: Explaining Lisa's Needs			
37	Ms. Jennifer → Forester and Jake	<u>I think what I'm trying to say is</u>	New message unit begun with the phrase "I think" and a faster rate of speech
38		<u>that Lisa has played soccer a lot less than both of you.↓</u>	Continued faster rate of speech; end of message unit signaled by drop in intonation
39		<u>You've played soccer a lot ▲ more</u>↑	Message unit begun with referencing the boys' experience; raised volume, emphasis on "more" and upwards intonation signals end of message unit
40		<u>She's only played it a ▼ little bit</u> ↓	References Lisa to begin new message unit; lowered volume, faster rate of speech; drop in intonation signals end of message unit Using hand signals to indicate "less" (holding thumb and index finger a short distance apart to indicate "less")
41		<u>So she doesn't know all of the same rules and</u> ↓	Faster rate of speech continues; changes to discussing her knowledge of the rules; downward

Table Continues

			intonation signals the end of message unit
42		<u>Lisa</u> <u>needs very clear rules</u>	Emphasis on Lisa and raised thumb pointing in the direction of Lisa signals the beginning of next message unit; faster rate of speech;
43		<u>so she knows how to play games</u>	Reason for Lisa needing clear rules signals next message unit beginning
44		and then she listens <u>great</u>↑	Result of her knowing the rules signals new message unit; emphasis on "great" and raised intonation signal end of message unit
45		But if she doesn't understand it |	Short pause signals end of message unit
46		it's very hard↓	Downward intonation signals end of message unit
IU 6: Connecting to Boys' Experience			
47	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	<u>I play soccer like every day at my house</u>	Jake begins discussing his experience; faster rate of speech
48		<u>every after day school</u> ↓	Use of a chopping hand motion to emphasize "every after day" signals message unit
49		<u>I get my ball out of my garage</u>	A narrating of his experience begins

Table Continues

221

Table Continued

50		and I kick it around with my Grandpa	Linking to his experience with his Grandpa
51		and just kick it ↑	Repeating the phrase signals the beginning of the message unit; A raised intonation signals an end of the message unit
52		and I play↓	A change from kicking, now playing is emphasized and a downward intonation signals the end of the message unit Faster rate of speech used throughout
53	Ms. Jennifer → Jake and Forester	Yeah, and I can tell ↑	Emphasis on "yeah" signals beginning of message unit Emphasis on "tell" and an upwards intonation signal end of message unit
54		I can tell	Repeating phrase and faster rate of speech indicate message unit
55		that you have a lot of experience with that ↓	A lowered/dropped intonation signals end of message unit; slower rate of speech again
56		and I could be wrong ↑	Questioning her own opinion; emphasizing "could be wrong" signals message unit; raised intonation signals end of message unit

Table Continues

57		but I think <u>Li</u>+sa doesn't ↓	Moving to stating her opinion; emphasizing Lisa; signals message unit; dropped intonation signals end of message unit
58		I don't think she has the same soccer experience ↓	Rephrasing for clarity signals message unit; dropped intonation signals end of message unit
IU 7: Checking What's in Lisa's Bucket			
59	Ms. Jennifer → Jake and Forester	So let's go talk to her	Beginning next steps ("let's go talk to her") signals message unit
60		and explain the <u>rules</u>↑|	Reason for talking signals message unit; emphasis on "rules," upwards intonation and a slight pause signal end of message unit
61		and see if she still wants to play↓	Stating Lisa's choice signals message unit; downwards intonation, standing up, picking up notebook and pen and beginning to walk away from picnic table signals end of message unit
62	Forester → Ms. Jennifer	A+nd I know where she's hiding↓	Drawing out the vowel on "and" signals message unit; drop in intonation signals the end of the message unit
63		When I see Lisa |	Forester begins discussing what his next steps are; pause

			indicates end of message unit
64		I will tell her I'm sorry |	Forester uses inflection similar to when making a list; hand gesture-finger raised and dropping it down as he "lists" his first thought; pause indicates end of message unit
65		and I didn't do it ↓	Hand gesture-finger raised and dropping it down as he lists his second thought; drop in intonation signals end of message unit Hesitating in walk; hands widened at hips in an inverted "v" hanging onto his cuffs
66	Ms. Jennifer → Forester	Oh | no one's in trouble Forester ↓	Emphasis on "oh" signals message unit; faster rate of speech; slight drop in intonation signals end of message unit
67		no ones in trouble↑	Repeats thought for emphasis; continues faster rate of speech; rise in intonation signals end of message unit
68		we're just going to see what's in Lisa's bucket↓	Stating the purpose of their discussion signals message unit; drop in intonation signals end of message unit

69	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	Conversation between teacher and Jake inaudible between 00:03:30 and 0:03:26.8	
IU 8: Resolving the Issue			
70	Ms. Jennifer → Lisa	▲<u>Lisa</u>, <u>we came to talk to you</u>	Increased volume, emphasis on Lisa, signals message unit
71		<u>about some of your problems with the soccer game</u>	Sharing what they came to talk about signals message unit; change in subject signals end of message unit
72		but <u>Jake</u> brought up a good point ↓	Emphasizing Jake's point signals message unit; drop in intonation signals end of message unit
73		He said, you might not be ready to talk ↓	Sharing Jake's point signals message unit; drop in intonation signals end of message unit
74		So I wanted to check first ↓	Changing subject signals message unit; drop in intonation signals end of message unit
75		would you like to talk about that ↑	Stating first choice signals message unit; uses raised hand to indicate first choice; rise in intonation signals end of message unit
76		so we can help |	Reason for talking signals message unit; short pause signals end of message unit

77		you feel better and understand the game ↑	What they would be helping her to do signals message unit; raised intonation signals end of message unit
78		Or do you want some space↓	Suggesting other option signals message unit; raising second hand indicating second choice; drop in intonation signals end of message unit
79		So would you like to talk <u>right now</u> about it ↑	Restating first choice indicates message unit; emphasis on "right now" as the first choice; waving fingers of first raised hand indicating first choice; rise in intonation signals end of message unit
80		or do you want some space first ↓	Restating second choice; waving fingers of second raised hand indicating second choice; drop in intonation indicates end of message unit
81	Lisa → Ms. Jennifer	Which one's which ↑	Student referring to teacher's raised hands signals message unit; rise in intonation signals end of message unit
82	Ms. Jennifer → Lisa	Talk about it right now ↑	Raising left hand and wiggling fingers signals message unit (restating choice); rise in intonation signals end of message unit

Table Continued

83		▼ Or space first ↓ [student points at right hand]	Raising right hand and wiggling fingers signals message unit (restating second choice); drop in intonation signals end of message unit
84		Space ↑	Keeping right hand raised in the air indicating the "space" choice signals message unit; rise in intonation signals end of message unit
85	Lisa → Ms. Jennifer	mm-hum	
86	Ms. Jennifer → Lisa	Okay so when you're <u>ready</u>,	Message unit signaled by "okay"; emphasis on "ready" signals end of message unit
87		can you come find me ↑	Stating Lisa's next step signals message unit; rise in intonation signals end of message unit
88		And then we can talk about it↓	Gesturing with hands pointing at student, pointing at self, circling to include the others signals message unit; drop in intonation signals end of message unit
89	Lisa → Ms. Jennifer	It'll probably be [inaudible 00:04:01]	Hand gesture raising hand horizontally indicating length of time available and telling her timeframe signal message unit
90		wa+it↓	Drawing out the verb and a drop in

Table Continues

91		it's not morning choice time↓	Stating the reason for waiting signals the message unit; drop in intonation signals the end of the message unit
			intonation signal the message unit
92	Ms. Jennifer → Lisa	No this is the morning choice time |	"No" and the faster rate of speech signal the message unit; short pause signals the end of the message unit
93		but you know what↑	Raised intonation signals the end of the message unit
94		we have | about | probably three minutes left ↑	Emphasizing "we have" and "about" signals message unit; rise in intonation signals end of message unit
95		that we can do some extra time ↓	Stating that she can have extra time; faster rate of speech (signals message unit); drop in intonation signals end of message unit
96		We can do like 10 minutes if you need some extra time ↓	Stating the time and restating "if you need some extra time" signals the message unit; drop in intonation signals the end of the message unit

Table Continued

97	Lisa → Ms. Jennifer	<u>O</u>kay↓	Lisa is nodding head
98 99	Ms. Jennifer → Lisa, Forester, and Jake	Okay ↓ Thanks ↑ boys ↑	
100	Jake → Ms. Jennifer	<u>Me</u> and Forester will probably tell Lisa about the rules ↓	Emphasis on "me" and stating what they will do signals the message unit; drop in intonation signals the end of the message unit
101 102	Ms. Jennifer → Jake	<u>Yeah</u> ↓ so when she comes to <u>me</u>+	Emphasis on "me"; elongating the vowel on "me" signals the end of the message unit
103		I'll come find both of you↓	Stating what she will do signals the message unit; drop in intonation signals the end of the message unit

Micro-Transcription of Episode 106: Ms. Gwen and Eloise

Key: (adapted from Bloome et al, 2008, p. 75)

↑ = rising intonation ↓ = falling intonation <u>Stress</u> = vocal stress ▼ = less volume ▲ = more volume <u>Uttered with increased speed</u> | = short pause ‖ = longer pause … = interruption Vowel+ = elongated vowel *Nonverbal behavior or transcriber comments for clarification purposes in italics*

Line	Speaker	Micro-Transcription	Contextualization Cues
Interactional Unit 1 (IU 1): Checking Feelings			
1 2 3	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay↓ So let's, let's scoot back↓ let's see	Teacher looking at student, hands in pockets, removing hands from pockets and squatting down across from student; Student seated, hunched over, looking down at ground.
4 5	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Oka+y↑ Are you, <u>How are you feeling right now</u> ↓ |	"Okay" spoken as drawn-out, upwards inflection—questioning stance taken by the teacher Spoken with an increased rate of speed with a downward

Table Continues

Table Continued

			inflection; ended with a slight pause and downward intonation
6		about your drawing↓ ‖	Spoken with a continued increased rate of speed; ended with a downward intonation
IU 2: Expressing Identity			
7	Eloise →Ms. Gwen	▼Inaudible (from Ms. Gwen's comments in line 14 it seems she must have said, "I can't draw.")	Student responding so softly that her comments are inaudible, and she is looking down and away from the teacher
IU 3: Challenging Expressed Identity			
8	Ms. Gwen →	Okay so |	Use of verbal marker "okay so"
9	Eloise	what can you say instead of...	Spoken with an increased rate of speed; interrupted by student
10	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	I don't know what to say↓	Said evenly with no specific intonation and/or inflection or emphasis; ended with a downward inflection
11	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay ↓	Use of verbal marker "okay"; downward intonation
12		So+↑	"So" spoken as drawn-out, upwards

Table Continues

231

			inflection— questioning stance taken by the teacher
13		let's focus on your feelings↓|	Begun with "let's"; ended with downward intonation
14		instead of saying a blanket statement that you can't draw↓	Message unit begun with "instead" and ended with a downward intonation
IU 4: Reaffirming Identity			
15	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	I can't draw↓	Begun with "I"; ended with downward intonation
IU 5: Challenging Identity/Checking Feelings			
16	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay |	Throughout exchange, teacher remains squatted in front of student, alternately looking at student and to the horizon; uses an even emphasis on words; conversational volume; pauses to allow student to respond;
17		so here's some things that you could say instead↓	Message unit begins with "so" and ends with a downward intonation

Table Continued

18		Instead of saying you can't draw ↑	Message unit begins with "instead" and ends with an upward inflection
19		you can say something like	Message unit begins with you and continues through the suggested words the teacher provides ending with a downward intonation
20		"I'm feeling frustrated with my drawing	
21		because it's not turning out	
22		the way I want it to be" ↓	
23		Is that how you're actually feeling↑	Message unit begins with "is" and continues through an upward intonation
24	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▼I don't know ↓	Student moves her head while emphasizing words (nodding somewhat for emphasis); student continues drawing/shading on her paper.

Message unit ends with a downward intonation |
IU 6: Checking Feelings			
25	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay ↓|	Use of verbal marker "okay"
26		then how are you feeling↑	Teacher leans forward and looks her more directly in student's eyes.

Table Continues

			Message unit ends with an upward intonation
IU 7: Expressing Identity/Acknowledging Identity			
27	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▲ Frustrated.	Student's volume increases; looks directly at teacher; straightens neck; emphasizes the first syllable of the word "frustrated" using vocal tone, volume, and head-nod.
28	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	So what are you frustrated about↑	Spoken with an increased rate of speed; ends with an upward intonation
29	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Because |	Student pauses slightly
30		the drawing is an important task↑	Student ends message unit with a slightly upward intonation
IU 8: Challenging Identity/Feelings			
31	Ms. Gwen →	Okay ↓	Use of the verbal marker "okay";
32	Eloise	what can you say instead↑	Ends with an upward intonation
IU 9: Affirming Identity/Feelings			
33	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	It looks ba+d↓	Repeatedly looking from paper to teacher; increased volume; raises shoulders in a shrugging motion.

Table Continues

Table Continued

			Uses a drawn out vowel emphasis and ends with a downward intonation
34	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Why does it look bad↓	Ends with a downward intonation
35	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Because it's <u>bad</u> and I can't draw and I'm not good at <u>art</u>↓	Message unit begun with "because" and continues through "art"; Emphasizes "bad" and "art" Student uses left hand to gesture on each word of "and I'm not good at art." Ends with a downward intonation
36	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay↓	Use of verbal marker "okay"
37	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	I'm not good at art↓	Student restates and hunches over, shakes head. Ends with downward intonation
IU 10: Challenging Identity			
38	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Nope↓ |	Use of downward intonation; slight pause
39		You're not allowed to say	Message unit begins with

Table Continues

40		"I'm not good at art"↓	"you're" and continues through "art" but marked as two separate message units because of the difference between what the teacher is saying and what she is not allowing the student to say When teacher is speaking, student lays head in hand, shaking head, nods head "no."
IU 11: Rejecting the Challenging of Identity			
41	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	No↓	Student interjects; shakes head and hand, rests head on hand.
IU 12: Endeavoring to Separate Feelings from Identity			
42	Ms. Gwen →	Okay↓	Use of verbal marker "okay"
43	Eloise	So let's flip this around↓	Message unit begins with "so" and ends with downward intonation after "around"
44		You're feeling frustrated because it doesn't look the way you want it to↓	Said with an increased rate of speed; ends with downward intonation
45	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▼ [inaudible]	Student is hunched over work, gives a slight shake of

Table Continues

			her head during her response.
46	Ms. Gwen →	Okay↓	Use of verbal marker "okay"
47	Eloise	So then <u>that's</u> what you say instead of saying you're not good at drawing ↓	Begins with "so"; Emphasis on "that's"; ends with downward intonation after "drawing"
48		So+ | <u>try it again</u>↓	Drawn out vowel on "so"; slight pause; said at a faster rate of speed and ends with a downward intonation
49	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▼ [inaudible]	Student alternately looks between her paper and the teacher; she moves her head and body in slight emphasis of her words; looks at the teacher directly.
50	Ms. Gwen →	Okay. |	Use of verbal marker "okay"
51	Eloise	So+ |	Drawn out vowel on "so"; slight pause
52		<u>do you understand the difference between saying</u> |	Said with a faster rate of speed; slight pause
53		"I'm bad at art↑"	Message unit ended with a raised intonation

Table Continued

54		versus | <u>saying that you're frustrated</u>↑	Continued with "versus" and slight pause and ended with an upward intonation
IU 13: Reaffirming Identity and Feelings as Connected			
55	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	no↓	Student shakes head
IU 14: Connecting a Negative Sense of Identity with Negative Self-Talk			
56	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Okay |	Use of verbal marker "okay"; slight pause ends message unit
57		so+ um ‖	Use of elongated vowel; message unit ended with a longer pause
58		When you+ |	Message unit begins with "when"; ends with slight pause
59		<u>when you're saying that I'm bad at art</u> |	Said with increased rate of speed; message unit ends with slight pause
60		you're doing negative <u>self</u>-talk↓	Emphasis on "self"; ends with downward intonation
61		It's like you're putting yourself <u>down</u>↓ ‖	Emphasis on "down"; ends with downward intonation and longer pause

Table Continues

62		Okay↑	Ends with upward intonation
63	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Shrugs shoulders	Student remains in seated hunched position looking at ground
64	Ms. Gwen →	And|	Ends with slight pause
65	Eloise	what do you think would happen if you always tell yourself that <u>over and over again</u>↑	"Over and over" said with increased rate of speed; ends with raised intonation
66	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▼ [inaudible] shrugs	
IU 15: Connecting Negative Self-Talk with Identity and to Perseverance			
67	Ms. Gwen	So|	
68	→ Eloise	um |	
69		Do you <u>think that maybe eventually you'd start to believe that</u>↑	Said with increased rate of speed; emphasis added on "that"; and ends with raised intonation
70	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▼ [inaudible]	
71	Ms. Gwen →	Okay|	Use of verbal marker "okay"
72	Eloise	<u>And if you start to believe that you're really bad at art</u> ‖	Said with increased rated of speed; ends with longer pause
73		<u>would you be willing to try it later</u>↑	Said with continued increased rate of speed and ends

			with upward intonation
74	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Student shrugs [inaudible response]	
75	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	So		Slight pause marks end of message unit
76		The negative <u>self-</u>talk <u>it's li+ke</u>		Emphasis on "self"; said with increased rate of speed; ended with slight pause
77		<u>it's li+ke it's slow+ly putting a</u> <u>chink</u>		Said with an increased rate of speed; emphasis on "chink"; ends with a slight pause
78		in the way you believe about your<u>self</u> and the way you see yourself↓	Emphasis on "self" and ends with a downward intonation; Teacher leaning in to student's space; using right hand to gesture to emphasize the words "you believe about yourself" the way you see yourself
79		Does that make sense↑	Ends with an upwards intonation
80	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Nods in agreement	Looking at teacher directly in eyes
IU 16: Stating the Core of the Problem			

Table Continues

81	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	<u>I know that like you were just like saying it</u> but this is actually a <u>really important part</u>↑ ǀ	Teacher uses chopping hand motion to emphasize the words and an increased rate of speech and shakes head for emphasis; ends with upward intonation and slight pause
82		because then you're going to start to believe <u>tha+t</u>↓	Emphasizes "that"; ends with downward intonation
83		Okay↑	Ends with upward intonation
84		The <u>core</u> of the problem isn't that you are bad at <u>art</u>↑	Emphasizes "core" and art"; ends with an upward intonation
85		What's <u>the core</u> of the problem↓	Emphasizes "the core" and ends with downward intonation
86	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	My dra+wing skills↑	Draws out vowel in "drawing"; ends with an upwards intonation
IU 17: Rejecting Student's Statement of the Core of the Problem			
87	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	No++ you're <u>drawing</u> ↑skills↓	Teacher draws out the words, uses a soft laughing tone and shakes head no.

88	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	[inaudible]	
89	Ms. Gwen	Okay↓	
90	→ Eloise	so the core of the problem is how you were feeling↓	Emphasizes "the core" and "feeling"; ends with a downward intonation

IU 18: Affirming Teacher's Statement of the Problem

91	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Oh |	Uses a slight pause to end message unit
92		yes↓	Uses a downward intonation to end message unit

IU 19: Checking Agreement

93	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Yes↑	Uses an upwards intonation to end message unit
94		So how were you feeling↑	Begins message unit with "so" and ends with upward intonation
95	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Frustrated↓	Uses a downward intonation to end message unit
96	Ms. Gwen	You were feeling angry and frustrated↓	Student adjusts body, puts arm over the back of her chair, waves her paper. Teacher gestures with right hand cupping it into a drawing in motion; continues to gesture the end of phrases with her right hand;
97	→ Eloise	So+ you were in the pit↓	
98		Yes↑	
99		yes↓	
100		Okay↓	

Table Continued

IU 20: Identifying Expressing Feelings as Means of Control			
101	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	So |	
102		Do you see how the <u>core</u> of the problem |	
103		it's coming from a feeling of anger and frustration |	
104		right↓	
105		So if you name that <u>fee+ling</u>↓	
106		then you can recognize how you're <u>fee+ling</u>↓|	
107		and then you can <u>do</u> something about it↓	
108		It gives you control↓	
109		If you say that feeling and you <u>own</u> it ↓	
110		then you can say <u>Okay</u>↓	
111		I am feeling |	
112		<u>I'm in the pit right now</u> feeling <u>frustra</u>+ted and I'm um, I'm um upset..." "<u>but I can take a break and come back</u> to i+t↓	Teacher uses hand gestures to emphasize the phrasing, the word "break" (pushing away with her hand); student alternates between looking at the teacher and drawing on her paper; student takes a deep breath (sighs deeply) when teacher says "so we're going to try this again."
113		Right↑	
114		<u>And that's going to give me more control than saying</u> "Oh| I'm just bad at art↓	
115		" <u>Okay</u>↑	
116		<u>So we're going to try this</u> <u>again</u>. ‖	
IU 21: Telling the Student What to Say			
118	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	I'm glad to see that you're taking a deep brea+th |	Student takes a deep breath; Message unit
119		"I'm feeling frustrated..."↓	

Table Continues

			ended with a slight pause
IU 22: Reluctantly Restating the Teacher's View			
120	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	I'm feeling frustrated ‖	Message unit ended with pause and with student's putting her face in her hands
121		u+gh↓	Drawn-out vowel; message unit ended with a downward intonation
122	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Becau+se ↓	Extended vowel; message unit ended with a downward intonation
123	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	The drawing↑	Student moves her face to the other hand and shakes her head and pauses. Message unit ends with an upward intonation
124	Ms. Gwen →	Okay↓	Use of verbal marker, "Okay"
125	Eloise	So take a moment ⏐	Said with an increased rate of speech; message unit ends with a downward intonation and a slight pause
126		and gather your words ↓	Said with an increased rate of speech; message unit ends with a downward intonation

Table Continues

127	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	[inaudible]	
128	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Because that what↑	Message unit ends with an upward intonation
129	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	The drawing is not like I want it↓	Message unit ends with a downward intonation
IU 23: Accepting the Student's Restatement as the Correct View			
130	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	There you go↓	Message unit ends with a downward intonation
131		So then what can you <u>do</u> if you're feeling frustrated↑	Emphasis on "do"; message unit ends with an upward intonation
IU 24: Not Accepting the Teacher's Perspective as the Correct Perspective			
132	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Shrugs her shoulders	
IU 25: Persisting in Her Perspective as the Correct Perspective			
133	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Do you keep <u>going</u> ↑	Emphasis on "going"; message unit ends with an upwards intonation
134		or do you take a break↓	Message unit ends with a downward intonation
135	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	Take a break↓	Message unit ends with a downward intonation
136	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	So when we were building		Message unit ends with a slight pause

Table Continues

Table Continued

137		when you had all of those divergent-thi+nking <u>challenges</u>↑	Drawn out vowel in "thinking"; emphasis on "challenges"; message unit ends with an upwards intonation
138		Yes | and so what are you going to right now↑	Message unit ends with an upwards intonation
139	Eloise → Ms. Gwen	▼ inaudible	
IU 26: Rejecting Student's Statement of Identity			
140	Ms. Gwen → Eloise	Yes|	Teacher touches student on shoulder; student looks down at paper
141		Okay↑ |	
142		okay↓	
143		so you can't say that about yourself↓	
144		Okay↑	
145		okay↓	

11-29-20 9:30 a.m.

Methodological Journal

Dissertation

Am currently in the process of uploading video files to rev.com for transcription

purposes. I am finding (as I watch the videos) that I am remembering nuances from the data

collection that I might have forgotten without the video/audio recordings.

Yesterday, I had an "AHA" moment when writing an analytic memo for MAH00048: This is an

important episode for possible Critical Discourse Analysis because it explicates how Ms.

Jennifer seemingly leads the students through considering multiple perspectives, how they talk

about "rules," and how she seemingly respects her students' personhood while "correcting"

behavior.

I found this exchange to be quite powerful when filtered through a lens of "democratic

education." Ms. Jennifer is not "telling them" how to be good citizens; she is leading them to

identify and to hopefully consider multiple perspectives; she is linking Lisa's behavior to the

boys' behavior, seemingly helping them to make connections to their own understanding (e.g.

helping them to put themselves in Lisa's position). Helping the boys to see Lisa's perspective is

an important step in nurturing empathy, much-needed for democratic living.

As I'm uploading the videos, I am aware of some challenges of how I structured the

video recordings. Because the video was of children in real school activities (as "real" as I could

possibly imagine), some of my video recordings and audio recordings may seem to be a bit

random; however, I chose to video record/audio record/and type my observations as

authentically as I could remaining true to the structure (or lack of a typical structure) of the

classroom as I could manage. When my video recorder needed to be charged, I switched to audio recording and typing. When I wanted to be sure to capture dialogue in the outdoor space, I often used my phone so that I could get the exact words of the speaker. The outdoor nature of the recordings made one standard type of video recording/audio recording challenging. I endeavored to use the same sorts of recordings across the three classrooms, and I endeavored to capture direct instruction, conversations, play, and student engagement in the same types of recordings across the classrooms.

I am keeping track of the uploaded videos, the transcriptions created from the videos/audio recordings in a systematic way in my written methodological journal, and I am keeping my thoughts and reflections in the electronic version of my methodological journal. I am finding the sheer amount of my data to be a bit overwhelming. My research questions dictate that I record the students and teachers across the entirety of the school days endeavoring to capture the interactions between teacher and students/students and students/and sometimes researcher and students.

In one instance, I had an interesting conversation with Ruth's mother, Reva, and I wish I had had an opportunity to record the conversation. The conversation consisted of Reva asking about what I was seeing—"was it worth it"—was the money and the sacrifices made worth it. (however, I have to be careful—I'm interpreting her tone and question through the lens of my prior interactions with Reva at the point of the school's founding…I need to remain objective to what was actually asked, "Is it worth it?" In the context of the conversation, Reva seemingly was wondering if the sacrifices they have made (financial) have been worth the type of education they are trying to achieve.

I am interested in also following up with the following questions:

- Turnover of students/families
- Benefits as seen through the eyes of the remaining families
- What the teachers believe democratic education to be

I believe these questions are outside the scope of my current study, but I would be interested in continuing the research beyond this particular study.

I am also feeling a bit scattered in my approach right now—

- Uploading audio and video to transcription service
- Getting familiar with Transana software for data analysis
- Writing analytical memos within Transana (and writing memos outside of Transana because of having to be connected to the external hard drive and the large window pane that is required for the video link each time the video is accessed in Transana)
- Remembering to upload the additional analytical memos into Transana
- Tracking progress in my excel data analysis file

Need to devise a system:

- Ensuring that it is in line with chapter 3 of my proposal
- Aligning the system/analytical memos/etc. to my research questions
- Ensuring that my research questions and theoretical framework are running through my data analysis

For now:

- Continue to upload data for transcriptions
- Create a file that is better organized on my computer that pulls everything into one place (from Apple and Windows both)
- Use Transana for everything

Transana:

- Upload episodes (audio and video)
- Upload transcriptions
- Create time stamps within uploaded transcriptions (including a "clean-up" of the transcription from the transcription service)
- Create an analytic memo/note for each transcription that answers "what is the purpose of this episode"

- Create "clips" and "quotes" for analysis purposes within each transcript (these are the data sets that will define my codes)

Devote 2-3 hours each weekday to dissertation.

Devote weekends to longer work on dissertation.

Further research for informing my theoretical framework (based on my data analysis):

- Play-based learning
- Sustained time-on-task of students
- Imaginative play linked to reality