Layered Pedagogies of Instruction and Restorative Justice: A Kindergarten Case Study of Community and Belonging

Erica Steinitz Holyoke
The University of Texas at Austin

Layered Pedagogies of Instruction and Restorative Justice: A Kindergarten Case Study of Community and Belonging

Erica Steinitz Holyoke

Abstract

The current climate of education often results in surveillance of outcomes and accountability in early childhood learning and management, especially in schools serving Black, Indigenous, and Children of Color. Historically, classroom management has been about controlling students, the environment, and ultimately what and how learning takes place. In response, centering restorative justice as a humanizing approach to classroom management is necessary to focus on equity. However, this focus can be filled with tensions and conflicting philosophies against the status quo in schools. Likewise, classroom community practices, including punitive and restorative discipline, are typically looked at separately from academic learning, without consideration of the interconnected pedagogical decisions that undergird experiences for students. Positioning an either/or mentality can result in a dichotomy of what is good and bad in education that obscures the complexities and nuance of teachers' work. This interpretive case study examines intersections of academics and community building to understand a sense of belonging in an early childhood classroom. This study illustrates how one kindergarten community navigated opposing perspectives and pedagogies. Discourse analysis revealed findings of how the class traversed the complexity of languaging to build community in a context self-identified as restorative, while also implementing highly structured literacy curricula, and a mix of discipline philosophies. This study humanizes tensions experienced within the constraints of the current educational system as teachers and young children build towards restorative justice as a way of being.

Keywords: restorative justice, early childhood, community, discipline, classroom management

Schools and scholarship typically address academics and community building separately, ignoring the connection between language, learning, and a sense of belonging (Beach & Beauchemin, 2019; Casey et al., 2013; Comber, 2015; Comber & Woods, 2018). To exacerbate this siloed approach to education, both community-building and academics operate through control and regulation as a means for functioning in school under white-centered norms. Across domains, early childhood education often reiterates deficit orientations toward children and families. This occurs through scripted programs that center whiteness, a focus on conformity and individual achievement (Milner, 2020; Yoon, 2015); and through systems that perpetuate disproportionate discipline and the preschool-to-prison pipeline (Bryan, 2017).

In response, educational scholarship has drawn from Indigenous and First Nation perspectives of restorative justice as a paradigm shift to prioritize a school setting where students are seen, heard, and empowered. Children and adults are accountable members of a dynamic learning community that centers relational ways of being (Winn et al., 2019; Winn, 2013; 2018). It is an ideology that privileges a communal ethos of relationships and healing collectively. While benefits have been examined in research (e.g., Acosta et al, 2016; Winn, 2013; 2018), typically, analysis and implementation of literacy learning, and restorative perspectives of classroom management continue to be explored in isolation. Ideally, restorative justice and other approaches that center community take place in school contexts where humanizing practices of academic teaching also occur (Hambacher, 2018). In these situations, the practices—curricular and behavioral—are in alignment. However, research indicates that schools can be places of contradiction, and the approaches enacted within them do not always align.

Although alignment between instructional and community building practices is ideal, that alignment is often hard to achieve, either because of personal decisions, or the context and mandates of schools, districts, or educational systems. Scholarship often positions

binaries and either/or alternatives for comparison in education. These binaries simplify the complexities of schooling and the muddled nature of traversing learning in a classroom community. Learning is full of tensions and positioning an either/or mentality results in a dichotomy of what is good and bad in education. While there are practices that are harmful to students, this case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) illustrates the ways in which agency can be found in while navigating pedagogies in a context where there was both scripted curricula and choice for children and both punitive and restorative disciplines. Given the increasing presence of policies that are damaging to children through both discipline and academics (Milner, 2020), we must explore the pedagogy and work of teachers and children pushing for new ways of being together. I ask: In what ways does a kindergarten teacher navigate the tensions between traditional classroom practices (i.e. behavior management and scripted curriculum) and more restorative, community-focused pedagogies?

Literature Review

The present study examines restorative justice in early childhood as a proactive measure of community building (Davis, 2019). As grounded in the literature, I present an overview of restorative justice, a connection of restorative justice and literacy research, and conclude with a synthesis of research around scripted curricula in elementary settings.

Restorative Justice: Comprehensive Implementation

Importantly, restorative justice originates from a long, rich history in Indigenous and First Nations communities as an ethos and way of approaching harm, community, and relationships (Ortega et al., 2016; Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015; Vaandering, 2014). When restorative justice is applied in U.S. educational contexts, there is often a discord, as it is conflicted with neoliberal perspectives and school reform. These tensions result in mixed implementation of the purpose of restorative justice, and thus it manifests as an approximation. Research has emphasized a holistic approach in

implementing restorative practices within and across the school community (e.g., Acosta et al., 2016; Cavanagh et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2016; Ingraham et al., 2016; Kehoe et al., 2018; Ortega et al., 2016; Vaandering, 2014). Bevington (2015) highlighted congruence across values, practices, and outcomes in examining the positive impact in understanding the connections of emotional literacies, conflict resolution, and relationship building in a primary context. In this study, success meant a united front across the school community to promote restorative values in which children, families, staff, leaders, and community members were not only active but embraced the key beliefs of humanizing victims and offenders and promoting a positive school culture. The findings of this study were consistent with other research (Ingraham et al., 2016; Kane et al., 2009; Kaveney & Drewery, 2011; Shaw, 2007) centering the comprehensive focus on the community at large, the school ethos, and a holistic approach to disrupting discourses of discipline and control. Findings imply that when a school community enacts restorative justice as an ethos there is greater affirmation towards the practice and stronger benefits for children, families, and teachers. In my study, there were opposing perspectives leading to conflicting pedagogies as the focal teacher and children worked to create a sense of belonging.

Connection to Literacy Learning

Restorative justice, while positioned as a discipline approach in schools, positively impacts academics, relationships, and classroom communities. Studies highlight shifting from a retributive discipline system focused on referrals and suspensions as one way to disrupt harmful structures in schools. It is important to examine the impact of restorative justice on other domains of learning, which literature has indicated include a focus on community values (Cavanagh et al., 2014; Wearmouth & Berryman, 2012) and social and emotional literacies (Hambacher, 2018; Kehoe et al., 2018; Shaw, 2007; Schumacher, 2014), and a positive impact on academics (Gregory et al., 2016; Erb & Erb, 2018; Ortega et al., 2016). Examining the connection between restorative justice and literacy practices, Winn (2018) emphasized the

importance of relational literacies (Salmon & Freedman, 2001) as a means to decolonize teaching practices, and to support "students in becoming agentive and self-disciplined readers, thinkers, and doers" (Winn, 2018, p. 69). In a kindergarten classroom, this may include opportunities for choice, innovation, and active engagement in learning collaboratively within a community. Importantly, studies have indicated the benefits of a paradigmatic shift towards restorative practices away from punitive discipline (e.g., Cavanagh et al., 2014; Kane et al., 2009; Kehoe et al., 2018; McCluskey et al., 2008; Payne & Welch, 2015; Shaw, 2007; Teske, 2011), however, these studies have not explored restorative justice in early literacy classrooms, nor have they examined what occurs when implemented alongside prescriptive literacy practices. We have inductive analysis pointing us to general patterns but are left without an up-close picture of how restorative justice enactment unfolds in the day-to-day interactions that occur in early childhood settings. Considering the proactive (Davis, 2019) possibilities of restorative justice, an examination in early childhood settings reiterates the ability for young children to take on agentic stances with teachers and carries implications for alternatives to the status quo.

Scripted Literacy Programs

Increasingly since the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) and recently through a focus on The Science of Teaching Reading (Mosely Wetzel et al., 2020), requirements of explicit and specific literacy programs are common with the stated intention of promoting academic achievement (MacGillvray et al., 2004; Yoon, 2013). Highly structured literacy programs operate under the belief that sequential learning produces academic achievement. This does not align with effective inquiry instructional practices (Mosley Wetzel et. al., 2020, p. S324), upholds teaching that perpetuates racism (Milner, 2020), and runs contrary to the philosophies of restorative justice. Often these programs emphasize individualism, achievement, and competition, rather than a relational approach to learning that prioritizes and privileges accountability, responsibility, and ownership

within a collective learning community. There are mixed responses in studies documenting the impact for teachers navigating scripted programs. Responses range from the benefits of guiding teachers on what to do and strategies to support student achievement (e.g., Neugebauer et al., 2017) to tensions in how scripted programs limit the flexibility, creative agency, and professional knowledge to do right by students (Parsons et al., 2018). In the context of the current study, it is important to consider how scripted programs are a form of curricular control (MacGillvray et al., 2004). In this regard, highly structured literacy teaching is prescriptive, anticipates a singular way of learning and knowing, and expects conformity for children. Studies have found challenges in implementing programs that focus on a single mode of meaning-making and learning, and a loss of teacher identity in reaching the needs of individual students (Dresser, 2012). Alternatively, Powell et al. (2017), found that teachers reported benefits of scripted literacy programs in providing a framework for addressing the academic needs of their students.

Responsive teaching takes many forms in scholarship but largely can be defined as "teachers adjust[ing] their teaching according to the social, linguistic, cultural, and instructional needs of their students" (Parsons et al., 2018, p. 206). Findings have identified that teachers appreciate the value of creating frameworks to meet the needs of students in the classroom (Brownell, 2017; Parsons et al, 2018; Yoon, 2013) and recognizing the hybridity of scripted programs. Flexibility in addressing the needs of students becomes a way to take back individual teacher identity, power, and the craft of teaching, thus disrupting perspectives focused on conformity for teachers and children (Dresser, 2012). In my study, findings indicate how Ms. Hudson drew on both scripted programs and responsive teaching to build a community with children.

Theoretical Frameworks

Two perspectives support the design and analysis in this study, languaging and pedagogy of belonging. Languaging (Beach &

Beauchemin, 2019) encapsulates the power of words and discourse. It integrates an awareness of the dynamism of communicating by valuing or undercutting personhood. Through this lens, language, communication, and belonging are integrated together, and cannot be separated.Languaging, which views language as an action, creates an evolving meaning of individual and communal integrations of being and learning in the classroom. Languaging perspectives build on foundations of dialogic discourse and multi-voicedness (Bakhtin, 1934) of how people function socially in communicating and making meaning over time. In regard to this study and building a community, a perspective of languaging establishes a lens to understand how Ms. Hudson created space for advocacy through discourse and collective collaboration in an individually oriented curricular learning space.

The second theoretical frame is a pedagogy of belonging (Comber, 2015). I used this frame to interpret how Ms. Hudson built belonging and inclusivity through her teaching and interactions. In a pedagogy of belonging, engagement between teachers and children is situated in the context of the community. It views teachers' responsibility to expand beyond teaching academic skills; teachers must ensure that children have the possibility to engage and grow in the community as an individual and a learner, while also engaging as part of the greater collective. This supports a sense of security by inviting children into the community and also contributes to their academic successes. This pedagogy embraces the ways in which the community is established collectively. The work of being thrown-together (Massey, 2005) in a classroom is often unintentional, but how teachers and students make powerful connections can be purposeful within a community space. This perspective highlights the independence and decision-making that each child and teacher has, and how both individually and collectively a togetherness can be established. For Ms. Hudson and the Panthers, a pedagogy of belonging connected her focus on the value of community alongside her high academic expectations.

Together these perspectives allow for an understanding of the integration of literacy, language, and community as the way in which teachers and children strive to build a classroom ethos. By designing and analyzing the study through these lenses, we see the complexity of languaging as a constant in a dynamic community with layered and conflicting pedagogies. Using discourse analysis elevates these frames to understand the sense of community and belonging enacted together. Languaging and pedagogy of belonging center the words, actions, and ways of being for the children and teacher in how to learn and connect together.

Methods

I employed an embedded case study design, and used ethnographic methods, and discourse analysis techniques to examine the complexity of the classroom culture (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Setting and Participants

The study took place in a large city in the Southwestern United States. The school was a public, out-of-district charter, Title I elementary school. The kindergarten class had 24 students aged 5- to 6-years old. The students identified as 19 Latinx, three Multi/Biracial, one African American, and one White; 13 males and 11 females. Their teacher, Ms. Hudson, identifies as a Black woman and was in her fifth year of teaching at the time of the study. Ms. Hudson is a mother and often referenced her son and his literacy development in our personal communication, and in class with students. Ms. Hudson founded and ran the dance troupe for upper elementary students and co-founded a subscription literacy company to promote diverse text sets for young children. She was well regarded by campus administration, colleagues, and parents at the school. Ms. Hudson did not speak directly about her racial and cultural identities in our interview or personal conversations related to her teaching practices. As a white woman working to learn with Ms. Hudson and her teaching practices, I made the methodological choice to follow her lead in reporting aspects of her teaching that she shared with me as most salient.

The charter district used scripted curriculum and direct instruction for the multiple literacy blocks of the day, including whole class reading, writing, and phonics instruction. However, Ms. Hudson's campus also self-identified as a restorative school and had been implementing restorative and community building circles for three years prior to this study. The school simultaneously upheld conflicting behavior systems to restorative justice by drawing on punitive discipline, external motivation and rewards. Examples included time away in another classroom, public behavior clip charts, and positive external incentives, such as lunch with the teacher, for students who earned it weekly for predetermined achievements. These systems were implemented school-wide and not unique to Ms. Hudson's classroom.

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

My positionality is important to consider in terms of the identities and experiences that I associate with and shape who I am as a person and educator, and the role that I took on in the research. I am a white female raised in an upper-middle-class family. I recognize the privilege afforded to me based on my upbringing and racial identity and have spent much of my youth and career as an educator questioning institutional inequities and seeking to transform educational opportunities as I strive to be an accomplice for racial justice (Powell, 2019). I recognize that I do not share racial and cultural backgrounds with Ms. Hudson nor most of the children in the classroom.

My relationship with Ms. Hudson was and continues to be a collegial one, as prior to the study I worked at her school as an assistant principal and literacy coach, and informally as an academic coach with her. My relationship with Ms. Hudson, and the near-insider perspective of the happenings of the school, offered me insight entering the study and also caused me to consider alternate views of what I initially gathered in my observations and learned during data collection. Throughout the study, I asked questions with Ms. Hudson and the children about my inferences, as well as to periodically check my biases and assumptions of teaching to ensure my

analysis was reflective of their experiences. I am grateful to have shared this space with the Panthers and Ms. Hudson and hope to honor their lived experiences through my attempts to portray the complexity of their community in a two-dimensional manuscript.

Data Collection and Context

I used qualitative research techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2018) as a participant-observer. I conducted observations in multiple blocks in the school day, across 15 weeks, each lasting for a minimum of 1 hour, and extending as long as 5 hours. I collected over 50 hours of audio/video recordings accompanied with fieldnotes. Data included photographs of the environment, children, work samples, and classroom artifacts, as well as three focus group interviews with students, and a semi-structured interview with Ms. Hudson.

The components of the literacy block observed included a) morning arrival, breakfast, and morning work, b) community-building circles, c) guided reading and literacy stations, d) writing, and e) whole class reading instruction. While I did not observe all literacy components on each visit, nearly all visits included observations of morning arrival, breakfast, morning work, and the community-building circle. The community-building circles were taken up in a variety of formats. Some followed restorative community-building circles, with check-ins, sharing rounds, and the use of a talking piece, while others served a separate purpose for the community. The other circles included a star student of the week on Wednesdays, as well as periodic use of circles to share community updates, hold peace circles, and review experiences as a class, or take responsibility for previous events.

An important, informal, and flexible time of day was breakfast, which students had in the classroom accompanied with morning work before moving to the carpet as a community. Breakfast and morning arrival created powerful moments of dialogue between students and gave a rolling start to engage in the structured academic blocks. Students arrived throughout breakfast and, with reminders from Ms. Hudson, got ready for the day by pulling out their materials, gathering their food, and settling into their table groups. Students engaged in debates about their interests, proudly shared stories

from home, and asked questions of one another. Ms. Hudson sat at the door greeting each child and asking about their mornings, families, and what they did the day before. She played soft jazz music as they ate. Ms. Hudson invited older elementary students, largely from her dance troupe, into the class to support as mentors for the kindergarteners by engaging in conversations, opening milks, peeling oranges, or cleaning up messes. While not an official literacy space of the day, Ms. Hudson and students engaged in relational dialogue and demonstrated their belonging in the classroom space.

Data Analysis

I used microanalysis with interactional sociolinguistics and ethnography of communication (Cameron, 2001; Jaworski & Coupland, 2014) to analyze interactional data. Ethnography of communication allowed for contextualizing the speech events and acts within the speech community and the shared norms and systems in which they operated. Interactional sociolinguistics extended from this contextualization to allow for an examination of the frames and footing that interlocutors took up through their interactions. Referencing both of these approaches and using microanalysis provided a close exploration of interaction details, while also situating them within the larger context. Through this analysis, I hope to display the work the teacher and students did through their language and learning related to restorative justice and the prescriptive literacy programs.

I engaged in prolonged observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, and peer debriefing to support the validity and rigor of the study. I observed across four months to diminish the effects of obtrusiveness and did not begin formal data collection until my presence was minimally disruptive to the learning community. I triangulated data by looking across sources, dialoguing with experts of the school site (such as the teacher and the principal), and referencing interviews to synthesize the emerging themes early in the analysis. Upon recognizing the various ways Ms. Hudson responded to students, I identified negative cases when she did not follow these patterns of communication to clarify and strengthen the findings. Finally, peer debriefers supported me in revising for clarity and sufficient detail.

Analysis followed four phases. The first was returning to and expanding field notes of focal moments and dates flagged in my analytic memos and ongoing process log. The second phase involved re-watching videos to further expand field notes, adding to the data log, and making new analytic notes and codes. After reviewing the data in this way, I created SPEAKING grids aligned to ethnography of communication for the different components of the day, which were general enough to apply across multiple observations (Cameron, 2001). Finally, after generating emerging themes, (e.g., multiple voices, helping, and re-storying), I revisited the data and transcribed key moments. These transcriptions were based on the teacher invitations for participation, moments of helping, and the use of community-building circles. Moments of "helping" emerged from Ms. Hudson's interview and through the generative-coding process. As I continued to collapse codes, I transcribed additional events for further analysis. In each transcript, I engaged in line-by-line analysis aligned to the discourse patterns that emerged through previous rounds of analysis.

Findings

Findings examine how Ms. Hudson and the Panthers enacted community building and inclusive practices in a context that drew on contradictory pedagogical frames. Through analysis, I examined Ms. Hudson's 1) movement towards restorative justice, and 2) how she traversed the school aligned discipline structures. Within the first finding we see the variety of strategies that Ms. Hudson used as a bricoleur (Erickson, 2004) in her practice to establish a classroom community building on tenets of restorative justice. Her work was situated in a school context that strove to implement restorative justice perspectives, but also used scripted curricula, and more traditional punitive discipline structures such as a behavior color chart required in each classroom. Ms. Hudson's agency was curtailed by mandated curriculum and behavior management regimens. However, she also appreciated these structures as ways to provide

children high expectations (interview). The findings emphasize how Ms. Hudson enacted agency primarily through the first finding, movement towards restorative justice. Figure 1 offers a visual of the interaction of the findings, situated within, and by Ms. Hudson's values as a teacher. Across the findings, Ms. Hudson drew on and enacted notions that student voices mattered, multiple opinions were important, listening was a responsibility of the community, and that participation included helping and collaboration.

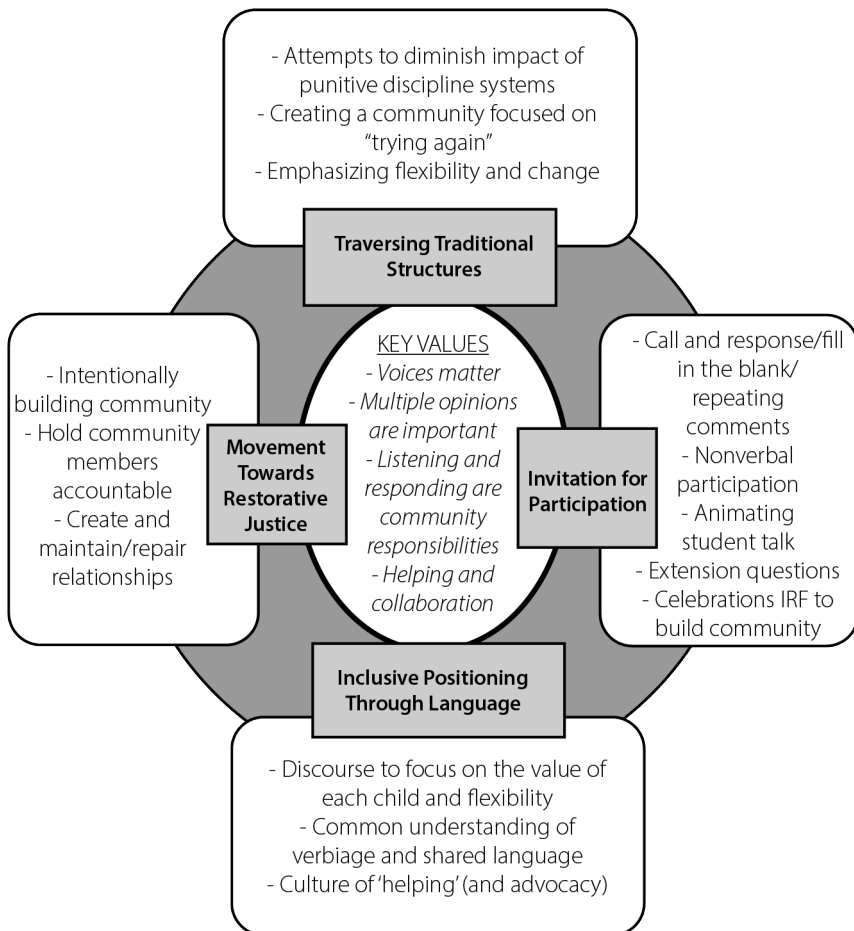## Building Classroom Community Through Bricolage

- Attempts to diminish impact of punitive discipline systems
- Creating a community focused on "trying again"
- Emphasizing flexibility and change

Traversing Traditional Structures

- Intentionally building community
- Hold community members accountable
- Create and maintain/repair relationships

Movement Towards Restorative Justice

KEY VALUES
- *Voices matter*
- *Multiple opinions are important*
- *Listening and responding are community responsibilities*
- *Helping and collaboration*

Invitation for Participation

- Call and response/fill in the blank/ repeating comments
- Nonverbal participation
- Animating student talk
- Extension questions
- Celebrations IRF to build community

Inclusive Positioning Through Language

- Discourse to focus on the value of each child and flexibility
- Common understanding of verbiage and shared language
- Culture of 'helping' (and advocacy)

Fig. 1 Visual of Integration of Findings

Movement towards Restorative Justice

Analysis indicated that Ms. Hudson moved towards restorative justice in her community building and literacy practices through 1) community building circles, 2) the multiplicity of participation invitations, and 3) how she languaged to create a sense of belonging. Each of the sub-themes are explored below with a summary at the end of each subsection.

Restorative Justice and Community-Building Circles

Through community building circles, Ms. Hudson established an embodied way to share physical space through a class-specific discourse system using movement, repetition, and norms to set intentions. Ms. Hudson facilitated community circles in the morning; however, the key tenets behind restorative justice also surfaced throughout the day across literacy blocks. In community building circles, students took turns with a talking piece, which indicated who had the floor, while others were positioned as listeners, supporting them to share their stories and feelings. This transferred into listening habits to one another across events in the day. The communication interrupted more traditional patterns of talk in the classroom, which aligned to scripted curricula, such as initiation-response-feedback (IRF) of turn-taking back and forth between teacher and a student (Mercer, 2007). Unique to the Panthers' kindergarten community and enactment of circles, students engaged in overlapping talk and nonverbal responses to their peers' sharing. When discussing community circles in their interviews, students emphasized that they "liked sharing," (Teresita, interview), "being next to everybody," (Miguel, interview), and "having friends share" (Alvaro, interview). Students consistently referenced the joy of being able to have a turn with the talking piece, and also in having time to listen to their friends. Similarly, Ms. Hudson framed circles as an accountability and responsibility to each other and herself for intentionally building community.

Opening their circles each morning, Ms. Hudson called students to gather and counted down as they moved freely (crawling,

jumping, walking, dancing) to a circle spot on the perimeter of the class carpet. She began each community circle with a call and response:

> **[1]Ms. Hudson**: We are in community (.)
>
> **Students** (in unison, loudly): circle!!
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: We are in community circle. And in community circle we [Holds up three fingers and motions counting to three with each word. Students copy the motion as they verbally repeat the words)
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: (motions 1) honor
>
> **Students** chorally in unison: (motion 1) honor
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: (motions 2) respect
>
> **Students** chorally in unison: (motions 2) respect
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: (motions 3) listen
>
> **Students** chorally in unison: (motions 3) listen

The circle formation physically marked shared space affirming that each child held a physical location in the classroom. The tone and flexibility of voice levels encouraged students to use a volume that suited their feelings; they were not directed to be louder or quieter by Ms. Hudson. Here, the choral responses established a sense of unity before beginning the community circle. Students' movement displayed an embodied and shared knowledge of the class norms during this time of the day and they were not restricted, controlled, nor directed as they gathered in a shared space. Following the break-fast dynamics, this time of day offered a communal space and a sense of belonging in and part of something. Additionally, through turn-taking both in listening and speaking in the class, students found multiple means of participating and joining together.

---

1. Throughout the paper, these transcriptions are written in play-script format for ease of readability. Participant names are bolded as they communicate verbally or nonverbally. Nonverbal and gestural communication are included in parenthesis (), and pauses are noted (.) with a period marking each second.

The talking piece afforded students a chance to bring their individual experiences, voice, and perspectives into the shared physical and emotional space.

As each circle continued, regardless of the specific focus, the class first engaged in a "fist-to-five" check-in to express their feelings. Again, students were invited to display their emotional state to the class. Students eagerly engaged in sharing their numbers and observing those of others. As we see in one example below, the students had internalized the routine and discourses of participating in the classroom community circle, however, Ms. Hudson also willingly followed their revisions.

> **Ms. Hudson**: Okay, so on a fist to five we are going to see how you are doing today.
>
> (Students sit in their spots crisscross; Victoria stands and waits for Ms. Hudson to move and sit down next to Rebeca.)
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: You are either at a 5, you are super, super great! Or (. .) a 3, or a 2, or a 1.
>
> **Connor**: Or a 10! (holds up 10 fingers)
>
> **Leonardo**: Or a 5! (holds up 5 fingers)
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: (smiles) or a 10 if you are awesomely great today!
>
> **Connor**: (smiles) or a 9! (holds up 9 fingers, bouncing them up and down)
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: (looks around the circle) got it?
>
> **Another student**: Or a 99!!
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: Okay, so fist-to-five. Go!
>
> **Students**: (immediately hold up hands showing how they are feeling)
>
> **Student**: I am at a zero.
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: oh no! (and holds up her own 5 fingers to show her emotions)
>
> **Students**: (Call out numbers with overlapping talk) I'm a zero! I'm a 10!

> **Caleb**: I am at a zero (excitedly, with uptick in his tone)
>
> **Ms. Hudson** (simultaneously to Caleb): I see Montserrat is at a 10, Liya is at a 10. Elias is at a 5 like me today (students also scan the circle with their fingers still on display).

The language used in the circle was unrestricted, and when Connor proposed to extend their range for expressing their feelings, Ms. Hudson took up the suggestion, and other students utilized this revision. Ms. Hudson actively modeled scanning the carpet of what students were showing her, as a way to listen and acknowledge belonging. Students showed a feeling of safety and security, sharing their feelings anywhere from 0 to 10. Each child was seen and heard in this daily communication, and the routine offered a chance for Ms. Hudson to check in throughout the day as needed. Beyond the fist-to-five, as circles continued, students often leaned forward or towards their peers when listening and audibly responded when classmates gave examples or told stories as the talking piece was passed from person to person. They expressed enjoyment of speaking when it was their turn, and having other friends share (Focus Interviews 1 and 2).

Summary. Ms. Hudson embraced notions of accountability, responsibility, and listening as part of the importance of beginning the day with a community circle (interview). She also emphasized the value of having informal spaces to build relationships with the students. Importantly, a sense of belonging (Comber, 2015), stemmed from the flexibility in how students languaged with each other as listeners and speakers, and the uninhibited forms of talk and involvement. In later examples, I explore how the subtext and foundation for the interactions were grounded in concepts and communicative practices utilized in the morning community-building circles. Ms. Hudson reiterated shared values and emphasized the way the Panthers cared for one another through her modeling. She aimed to create a space where students used talk to belong, by drawing on her role as a facilitator and leader in the classroom to center children around high academic expectations, while also fostering a culture of care for learners growing individually and together across moments of the day.

Multiplicity of Invitations for Participation

Ms. Hudson drew on a range of tools and strategies to invite participation and involvement during literacy events, including during breakfast and community-building circles. Through the use of six invitations (Table 1), Ms. Hudson communicated belonging in the community and languaged to involve students in the classroom through their participation. She also reiterated an active and responsive listening stance to and with students. For Ms. Hudson, participation and voice were important over the correctness of student responses (interview). She regularly used a compilation of strategies across literacy and teaching events for noticing and naming contributions, as well as animating comments authored by students aligned to interactional sociolinguistic analysis (Cameron, 2001). Table 1 indicates the types of invitations that Ms. Hudson provided to students, how each invitation related to community building or inclusion in the classroom, and brief examples of each component.

Table 1.
Types of Invitations for Student Involvement

Invitation	Definition & Explanation	Examples
Call and response/ Fill in the Blank/ Repeating Comments	Ms. Hudson used call and response frequently in her communication. She would ask students to call out key words or responses that were either known information, or unknown open-ended questions. This was a way in which she checked for engagement, encouraged participation, and checked their understanding. Often the volume and overlapping talk in these moments were strongly valued and encouraged. Placing their voices in the classroom space seemed to the priority for these types of interactions. These interactions occurred across speech events and were not isolated to specific times of the day.	- Students would repeat key phrases as participation. In community circles they would always repeat after Ms. Hudson (honor, respect, listen) - Students would fill in the blank with content. When reading Ms. Hudson would pause in a known text and the class would call out the word that would (or might) fit in the blank. - Ms. Hudson would ask them to state class norms in unison together. - Ms. Hudson would ask focal questions during star student for students to call out answers about their peer ("She likes to do what at home?" "So how does he want to be a helper?")

Table 1 continued.
Types of Invitations for Student Involvement

Nonverbal Participation	Ms. Hudson often asked for non-verbal responses from students. She held high expectations for all students to participate, and used this as a response tool to bring students in. At times she followed up on their nonverbals and asked students to explain, and others it was more informal to bring them into the conversation or content of discussion. She used this in both behavioral and emotional check-ins, as well as content. A focal nonverbal was "giving shine" to students.	**-** "Show me a thumbs up or down. Who agrees with [Student name]? Who disagrees? I should see all thumbs" **-** "Show me a fist to 5 how you are feeling today" **-** "Show me a fist to 5 how excited are you to read about Ruby Bridges" **-** "Give shine to [student name]" **-** "Thank you, [student name] for giving shine!" **-** Turn and look towards [student name], they are sharing.
Animating Student Talk	Ms. Hudson would revoice students comment and serve as the animator for their ideas and thoughts. Typically, this was done to either confirm and validate their response, or to use their words as a catalyst to further instruction.	**-** "So, you are saying, [repeat student language]?" **-** "So [student name] said [insert language]. Do you agree or disagree? why?"
Extension Questions	Ms. Hudson often posed extension questions or follow-up for students to engage in their thinking and language about a focus question or idea. She varied this from asking individual students to extend their own answers or posing the extension question to the class.	**-** "Why do you think that?" **-** "What tells you that?" **-** "Who has something else they want to say, or that they could add on?"
Celebrations	Ms. Hudson and the students often would engage in "full-stop" of their activities and learning to celebrate the efforts, successes or attempts of their peers.	This often took the form of a scripted "Oh yeah!" or "Way to go, [student name]."
Initiation-Response-Feedback Structure	Ms. Hudson primarily engaged in an IRF (Mercer, 2007), communication structure with students in the classroom. However, she leveraged a multiplicity of responses for the 'feedback' component of this exchange, typically avoiding explicit evaluation, and rather using the other tools to animate student talk, seek out questions, or acknowledge their participation.	**-** "Okay, so you mean _____?" **-** "Awesome. Does anyone have another idea?"

Examining Everyday Invitations. To understand how Ms. Hudson used these components and invitations, I present segments from a small guided reading group where she engaged in multiple invitations with students.

1	**Ms. Hudson**: It's a storybook. A storybook is usually make-believe. An informational book is real, it has pictures and the characters are doing real things. Once again, can bears fly a jet?
4	**Students** (including Caleb, who previously has not audibly responded): (loudly) Noooo
6	**Ms. Hudson**: So, can this be an informational book? (. .) No. It would not be an informational book. It would be a storybook. Awesome. Now, why do you think the bear is flying the jet? (Shows picture from the text of the Bear flying the jet.)
10	**Caleb**: Because
11	**Ms. Hudson**: Raise your hand and I will call on you.
12	(All students in the group immediately raise their hands.)
13	**Ms. Hudson**: Yes, Caleb, why do you think the bear is flying the jet?
14	**Caleb**: Because, because
15	**Ms. Hudson**: He's flying the jet because… (motions to other students to look towards Caleb. Students shift their gaze towards him.)
17	**Caleb**: He is flying the jet because, because he (. . .) (leans forward)
18	**Ms. Hudson**: Give him "shine."
19	**Mateo, Camila, Teresita**: (wiggle fingers towards him as "shine")
20	**Caleb**: (. .) because he stays high.
21	**Ms. Hudson**: He's flying the jet because he stays high? (tone is warm)
22	**Caleb**: (nods and looks down smiling) yeah

In this excerpt, Ms. Hudson began with an *IRF structure* with the group, trying to reinforce a distinction between informational and storybook texts (lines 1-3). However, as a distinction from traditional *IRF* communication focused on correctness, and aligned

to other uses of *IRF* for Ms. Hudson, her feedback in this pattern of talk remained largely non-evaluative. She initiated by asking a question and students responded chorally. In her feedback (lines 6-9) she extended their answer by *re-voicing and extending* their choral response: "no. it would not be an informational book" and then offered another question to begin the *IRF* cycle again. This time she engaged directly with Caleb. Line 11 is an exception to the invitations and can be classified as a redirection or naming of expectations. She often used direct language to cue students to classroom norms. In line 15, Ms. Hudson continued *IRF* by providing Caleb feedback in the form of a scaffold to prompt him to continue his answer. However, she also used an invitation of a *nonverbal cue* here and again in line 18 to engage the other students, and center Caleb as someone with knowledge to share. "Shine" which will be explored later, served as a means to show support for peers in the class, and a tool to invite students into the space nonverbally. In the final structure of the feedback, line 21, Ms. Hudson confirmed Caleb's answer by *re-voicing it or animating it*. In this brief exchange, Ms. Hudson used four of the invitations: *fill in the blank answer* (her first initiation), *IRF structure, nonverbal participation*, and *animating student talk* to invite students into the learning space.

I continue from this same excerpt of the guided reading group lesson, where Ms. Hudson employed additional structures inviting students into the learning space. I continue with this example because of the everydayness of the talk, and the similarity to other guided reading groups and lessons observed. The final comment that Ms. Hudson made in the transcript (line 42) provided a contrasting example of a time when she engaged with evaluative language and provides context for negative cases of her routine patterns in communication.

23   **Ms. Hudson**: Does anyone else have something that they want to add or a different thought? (.) Joshua, you are sitting bottom flat and quietly. Thank you. (prompts towards Joshua) I would like to add…

26   **Joshua**: I would like to add…

27   **Ms. Hudson**: What would you like to add?

28   **Joshua**: It is a storybook

29   **Ms. Hudson**: I was asking why is the bear flying the jet?

30   **Joshua**: So (. . .) he. (.) He's flying the jet 'cause he want to see all the stuff.

32   **Ms. Hudson**: (nods) He wants to see all of the stuff that's on the ground. Thumbs up if you agree with Joshua, thumbs down if you disagree (models thumbs up and down as she says it).

35   (Immediately, Camila puts her thumb up and Mateo puts his thumb down)

36   **Ms. Hudson**: I'm looking for all thumbs (directs gaze towards Teresita and Caleb while flipping her thumb both up and down).

38   (Teresita and Caleb make their decisions. Teresita puts her thumb up and Caleb thumb down.)

40   (Caleb shakes his thumb down at Joshua and shakes his head. Joshua smiles and Shrugs.)

42   **Ms. Hudson**: (draws a star on the table) Great answer, Joshua.

Ms. Hudson continued the discussion by *asking questions* to extend Caleb's answer. She did not provide Caleb any direct feedback aside from a smile and swiftly invited additional voices into the group discussion by extending questions first to the group (line 23-25), and then directly to Joshua (line 27). Ms. Hudson restarted the *IRF cycle* again in line 29 to clarify for Joshua which question she hoped for him to reply to. Her initial feedback cycle with Joshua after he formulated an answer was to *animate his talk* by restating the comment and then asking for *nonverbal participation* from the group (lines 32-41). She enforced a need for all students to provide engagement in their nonverbal participation but did not offer feedback regarding their disagreement with one another.

The final response in this sequence, line 42, is worth examining as Ms. Hudson provided a rare evaluative response both verbally and through marking it visibly for others with a star on the table.

This was a negative case in that Ms. Hudson typically used non-evaluative language in her *IRF*, feedback response. Here however, she used evaluative language to commend Joshua's response. These examples happened rarely, but when they did, they were with students who often needed additional reminders to follow the class participation norms and would often have interpersonal disagreements with peers during informal times of the day. Additionally, when Ms. Hudson offered evaluation with a clear positive (or negative) response, it was often about a skill that they had spent multiple attempts to clarify as a class or group. The third prerequisite for these evaluative responses, which happened rarely, related to the timing of the academic block ending. In this case, all three of the situated contexts were present. Joshua was a student who Ms. Hudson often tried to positively reposition in the classroom to have him seen for his strengths to his peers, or restoried (Worthy et al., 2012) to belong within the community. Aligned with the criteria for negative cases, the skill the group explored in this example was one that they had spent multiple iterations to reinforce; and immediately after this exchange, the group rotated to the next literacy activity. Caleb, another student who was often "othered or excluded by peers and teachers in the building, did not get the same evaluative feedback because they were not rushing towards the end of the lesson despite engaging around the same content.

Deep Dive into Nonverbal Invitations. Continuing to examine Ms. Hudson's participation invitations, I return to the nonverbal examples from the two excerpts above. In addition to the nonverbal prompt of showing agreement and disagreement, Ms. Hudson appealed to students to use nonverbal participation through "giving shine." These tools of nonverbal invitation, as well as use of American Sign Language, were regularly prompted and modeled by Ms. Hudson. These communicative acts were important nonverbal discourse that students used both independently and when prompted. Students were often explicitly praised when they used nonverbal participation, with comments such as "Thank you Gustavo for showing him

shine!" or "that's nice [to give shine] Liya, that's a good helper." In their interviews, students elaborated about shine as a way to help in the classroom. For example, Cameron explained "we do it [showing shine] to help our friend get our answer right" and Gabriel added, "and when they stuck. So, it helps them." Olivia elaborated, "yeah, so we try it (. .), we do it because we are friends." Looking at Cameron's response, getting answers "right" was a shared activity in the class discourse community. His use of the word "our" indicated shared ownership of answering and responding to questions posed by Ms. Hudson. She instilled the idea that helping was important, and through their nonverbal communication, students helped others to have space to try on a response, much as Ms. Hudson encouraged students to do in the first excerpt with Caleb.

Personal Celebration as a Collective Invitation. Another participation invitation Ms. Hudson enacted was asking for students' voices to celebrate when a child achieved a personal accomplishment. A personal accomplishment could be academic, such as reaching a benchmark on a digital literacy program (Example: Mia reached level 3 during indoor recess), social, such as demonstrating an individual behavioral goal (Example: Isaiah used gentle handshakes and safe body movement during a morning greeting), or an everyday activity of taking a risk and offering an answer to a whole class question (Example: Victoria, a typically quieter student, answering a question during the whole group reading lesson). Children fully stopped what they were working on to celebrate the win or success with their classmates. Ms. Hudson re-voiced and announced the accomplishment and prompted the class to say "Way to Go, Victoria!" or "Oh yeah, Mia!" Typically, between 90% and 100% of the class would pause their work and engage in the repeated phrase, loudly encouraging their teammates. After the full stop, the discourse often continued at students' tables about the accomplishment, and a number of children, nearly always including Arturo, Liya, and Martin, rushed over to offer a personal compliment, and at times a hug to continue validating the celebrated individual.

The celebration invitations positioned learners as belonging to the classroom both if they achieved, and if they were able to offer joy and praise for their peers. Additionally, pausing the flow of learning to interject these celebrations collectively prioritized the importance of each child and a variety of accomplishments in the culture of the classroom community. Languaging positioned students as seen, and Ms. Hudson sent the message that participation and celebration mattered, and that the students mattered. The celebrations importantly did not just focus on academic achievement and took on a collective purpose. When one classmate succeeded, the whole class was succeeding.

Summary. Through Ms. Hudson's discursive moves, she repositioned students as valued members included in the community. Both through her animations of their authored comments, and encouragement to agree and disagree, Ms. Hudson, valued student voice and perspective. From a lens of languaging, these invitations created an environment where students found space through their talk to belong in the classroom. She used call and response and chants in a manner that emphasized students' place and voice, and secured a sense of unity and belonging as a group. Briefly to elaborate on this invitation, student responses to open-ended call and response invitations typically varied and students emphatically announced their differing and overlapping answers, which were all celebrated. In this community, languaging encouraged a collective and collaborative building of voices together. Additionally, in community circles, Ms. Hudson modeled active and engaged listening as a community member, which students replicated across literacy events. Each of the six invitations (Table 1) that Ms. Hudson used in her teaching encouraged participation. Volume and overlapping talk were not monitored nor restricted, and the focus remained on students' involvement. Voices were encouraged and not silenced. Across the use of invitations, Ms. Hudson emphasized the importance that students were in a shared community, and all voices mattered in a variety of ways, rather than correctness of responses.

Languaging for Belonging

To understand the way that Ms. Hudson and students languaged to position others as needed and included in the community, I look to two brief examples. The first is an interaction between Ms. Hudson and Isaiah, and the second illuminates how students positioned each other as helpers in their own interactions, mirroring Ms. Hudson's modeling. Across observations, students consistently said yes when asked if they would like to be a community helper. While the actions requested varied by situation, students took pride in being asked, and quickly engaged in the helping task, be it supporting a peer academically, delivering a note to the office, or the everyday actions of cleaning up their table or turning on or off the lights. Students responded emphatically no matter the request or offer to help. Students elaborated in the interview that "they are friends" and know to "watch when someone needs help to do it" (Focus interview 1). The languaging for belonging theme examines how helping and being a helper was a foundational key for the individual relationships as well as maintaining the togetherness of the classroom community ethos. It is important to take up Ms. Hudson's definition of helping as advocacy in looking across both examples below, as this is a term that has been problematized in other contexts.

> **Ms. Hudson**: Isaiah do you want to be of help? A helper?
>
> (**Isaiah** was walking around the room and stops to look at Ms. Hudson.)
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: Isaiah, you can be a helper for Caleb?
>
> (**Isaiah** nods repeatedly. He picks up his pace and moves to the computer where Caleb is working. Isaiah kneels down and takes the piece of paper Caleb is holding to begin the work.)
>
> (**Caleb** hands Isaiah the headphones)
>
> (**Isaiah** puts the headphones on)
>
> (**Caleb** points to the screen and Isaiah begins to do the activity)
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: Okay, so you are not going to do it for him. You are going to **help** him.

Isaiah: ohhh

Ms. Hudson: So, take the headphones off (smiles and motions doing this). And he will tell you the letters, and you will do that. That's what he does with Ricardo. But I don't want you to do it for him. Let him do it. You are just helping him.

Isaiah: (nods, smiles, and removes the headphones)

(**Caleb** takes back headphones, says the letter aloud, and Isaiah begins pointing to letters on the keyboard.)

Ms. Hudson: Awesome, alright (turns back to her guided reading group).

This event occurred while Ms. Hudson met with a small group of students. Isaiah, who could be perceived as off-task as he walked around the room and disengaged from his own literacy work, was instead repositioned as a helper, which for the students was synonymous with "expert" (Focus interviews 1 and 2). Isaiah was languaged as a "more knowledgeable other" (Vygotsky, 1978), and took up a valued role in the classroom through Ms. Hudson's invitation. He was not only brought back to engage in literacy learning, but to do so as an expert with a peer. While Caleb was recognized as needing help, he also readily accepted the support. Ms. Hudson explained her view of helping as a form of advocacy, which is an important distinction in how she used the term in this exchange (interview). Looking at this through a lens of advocacy promotes students as problem solvers both individually, and within the community context. Caleb often experienced tensions in building relationships with his peers, and this partnership offered a space for him to build a positive interaction and relationship while also holding him accountable for his academic learning. He, too, was being repositioned and situated within the classroom community. Ms. Hudson offered a frame for how the students would work together, valuing Caleb's contributions and Isaiah's capacity to support through her appeal "he will do the letters, and you will do that. That's what he does with Ricardo. But I don't want you to do it for him. Let him do it. You are just helping." Aligned to perspectives of languaging, helping was a verb as well

as a shared interaction between the students, which Ms. Hudson facilitated. These instances of helping and languaging to engage with each other happened regularly throughout all informal and academic blocks. As Ms. Hudson elaborated in the interview, helping was about a "sense of accountability to be part of the classroom community." In this regard, it was a way to belong, and become included both as a helper, and someone who was advocating to have the help they needed (interview). Through these interactions, the community continued to be one focused on building relationships that were inclusive, healing, and collectively oriented.

The next example is an enactment of helping between two students without Ms. Hudson's facilitation. Arturo and Joshua sat on opposite sides of a large round table. Both were working on individual literacy practice activities as part of literacy rotations that occurred daily. During this time, students worked independently on their assigned activity with varying activities at each table. However, often mini-appeals and moments of helping emerged across observations including the one below.

> **Arturo** (to Joshua): Come and help… (inaudible) {From field notes, "he is asking for support on how to draw something in his illustration"}
>
> **Joshua**: Do you know how?
>
> **Arturo**: No. I want a car.
>
> **Joshua**: (draws for him)
>
> **Arturo**: No not like that (motions on paper with his finger) do it like this way
>
> (**Arturo** grabs another pencil because he had handed his original one to Joshua. They both start working side by side on the paper. Arturo erases Joshua's original drawing and Joshua tries a new attempt.)
>
> **Joshua**: Oh! I know what you are going to do. You need to make two cars.
>
> (**Joshua** draws one on the paper.)

Arturo: (smiles broadly to Joshua) Yeah!

(**Joshua** returns to his seat and immediately re-engages in his work, and Arturo draws the second car for the illustration.)

As occurred across a number of helping events between students, peers reacted to language, gestures or nonverbal communication as a cue to pause their independent work and engage with peers. Across observations, I inferred a culture of reading emotions and needs of others and taking action based on those readings as a known classroom structure. Students positioned themselves as comfortable asking for help, as Arturo does here when he said, "come help," by appealing to their friends as a "more knowledgeable other" (Vygotsky, 1978). Students also readily took up helping, even if it took them away from their own work. This indicated a fluidity and overlapping importance of individual work and achievement, and collective partnership and success. Similar to the first example, students navigated the competing ideas of how much work to do for the peer, and how much to support them in doing it themselves. The turning point in this example occurred when Arturo offered corrective feedback to Joshua: "no, not like that, do it like this way." At this point, they shifted to work jointly together. As was common across these moments of helping and as Joshua did here, students lingered to ensure that their help was received and at a sufficient level for the peer to move on. Once that became apparent to the helper, they returned seamlessly into their own work. Following this example, minutes later, Arturo called across the table this time announcing, "I made a car!" and held up his paper for Joshua to see. Joshua nodded in acknowledgment and continued working. In accordance with the structured curriculum, students worked on their independent learning activities, however, through their own advocacy they also recognized the power of getting and giving help together. They sought out opportunities within the structure to continue to engage communally.

Summary. While one could read these excerpts from the classroom as Ms. Hudson asking students to do something in specific ways, the positioning of students through talk indicated the

intent and impact was to create a sense of inclusion and purpose of important roles to hold within the community of learners. The positioning that happened in these examples mirrored those that occurred across events and students in the classroom. Ms. Hudson intentionally invited in students who needed to be reengaged in the community and positioned them as helpers. This was a way to save face for students who may be seen as off-task and created a shared recognition of the importance they each held within the community. A focus on belonging provided Ms. Hudson alterna-tives to frequent use of the school-wide punitive behavior chart, as in this class, students were able re-enter the happenings in a purposeful way. Perhaps because of the flexibility of who could be a helper from Ms. Hudson's perspective, students appealed flexibly to a variety of students when they took on the same habits. While at times students sought out specific peers known for their abilities on a target skill, proximity often was a significant factor in their appeals or awareness to offer help, signaling an awareness that anyone could both seek out support, and provide it in the class-room. Shifting between individual and shared work reiterated the power of being within a group and a sense of togetherness and belonging. However, doing work for others was not acceptable in the classroom helping culture, as each child was accountable and seen as both knowledgeable and capable.

Traversing School-Aligned Discipline Structures

Ms. Hudson also engaged in moments of discipline contrary to restorative justice aligned with school-wide expectations and more traditional punitive discipline practices. In these instances, behavior was on public display using a color chart and children were announced as "team captain" or having consequences such as "time away." When children did not comply with the community agree-ments, Ms. Hudson told them to "clip down" on the behavior chart, or to "clip up" when recognizing their efforts. This happened consis-tently throughout my visits and time with the Panthers alongside the work she took up creating a sense of belonging with students.

Using the clip-chart as a behavior management tool was in direct contrast with restorative justice: however, the Panthers explained that they saw the flexibility of being able to "try doing it again" (personal communication). This represented their internalization of Ms. Hudson's and their shared beliefs about restorative justice and community. There was an approximation in how restorative justice was enacted given the school-wide traditional and normalized behavior systems focused on control. Children expressed the opportunity to start over each morning, and throughout the day in their community with Ms. Hudson. Below is a brief example of how Ms. Hudson attempted to mitigate the impact of the clip chart. This example followed a specials class, where Ms. Hudson rejoined the class community in their classroom space. During specials, nearly all children's clips had been moved to the bottom of the chart, and six children were seated in time away at various tables.

> **Ms. Hudson**: Okay—Come on! (gestures to students sitting at the tables in time away) Well, we're going to get to stations. Recess will likely be inside because it is raining. I see Ms. Rodriguez clipped down a bunch of students during Spanish class.
>
> (Ms. Hudson moves all of the clips back up.)
>
> **Romelia**: We didn't do anything wrong
>
> **Ms. Hudson**: Okay, well maybe it [moving the clips] was a mistake (finishes moving clips all back up).
>
> (Students nod.)

Moments such as this were common in the classroom, where Ms. Hudson would return to see a number of students sitting away from the class and with the behavior chart significantly changed. Ms. Hudson established her reentry to the community by re-inviting children to the collective space on the carpet, "Okay—come on!" and publicly signaling they were together, on the behavior chart. She transitioned to use the chart in a positive manner (moving clips up); however, she still subscribed to the use of a public display of student behavior. Ms. Hudson embedded her dialogue with students

about their behavior, and the display on the clip chart with nearly all student clips at the bottom, alongside the next events in the classroom. She normalized this occurrence, and also minimized the effects. Ms. Hudson did not take up a restorative conversion with students, but she honored their word that "we didn't do anything wrong." In Ms. Hudson's response, "Okay, maybe it was a mistake," she was able to language a sense of belonging and affirm their perspectives in the community space. Together the class made an agreement and continued, after all children had returned to the shared space to the next events in their classroom community. As situated in the school community, Ms. Hudson both complied with normalized views of discipline to ensure behavior management, and also flexibly defied them.

While Ms. Hudson engaged in using the clip chart in traditional ways, moving clips both up and down, she typically stressed the importance of "clipping up" as a way to emphasize the work children did in a positive regard. This often was connected to her invitations for participation. In the next example, Angel announced an academic achievement from the literacy computer program during stations:

Angel: (shouting) Ms. Hudson! I completed level 3!!

Ms. Hudson: (pauses her small group instruction) Wow!! Everyone say: way to go Angel!

Class: (collectively) Way to go Angel!! (A few students rush over.)

Ms. Hudson: Good job, Angel. I'll clip you up!

(Angel nods and returns to his work right away.)

Angel displayed learned habits and discourse patterns by announcing successes and excitements with the class. He did not filter his volume of talk, and eagerly shouted to directly notify Ms. Hudson, and indirectly the class community. In line with Ms. Hudson's use of celebrations, students engaged in a "full stop" of their work to congratulate Angel on his academic achievement. Here, Ms. Hudson used the behavior clip chart as a way to celebrate Angel's accomplishments with his literacy learning, and to emphasize his work in

the class community. In this regard, she used the chart to highlight successes of children. While this still emphasized individual achievement, it was shared in the class community. Angel, a child who often had his clip "moved down," rejoined the class as displayed on the behavior chart, and through Ms. Hudson's acknowledgements. Ms. Hudson moved Angel's clip in this instance, but that was not always the case. Sometimes when acknowledging efforts (and challenges), Ms. Hudson would ask children to move their own clips. Often when children showed nonverbal or verbal encouragement for peers, Ms. Hudson would invite them to adjust their clip, such as: "Thank you, Miguel, clip yourself up for giving shine." Here Ms. Hudson would share the power of who accessed the behavior chart. She also reinforced children's choices to support their peers in a public display as part of the community. While the chart was often used aligned to traditional discipline measures, there was also a collective ownership of using the chart.

Summary. Restorative discipline has been defined as "a disposition, a mindset, and an approach to discipline that builds upon the foundational idea that schools are places where students are expected to make errors and learn from them" (Milner et al., 2019, p. 133). While Ms. Hudson didn't always take on a restorative justice perspective, she enacted the beliefs of supporting students to make "errors and learn from them" as indicated in how students spoke about the punitive measures in the classroom. She elaborated that her use of the scripted programs and her revisions to them allowed her to maintain "high expectations," and space for students "to always advocate for themselves" (interview). In the examples of how Ms. Hudson used the clip chart, she typically emphasized positive behavior ("clipping up") and encouraged the class to celebrate through her invitations for participation. Her use of the chart also extended to academic achievements especially when celebrating children's successes. This ensured that children had many opportunities to rejoin or be recognized for their work within the classroom community.

Discussion and Significance

Ms. Hudson valued accountability and self-advocacy, and believed in high levels of academic achievement for each child. She embraced having a structured curriculum to afford students opportunities for standardized academic achievement, and to ensure that students were able to reach traditional measures of school success (personal communication; interview). However, she also enacted multiple means for establishing and building a strong and inclusive community. Her approach to teaching and management were integrated in her pedagogy of instruction. Often this separation and siloed examination of instruction leads to misalignment between academic instructions and discipline practices. This tension was also a possibility for Ms. Hudson, but as a bricoleur (Erickson, 2004), she pieced together multiple perspectives to create her pedagogy as focused on the children as people, learners, and individuals in a collective community. Through setting intentions, invitations, and "giving each student what they need" (interview), Ms. Hudson created a community with the Panthers founded on belonging and respect. Languaging and honoring each child for the individual human they were in the classroom equipped students to flexibly move between being self-advocates seeking help, and experts for their peers. Additionally, high academic expectations aligned to traditional measures of school success can be an important part of ensuring equity (Ladson-Billings, 1992; 1995). This study exposed Ms. Hudson's approach to responsive teaching with a prescriptive curriculum (Powell et al., 2017), and relational approximations of restorative justice (Winn et al., 2019; Winn, 2013; 2018).

In considering the approximations of restorative justice, Ms. Hudson teaches us of the disconnect in schools in implementing restorative justice as a structure, without recognizing the pedagogical implications. Scholarship has indicated the power of engaging in restorative justice through a school ethos (Ortega et al., 2016; Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015; Vaandering, 2014), and we are left wondering what might be in communities such as the Panthers', if

they built community through a holistic and aligned commitment to restorative ways of being, rather than navigating divergent pedagogies. In spite of this disconnect, Ms. Hudson and the Panthers drew on many core tenets of restorative justice in their community building and literacy learning, and established their own sense of belonging. The findings exposed the nuanced ways that Ms. Hudson layered pedagogies established from her core values and prioritized students, and also left us with questions of what could be. What if our education system, schools, and teachers were supported to completely employ restorative ways of being, not only in response to discipline, but as foundational in learning? What if we dismantled harmful tools such as clip charts that ensure compliance, and instead focused on how teachers and children build lasting relationships together? What if teachers, such as Ms. Hudson, were leaders in crafting classroom communities? And, what if our classrooms were focused on love and equity?

As situated in an educational system that does not always welcome these questions, Ms. Hudson maintained teaching aligned to the status quo in schools (i.e., IRF; teacher-directed instruction) and structuring the classroom (i.e., punitive behavior systems), however, students felt valued, as people who could "try again" and were "friends and know to help." Children internalized her core values in spite of punitive discipline and scripted curricula. The children also were in a context where they needed to navigate multiple meanings of community. Often in contexts without Ms. Hudson students were reprimanded with punitive discipline measures primarily through forms of time away and exclusion. Through their work with Ms. Hudson, they unlearned these practices to see their community in another way. In this regard, Ms. Hudson's practices and attention to students' self-advocacy through helping, and multiple invitations for sharing their voice and opinions, drew out her approximations of restorative justice and altered traditional practices to work for her and the Panthers in building an inclusive learning space. While the literacy programs she taught expected a singular correctness of answers from students, her

focus on participation, invitations, and the humanity of the Panthers within a climate of controlled literacy learning emphasized a sense of belonging, which expanded an understanding of how teachers might teach responsively and relationally, while using prescribed curricula (Dresser, 2012). Her invitations maintained her strong desire for academic success and embraced the ways students shared their voices, agency, and above all a sense of connectedness in the kindergarten classroom. For teachers and researchers, this may be an opportunity to name, explore, and expose the deep tensions between multiple pedagogies in schools as we continue a shift towards more just and equitable ways of teaching and learning in education, and a transition towards restorative justice as a comprehensive way of being in school communities.

Ms. Hudson's identity and pedagogy influenced her position as an educator and the values she enacted in her classroom. From this case study, what we learn from her enactment and interview, is the importance of student achievement, facilitating a classroom of inclusion, the ability to have student needs met, and her love and responsibility as a teacher to foster that. From this, we understand a tremendous amount from Ms. Hudson's flexibility in compiling multiple pedagogical tools to create a dynamic learning space. Ms. Hudson's ability to navigate a prescriptive academic climate and engage in community building through languaging offers additional possibilities for educators and researchers to be open to exploring and learning in spaces that may be more complicated. In an educational climate where punitive and controlling ways of schooling are embedded and entrenched, Ms. Hudson's case emphasizes a need for comprehensive work to be done with preservice and in-service educators exposing classroom management as a pedagogy that begs to be revised to a focus on relational ways of being and caring for one another (Shalaby, 2020). Ms. Hudson and the Panthers existed within a school and educational climate that required her to be a bricoleur (Erickson, 2004), instead of providing opportunities for the class community to fully embrace restorative justice as a way of being.

This case study demonstrated the complexity and realities

of schools, and an example of how one teacher and kindergarten community enacted values of restorative justice in early childhood within a normative schooling experience that also emphasized the status quo in education. This case can serve as a reminder of the tremendous flexibility that teachers take up with children, and the need to oppose the controlling and colonizing alternatives for classroom management. While this community did not yet break from all traditions of control in classroom settings, we see the brilliance of how the teacher and children came together to find possibilities within their situated context. Academic learning, teaching practices, and building community were entwined for Ms. Hudson and the Panthers. Entering and learning from classroom spaces, such as this one, breaks the binaries of good and bad in education, and make visible the nuanced work that teachers employ in enacting academic learning and building dynamic classroom communities within a complex and rigid educational system.

Author's Note

References

Acosta, J. D., Chinman, M., Ebener, P., Phillips, A., Xenakis, L., & Malone, P. S. (2016). A cluster-randomized trial of restorative practices: An illustration to spur high-quality research and evaluation. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 26*(4), 413–430.

Bakhtin, M. (1934). Discourse in the Novel. *Literary theory: An anthology, 2*, 674-685.

Beach, R., & Beauchemin, F. (2019). *Teaching language as action in the ELA classroom.* Routledge.

Boyes-Watson, C., & Pranis, K. (2015). *Circle Forward: Building a restorative school community.* Living Justice Press.

Brownell, C. J. (2017). Mandated curricula as figured world. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique.*

Bryan, N. (2017). White teachers' role in sustaining the school-to-prison pipeline: Recommendations for teacher education. *The Urban Review, 49*(2), 326-345.

Casey, Z. A., Lozenski, B.D., & McManimon, S.K. (2013). From neoliberal policy to neoliberal pedagogy: Racializing and historicizing classroom management. *Journal of Pedagogy, 4*(1): 36-58.

Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse.* Sage.

Cavanagh, T., Vigil, P., & Garcia, E. (2014). A story legitimating the voices of Latino/Hispanic students and their parents: Creating a restorative justice response to wrongdoing and conflict in schools. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 47*(4), 565-579.

Comber, B. (2015). *Literacy, place, and pedagogies of possibility*. Routledge.

Creswell, J., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Fourth edition). Sage.

Comber, B., & Woods, A. (2018). Pedagogies of belonging in literacy classrooms and beyond: What's holding us back?. In *Interrogating Belonging for Young People in Schools* (pp. 263-281). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Davis, F. E. (2019). *The little book of race and restorative justice: Black lives, healing, and US social transformation.* Simon and Schuster.

Dresser, R. (2012). The impact of scripted literacy instruction on teachers and students. *Issues in Teacher Education, 21*(1), 71-87.

Erb, C. S., & Erb, P. (2018). Making amends: A restorative justice approach to classroom behavior. *Teacher Educators' Journal, 11*, 91-104.

Erickson, F. (2004). *Talk and social theory: Ecologies of speaking and listening in everyday life*. Polity Press.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin?. *Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 59-68.

Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2016). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 26*(4), 325-353.

Hambacher, E. (2018). Resisting punitive school discipline: perspectives and practices of exemplary urban elementary teachers. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 31*(2), 102–118. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1349958

Ingraham, C. L., Hokoda, A., Moehlenbruck, D., Karafin, M., Manzo, C., & Ramirez, D. (2016). Consultation and collaboration to develop and implement restorative practices in a culturally and linguistically diverse elementary school. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 26*(4), 354-384.

Jaworski, A., & Coupland, N. (Eds.). (2014). *The Discourse Reader* (Third edition). London: Routledge.

Kane, J., Lloyd, G., McCluskey, G., Maguire, R., Riddell, S., Stead, J., & Weedon, E. (2009). Generating an inclusive ethos? Exploring the impact of restorative practices in Scottish schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 13*(3), 231-251.

Kaveney, K., & Drewery, W. (2011). Classroom meetings as a restorative practice: A study of teachers' responses to an extended professional development innovation. International *Journal on School Disaffection, 8*(1), 5-12. https://doi.org/10.18546/IJSD.08.1.02

Kehoe, M., Bourke-Taylor, H., & Broderick, D. (2018). Developing student social skills using restorative practices: A new framework called HEART. *Social Psychology of Education, 21*(1), 189-207.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Reading between the lines and beyond the pages: A culturally relevant approach to literacy teaching. *Theory into practice, 31*(4), 312-320.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491.

MacGillivray, L., Ardell, A. L., Curwen, M. S., & Palma, J. (2004). Colonized teachers: Examining the implementation of a scripted reading program. *Teaching Education, 15*(2), 131-144.

Massey, D. (2005). *For space.* Sage.

McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Kane, J., Riddell, S., Stead, J., & Weedon, E. (2008). Can restorative practices in schools make a difference?. *Educational Review, 60*(4), 405-417.

Mercer, N. (2007). Sociocultural discourse analysis: Analysing classroom talk as a social mode of thinking. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice, 1*(2), 137-168.

Milner IV, H. R. (2020). Disrupting racism and Whiteness in researching a Science of Reading. *Reading Research Quarterly, 55,* S249-S253.

Milner IV, H. R., Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2019). *"These Kids Are Out of Control": Why We Must Reimagine "Classroom Management" for Equity.* Corwin Press.

Mosley Wetzel, M., Skerrett, A., Maloch, B., Flores, T. T., Infante-Sheridan, M., Murdter-Atkinson, J., Godfrey, V. C. & Duffy, A. (2020). Resisting positionings of struggle in "Science of Teaching Reading" discourse: Counterstories of teachers and teacher educators in Texas. *Reading Research Quarterly, 55*, S319-S330.

Neugebauer, S., Coyne, M., McCoach, B., & Ware, S. (2017). Teaching beyond the intervention: The contribution of teacher language extensions to vocabulary learning in urban kindergarten classrooms. *Reading and Writing, 30*(3), 543-567.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 101, Stat. 1425 (2002). https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ110/PLAW-107publ110.htm

Ortega, L., Lyubansky, M., Nettles, S., & Espelage, D. L. (2016). Outcomes of a restorativecircles program in a high school setting. *Psychology of Violence, 6*(3), 459–468.

Parsons, S. A., Vaughn, M., Scales, R. Q., Gallagher, M. A., Parsons, A. W., Davis, S. G., Pierczynski, M., & Allen, M. (2018). Teachers' instructional adaptations: A research synthesis. *Review of Educational Research, 88*(2), 205-242.

Payne, A. A., & Welch, K. (2015). Restorative justice in schools: The influence of race on restorative discipline. *Youth & Society, 47*(4), 539-564.

Powell, J., & Sinclair, M. N. (2019, April 5- April 9). *Becoming accomplices for racial justice: Preservice teachers and autoethnography as praxis* [Paper presentation]. American Educational Research Association 2019 Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada.

Powell, R., Cantrell, S. C., & Correll, P. (2017). Power and agency in a high poverty elementary school: How teachers experienced a scripted reading program. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education, 13*(1), 93-124.

Salmon, D., & Freedman, R. A. (2001). *Facilitating interpersonal relationships in the classroom: the relational literacy curriculum.* Routledge.

Schumacher, A. (2014). Talking circles for adolescent girls in an urban high school: A restorative practices program for building friendships and developing emotional literacy skills. *Sage Open, 4*(4), 1-14.

Shalaby, C. (2020). Classroom management as a curriculum of care. *Educational Leadership, 78*(3), 40-45.

Shaw, G. (2007). Restorative practices in Australian schools: Changing relationships, changing culture. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, 25*(1), 127-135.

Teske, S. C. (2011). A study of zero tolerance policies in schools: A multi-integrated systems approach to improve outcomes for adolescents. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 24*(2), 88–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2011.00273.x

Vaandering, D. (2014). Implementing restorative justice practice in schools: What pedagogy reveals. *Journal of Peace Education, 11*(1), 64-80.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Harvard University Press.

Wearmouth, J., & Berryman, M. (2012). Viewing restorative approaches to addressing challenging behaviour of minority ethnic students through a community of practice lens. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 42*(2), 253–268.

Winn, M. T. (2013). Toward a restorative English education. *Research in the Teaching of English, 48*(1), 126-135.

Winn, M. T. (2018). A transformative justice approach to literacy education. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 62*(2), 219-221.

Winn, M.T., Graham, H., & Alfred, R.R. (2019). *Restorative justice in the English language arts classroom.* National Council of Teachers of English.

Worthy, J., Consalvo, A. L., Bogard, T., & Russell, K. W. (2012). Fostering Academic and Social Growth in a Primary Literacy Workshop Classroom: "Restorying" Students with Negative Reputations. *The Elementary School Journal, 112*(4), 568-589.

Yoon, H. S. (2015). Assessing children in kindergarten: The narrowing of language, culture and identity in the testing era. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 15*(3), 364-393.

Yoon, H. (2013). Rewriting the curricular script: Teachers and children translating writing practices in a kindergarten classroom. *Research in the Teaching of English,* 148-174.