

Illinois State University

ISU ReD: Research and eData

Theses and Dissertations

11-6-2022

"You Have To Find Your People: "a Design-Based Approach to Transforming Teacher Practices Using Socially Just Innovation

Sarah Bonner

Illinois State University, sabonne@ilstu.edu

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

Recommended Citation

Bonner, Sarah, ""You Have To Find Your People: "a Design-Based Approach to Transforming Teacher Practices Using Socially Just Innovation" (2022). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1655.

<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/1655>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISUREd@ilstu.edu.

"YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR PEOPLE:" A DESIGN-BASED APPROACH TO
TRANSFORMING TEACHER PRACTICES USING SOCIALLY JUST INNOVATION

Sarah A. Bonner

169 Pages

The research for this dissertation is presented in manuscript format with an introduction, an in-depth outline of three manuscripts related to this study, and a conclusion that follows. As design-based research serving as the foundation to this work, the first manuscript used networked inquiry to uncover what teachers need in order to transform their classroom instruction to infuse socially just practices. The second manuscript used the figured worlds theoretical framework (Holland et. al 1998) to examine the identity transformations of experienced teachers. And, the third manuscript explored the connection between novice teachers and socially just innovative mentor teachers and its impact on newly developed classroom structures. Finally, the work concludes with implications for classroom teachers, teacher education, and administrators along with suggestions toward further research.

KEYWORDS: Design-based research, inquiry-based, professional development, qualitative studies, socially just innovation, teacher education

"YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR PEOPLE:" A DESIGN-BASED APPROACH TO
TRANSFORMING TEACHER PRACTICES USING SOCIALLY JUST INNOVATION

SARAH A. BONNER

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

School of Teaching and Learning

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2023

© 2023 Sarah A. Bonner

"YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR PEOPLE:" A DESIGN-BASED APPROACH TO
TRANSFORMING TEACHER PRACTICES USING SOCIALLY JUST INNOVATION

SARAH A. BONNER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Robyn Seglem, Chair

Anna Smith

Kyle Miller

Sara Kajder

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would never have been possible without the incredible (and ultra persuasive!) support of my chair, Dr. Robyn Seglem. It feels like yesterday when she approached me to “just talk” about the doctoral program. It was that day I felt that she saw something in me that I’ve never been able to see in myself. Also, that day, I learned to very rarely say “no” to her. I’m thankful for not only her help and guidance throughout this journey but I’m extremely appreciative for her innovative thoughts that made us the team we are today. Thank you for your mentorship not only throughout this program as a student but also what it meant to be a kind, caring, and thoughtful teacher. Additionally, words cannot express how grateful I am to have a good friend. I also owe an immense debt of gratitude to the other members of my committee: Drs. Anna Smith, Kyle Miller and Sara Kajder. Thank you for all of your insightful and thoughtful comments and questions that have helped shape and reshape this work. A former teacher candidate once told me that I was on her “Mount Rushmore” of teachers of all time. As I think about who I am as a researcher, I’m beyond thankful to all of you as mentors as you, too, sit upon my very own “Mount Rushmore.”

I am also grateful to the Teacher Church community. What started as a small focus group in the Fall of 2019 in an attempt to collect data from a handful of teachers, evolved into one of the most important groups - both personally and professionally - to me. From our weekly Sunday meetings to our annual summer retreats, Teacher Church continues to be a network of support where I go in order to learn, grow, and share. The Teacher Church community that my friends and I have built over the past two years is priceless. I wouldn’t have been able to do this work without Greg, Suzie, Winnie, Jim, Ryan, Caila, Kyle, Lynne, Allison, and even our newer members like Mike, Brooklyn, Nikki, Helen...and, of course, my co-conspirator in this

work...Robyn. Every time I returned to the data, I was reminded of the awesomeness of this group and the great things they individually keep doing for students everyday.

This work also would not be possible without my family. My mother, Cindy, provided endless encouragement throughout this process. Even when this process was hard, her endless cheerleading provided a level of motivation that I didn't want to disappoint. She listened when I needed an ear. She stepped in when I needed Gamma to help with my son. And, she never wavered in her belief that I could one day be called "doctor." While I did this work for myself, so much of this work continued because of her. The support of my father, Clyde, my brother, Robert, and my sister-in-law, Melinda has been invaluable to this journey as I am lucky to call them my family. And, supporting from afar, my Aunt Sue. She was - and always will be - a positive voice in my head that encourages me to do anything in order to be the best I can be.

Lastly, words cannot express the appreciation and love I have for the most important people in my life: Michael and Elliot. From all of the late nights, early mornings, and endless times away on the weekend, I want you to know that none of this would have been possible without either of you and you were both with me every time I stepped away. Thank you for your unconditional love, support, and laughter throughout this process. For Elliot, thank you for being one of my loudest cheerleaders I have in my life. For Michael, thank you for being my rock and helping me accomplish something that I never thought I could do. For both of my boys, I love you both unconditionally.

S.A.B.

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
TABLES	vii
FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
Overview of the Issues	2
Socially Just Innovation	3
Critical Theory	4
The Problem	4
A Teacher’s Perspective	5
Conceptual Framework	6
Design-Based Research (DBR)	6
Inquiry-Based Social Justice Design Framework	8
Study Overview	10
Article #1: A Design-Based Approach to Transforming Teacher Practices	10
Article #2: Examining the Figured Worlds of Experienced Teachers Seeking to Transform	11
Article #3: Practices of Novice ELA Teachers Mentored by Innovative Educators	12
Discussion	13
Limitations	13
Conclusion	14
CHAPTER II: A DESIGN-BASED APPROACH TO TRANSFORMING TEACHER PRACTICES	16
Abstract	16
Introduction	17
An Argument for Change	18
Collaborative Inquiry	18

Networked Inquiry	21
The Present Study	22
Methodology	24
Participants	24
Methods	26
Design-Based Research (DBR)	26
Researcher Positionality	26
Data Sources	28
Data Analysis	30
Findings	33
Establish Community	34
Rethink Purpose	41
Embrace Change	44
Discussions and Conclusions	47
Teachers as Learners	48
Teachers as Innovators	49
Teachers as Change Agents	51
To Conclude	53
CHAPTER III: EXAMINING THE FIGURED WORLDS OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS SEEKING TO TRANSFORM PRACTICES	54
Abstract	54
Introduction	55
Review of Literature	56
Professional Teacher Identities	57
Experienced Teacher Positionality and Transformation	58
Theoretical Framework	60
Positionality	62
World Making	62
Methods	63
Study Design	63
Study Participants	64

Data Collection and Analysis	65
Collaborative Online Discussions	65
Semi-Structured Individual Interviews	66
Teacher-Constructed Artifacts	66
Reflective Journal	67
Validity, Reliability and the Researcher’s Role	67
Limitations	68
Findings	69
Text Selections	69
Expanding Learning Communities and Spaces	75
Abandoning the Solo Expert Identity	75
Expanding Classroom Experts	76
Collaborative Grappling and Rethinking Space	79
Rethinking the Role of Students	84
Celebrating Failure	87
Shifting Grading Practices	89
Conclusions and Implications	92
CHAPTER IV: INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF NOVICE ELA TEACHERS MENTORED BY EXPERIENCED AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATORS	95
Abstract	95
Introduction	97
Making the Case to Change	98
ELA Teacher Preparation	99
ELA Teacher Mentoring and Induction	100
Student-Centered Teaching	101
Positionality	102
Methodology	103
Context of the Study	103
Data Collection	105
Collaborative Online Discussions	105
Individual Interviews	106

Teacher-Constructed Artifacts	107
Reflexive Journal	107
Data Analysis	108
Limitations	110
Findings	111
Rejecting Initial Conceptualizations of Teaching	111
Empowering Students as Catalysts for Learning	116
Discussion and Concluding Thoughts	126
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	130
Summarizing the Findings	130
Key Findings	130
Extending the Field	131
Implications for Design-Based Research	132
Implications for Teacher Education	133
Implications for Classroom Teachers	136
Implications for Administrators	140
Further Considerations and Implications for Research	142
Conclusion	145
REFERENCES	147
APPENDIX A: INQUIRY-BASED SOCIAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK	167
APPENDIX B: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - PRE-FRAMEWORK EXPERIENCE	168
APPENDIX C: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - POST FRAMEWORK EXPERIENCE	169

TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Teacher Participants, Personal Identity, Grade Level/Positions, Years in the Profession, Schools, and School Populations	25
2.2	Summary of Data Sources	29
2.3	Inductive Coding Sample from Observational Memos	31
2.4	Sample codebook for study themes	32
3.1	Teacher Participants, Grade Level/Positions, Years in the Profession, Schools, and School Populations	64
4.1	Sample Process Coding Datasheet	108
4.2	Sample Values Coding Datasheet	109
4.3	Sample of Third Datasheet	110

FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	The Evolution of Teacher Church and the Journey of Design-Based Research	23
2.2	Needs of Teachers Seeking Professional Transformation	34
4.1	Instructional Practices Continuum of Novice ELA Teachers	124

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world” -

Paulo Freire

We live in an ever-changing world and, as the world continues to change, so must education. Leaning into Freire’s (1978) message of people changing the world invites us to think about a specific group of people - teachers. Vygotsky (1987) reminds us that “the teacher must orient his work not yesterday’s development in the child but on tomorrow’s.” As literature speaks to the influence on past classroom practices as a means to shape one’s own individual practice, focusing on tomorrow’s developments (Vygotsky, 1987) challenges that logic for teachers. Shifting this focus begs teachers to explore a variety of teaching practices and new learning methods to support many of the learners today. For students, many continue to feel disconnected from school as it rarely provides a sense of agency or belonging (Loprest et al., 2019; Palmer & Connolly, 2022).

However, many current classroom practices continue to ignore these growing feelings among students and implement traditional practices found in teacher-centered spaces. The need to rethink school to support a learner-centered model seems entirely overdue. Darling-Hammond (2018) speaks to not only the physical spaces of schools in need of redesign to support collaboration, creativity, and communication; but, she also suggests that schools need to rethink the organization of time, people, space, and support in connection to learning. Darling-Hammond (2018) advocates for drastic changes in how we approach the notion of school and cites the new advances in brain research as well as the developments in understanding the learner in an ongoing and changing world. At a time when teacher-centered approaches seem to be an acceptable means of education, it now presents as an outdated and ineffective path for student

learning. These two contrasts highlight the need to reexamine how teachers think about their everyday practices in an effort to reconnect students with meaningful learning experiences.

Overview of the Issues

The United States Department of Education site defines innovation as something “based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, and experimenting to test assumptions. Innovation is based on questioning and challenging the status quo. It is also based on recognizing opportunity and taking advantage of it.” In education, innovation can appear as a new pedagogic theory, methodological approach, teaching technique, instructional strategy, learning process, or institutional structure that all lead to impacting student learning (Serdyukov, 2017; Yunus, 2018). Innovation, whether it is with technology, assessment, or instruction, requires time and space for experimentation and tolerance for uncertainty. While some school districts prove to be innovative, their success depends on individual leaders and communities of educators who create an innovative professional culture.

As we seek change, education searches for new innovations to help support teaching and learning practices. Innovation - a concept that can be seen as fluid and abstract - continues to play a primary role when scholars engage in design-based research in efforts to discover new knowledge that can lead to the improvement of education (McKenney & Reeves, 2019). Hoffman and Holzhter (2012) state that “innovation resembles mutation, the biological process that keeps species evolving” (p. 3). Levasseur (2012) discusses innovation as a disruption of established patterns. Brewer & Tierney (2012) focus on those who disrupt by stating that “innovation is linked to creativity, risk taking and experimentation” (p. 15). While some schools and districts prove to be innovative, their success depends on individual leaders and communities of educators who create an innovative professional culture. As innovation seeks to improve the

student learning experience, the need to explore teacher practice becomes a critical component to both understanding and furthering innovation in education. Viewing learning and knowledge as an entry point to transformation, innovation can help us to reconceptualize student learning experiences as well as teacher practices to push the field of education forward.

Socially Just Innovation

To further stretch innovation in today's classrooms requires the acknowledgement of equity and inclusion for all learners. While socially just classroom practices is not a new concept to the field (Adams, 2007; Thomas et al., 2014), socially just innovation provides a lens that centers innovation around practices in the name of social justice and equity. This specific form of educational innovation seeks to explore new possibilities in designing learning experiences that invite students to think and engage critically in the world they live in (Friere, 1978; Mai & Hutnyk, 2020).

Ladson-Billings (2021) speaks to the connections between theory, practice, and the need to evolve curriculum from its traditional stance. When considering how theory, practice, and the need to change classroom practices collide with one another, it begs to think deeply about the role and nature of the learner. Integrating socially just inquiry affords learners a space to bravely question the established systems currently in place as well as actively participate in ways in which those oppressive systems can be disrupted to strengthen equity among others (Newcomer & Cowin, 2022). Socially just innovation provides an opportunity to not only advance the field by empowering both learners and educators to disrupt traditional educational structures but also challenges the restructuring of many of the foundational roots in education that continues to uphold learner inequities (Reay, 2022).

Critical Theory

To be engaged and informed citizens, youth need to have an opportunity to critically evaluate situations and then be able to take action (Thomas et al., 2014). Freire (1970) acknowledges that humans are not just beings, but that they are beings in the world. For the classroom, it seems essential for students to develop a belief system and know how they see themselves in the world. Knowing this, it becomes necessary for classrooms to develop lived experiences that invite conversations that break down perceptions in order to unearth factual representations in order to read what the world continues to say with a critical lens (Ross, 2018).

Critical pedagogy reminds educators of the exceptionally vital responsibility they have toward students in regards to not only being critical of texts produced within such a large playground of information; but also recognizing that students have the power and ability to take action in efforts to seek justice (McLaren, 2020; Ross, 2016). Additionally, it maintains the idea that teaching and learning should be grounded in local, lived experiences as well as learner interests.

The Problem

As we strive to leave the industrial-based model of teaching and learning in the past, education looks to rethink the notion of school in efforts to support all learners. While this is a loaded area to examine, one way to directly impact students can be connected to teaching practices. According to Darling-Hammond (2018), students today cannot afford to participate in rote memorization or factual-based learning because of the demands of the changing world. As learners need experience in problem solving, adaptation, and collaboration, very few teachers know how to structure these learning experiences in their classrooms. For many teachers, they are tied to scripted curriculum plans or pacing guides that do not afford them time or space to

explore these teaching practices with their students. Whether it is mandated through district policies or state legislature or individual teachers choosing to engage in these prescriptive curriculum practices, the need to reexamine current teaching practices is vital when thinking about the ever-changing needs of students.

For teachers who seek to reflect and change their teaching practices, it creates a cascade of barriers that often stifle this journey. In one direction, teachers who seek change can also face adversity from their communities. Surrounding teacher colleagues may feel threatened or frustrated by these changes and create negative responses toward the teachers engaging in this ongoing, purposeful work. These responses can create loneliness and can disrupt a teachers' sense of safety among those who work together in a school (Saks et al., 2022; Torres, 2020; Van Eycken et al., 2022). In another direction, teachers may face push back from school administrators. For administrators, they may feel obligated to promote the curriculum purchased by the district and can derail new practices because they may not be directly tied to the prescribed lessons approved by a district's school board. To push further, parents expect to see similar lessons and assignments from when they were in the classroom (Hourii et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2020; Lareau, 2019). Seeing this disconnect between their experiences and their child's learning experiences can negatively impact a parent's understanding of the skills relative to student-centered learning.

A Teacher's Perspective

A recurring topic throughout my experience as a middle school educator relates to being unique. Over time, I heard friends say, "there aren't very many teachers who are like you" and colleagues say, "there you go again being different." My transformation as an educator is a personal journey that all began by simply saying 'yes' to doing something different I believed

would be in the best interest of my students. I never wanted to be different or decorate myself with accolades, I wanted to evolve my practice so that my students would experience quality learning opportunities. I focused on developing my own identity and positionality as an educator by deeply questioning what it meant to be a practitioner. However, as I continued to explore and evolve my own practice, I became cognizant that more teachers still embody traditional practices and teacher-centered design methods.

My transformation journey infused connected learning principles, culturally relevant and sustaining teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Paris, 2021), innovative teaching practices (Cleveland, 2018; French et. al, 2020), and student-centered learning experiences (Hanewicz et al., 2017; Dole et al., 2016). Reflecting on my experiences in the classroom, I received ongoing praise from school administration as well as the community; however, my voice was rarely heard when it came to teaching and learning among colleagues. Throughout my transformation journey, I couldn't help but wonder if there were other teachers who were willing to design and perform in student-centered classrooms; and, equally, how their voices were negotiated within the public school context. Additionally, I wondered about the transformational journey of other practitioners, how their origin stories became influenced by change, and how these stories of change influenced their own practices in efforts to promote change in the field. Because I was so entwined with this work, I wanted to explore other teachers' journeys collaboratively and; therefore, chose to use a design-based approach to move forward in my work.

Conceptual Framework

Design-Based Research (DBR)

Early on, Bereiter (2002) explains design-based research (or DBR) by stating, "Design research is not defined by its methods, but by the goals of those who pursue it - it is constituted

within communities of practice that have certain characteristics of innovativeness, responsiveness, connectivity, and dedication to continual improvement” (p. 321). Bakker (2019) continues to shape the meaning of DBR by noting that design research “seeks to see education as it could be or should be - it seeks to solve a problem” (p. 71). Design-based research sees a potential or argues the need for change within education. In this lens, researchers under this approach develop theory within the context of real-world practice while producing findings that are not only useful, but can also transfer into classrooms to improve instruction (Reinking & Bradley, 2008; Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). Not only does DBR invite a new investigation into programs, technologies, teaching-learning strategies, and systems, it also promotes deeply examining existing knowledge in order to formulate new knowledge and new practices (Plomp, 2010; Mintrop, 2016).

Reinking and Bradley (2008) speak further about educational design-based research by identifying common descriptors: pragmatic, grounded, interventionist, iterative, collaborative, adaptive and theory-oriented. Due to its versatility, scholars often look to educational design-based research as a means to use an inquiry approach as it varies from models and frameworks specific to the area of study. Within the parameters of DBR, there are 5 characteristics of design research (Confrey & Maloney 2015; Phillips, 2006). These characteristics include: 1) developing theories about learning and how these newly designed theories can lead to new learning, knowledge, and practices; 2) understanding something that needs to be changed (Bakker, 2004); 3) establishing hypotheses, observations, and reflections are nuanced due to its collaborative nature among participants; 4) formulating cycles that support initial designs, teaching implementations, retrospective analyses in order to inform the design process; and 5) showcasing the ability to transfer across contexts (McKenney & Reeves, 2019).

Researchers who employ DBR studies not only are guided by theory, but they ultimately strive to improve instruction and learning through specific goals and intervention tactics. Grounded in practitioner relevancy (Bakker, 2019) – or the idea of addressing problems that realistically exist in teaching contexts, DBR seeks to understand the implementation of an intervention in hopes to positively transform learning environments. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) speak to the versatility of DBR by addressing the notion that this type of research does not yield a specific set of research methods; rather, it asks that researchers engage in methods that are relevant to studying the effects of the intervention itself.

The structure of this study reflected the nature of DBR in relation to how the inquiry-based social justice framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) developed for middle school and secondary classrooms was implemented by teachers. As this inquiry-based framework became a catalyst of transformation for my own teaching practices, DBR was used to examine teachers seeking change in their own teaching contexts. Teacher participants who chose to implement this framework were also experiencing their own problem-based questions relative to their current classroom practices. In connection to the nature of DBR, this conceptual framework aligned well with this work because it not only afforded teacher participants to be co-constructors of problem solving that directly impacted their pedagogical perspectives, but it also permitted teacher empowerment.

Inquiry-Based Social Justice Design Framework

The inquiry-based social justice design framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) permitted students to engage in topics that not only call into question their own personal beliefs, but also to think critically about other perspectives beyond their own. At the beginning of the framework (see Appendix A), students read a young adult text that addressed various social justice topics

relative to real life. Additionally, the framework asked students to engage in a series of assignments known as anchor activities that included interviewing people from the community connected to the text, writing on social media platforms about self-chosen topics connected to text content, and constructing authentic blogs that focused on crossing text-based ideas with nonfiction news stories.

The framework continued beyond the young adult text when students asked questions about the text as well as the experiences throughout the text study. Their questions were collected and used as a means of analysis among the class in efforts to generate overarching research topics. Collaborative participant groups chose an area of focus and supported various interests with additional research. As students completed their research, groups continued their inquiries by producing an awareness campaign that integrated a variety of media – applying the skills practiced during the anchor activities earlier in the unit. In light of this production, the use of inquiry within this framework was situated as inquiry as disruption (Seglem & Bonner, 2022). Critical theory supports the development of engaged and informed citizens, the ability to transform learning to embody equity and inclusion starts from a place of disruption (citations). This framework permits teachers to work with students as they acknowledge their own biases, engage with a variety of perspectives, and construct critical questions that address many problems facing their own communities.

As a means to answer those problem-based questions, collaborative groups constructed authentic media campaigns that cultivated awareness on social justice-related topics inspired by the initial class text and shared their creations with their communities. Teacher participants agreed to this study because they, too, wanted to implement this framework into their classrooms with their learners.

Study Overview

The journey of teachers implementing this inquiry-based framework stayed true to design-based research as it evolved into three different discussions. Design-based research (DBR) studies learning through a problem-based lens. With the use of observation and intervention, DBR traces the journey of an identified issue and seeks solutions through theorizing and practice within a small context. Bakker (2019) illustrates DBR as a cyclical process that demonstrates an ebb and flow as participants continue to shape both theory and practice as they continue to coincide with one another. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) speak to this necessary cycle by identifying four critical components: 1) design; 2) test; 3) evaluate; and 4) reflect. As teacher participants experienced these cycles, the components became fluid-like as teachers continued to shape their experiences to better strengthen their own understandings as well as support their learners.

Throughout this study, DBR played a significant role in working with teachers wanting to transform their teaching practices. While the term ‘transformation’ is specific to the individual, teachers within this study regularly collaborated to process new thinking as they were testing new ideas in their own teaching contexts. As a means to promote teacher transformation and afford disruption to traditional teaching practices, DBR served as a vehicle that empowered teachers to collectively work together to make change.

Article #1: A Design-Based Approach to Transforming Teacher Practices

The first manuscript, “‘You Have to Find Your People Like I Did at Teacher Church:’ A Design-Based Approach to Transforming Teacher Practices,” is an overview of the design-based qualitative study examining how teacher participants and myself co-constructed a study related to the inquiry-based social justice framework (see Appendix A) and its evolution into a weekly

teacher support space called Teacher Church. This manuscript serves as the centerpiece to this line of research by describing how teacher participants came together to examine an inquiry framework through the use of networked inquiry (Seglem & Garcia, 2016). The audience for this work centers around practicing teachers, teacher educators, and professional development structures. The primary research question connecting to this work states “What do teachers need when seeking professional transformation to their teaching practices?” Teacher participants not only met weekly to discuss their ongoing experiences from the inquiry-based framework (see Appendix A) but data also came from their responses from a series of individual interview questions (see Appendices B and C). Findings from this study uncover what classroom teachers specifically need in order to grow as professionals—establishing a community of trust, rethinking teachers identities and purpose, as well as the need to embrace change. A potential publishing outlet for this work would be the *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* not only for their work around highlighting innovative practices in education but also the nature of this study has the potential to impact many classrooms beyond just one specific discipline.

Article #2: Examining the Figured Worlds of Experienced Teachers Seeking to Transform

The second manuscript, “‘I Saw the World Around Us Changing and I Wanted More:’ Examining the Figured Worlds of Experienced Teachers Seeking to Transform Teaching Practices,” branches off of the first manuscript to deeply examine the experienced teachers featured throughout the networked inquiry—or Teacher Church—using a figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) lens. This study specifically takes on an investigation of transformative practices among experienced teaching professionals as well as a critical view of teacher identity as a result of this study. The research question driving this work states “What does a figured world of an experienced teacher—or a teacher who has been in the classroom for at least five years— look like

in terms of transformative practices?” Findings from this study discuss the journey experienced teachers uncover as they let go of aged teaching practices and reimagine new teacher identities. Audiences for this study could potentially be found among classroom teachers, teacher educators working with experienced teachers in furthering education programs and professional development outlets. In regards to publication, this work would be suited for *Teaching and Teacher Education* because the platform itself does not align to a single approach. It showcases a variety of studies and welcomes both new theories as well as pushing boundaries in the field.

Article #3: Practices of Novice ELA Teachers Mentored by Innovative Educators

The final manuscript, “‘You’re Letting the Kids Really Go There:’ Instructional Practices of Novice ELA Teachers Mentored by Experienced and Innovative Educators,” is a qualitative study that aims to identify the teaching practices of novice English/Language Arts (ELA) teachers who started their teaching journeys with an experienced, innovative, and justice-oriented teacher and how that impacted their own practices when entering the field themselves. Branching from the larger study around Teacher Church (or the first manuscript), it became clear in the larger data collection that the novice teachers in the group stood out, and therefore, this study is designed to center the voices and perspectives of these new teachers throughout its design. The driving research question for this work states “How do teacher to student-teacher mentorships rooted in collaborative, justice-oriented inquiry shape the instructional practices of novice teachers—or teachers who have taught less than five years?” Findings from this study show the potential to rethink how teacher preparation programs view field placements for student teachers as well as how to better understand the needs of novice teaching. Additionally, this study provides a potential exploration into teacher education programs as well as teacher professional development. A potential publication for this work

includes *Journal in Teacher Education* due to its exploratory nature in examining new approaches to teacher education in today's field.

Discussion

Collectively, these three manuscripts demonstrate the core themes of this design-based study by providing an overview of the design-based research study itself in conjunction with teachers actively working in the field, investigating the transformative practices of experienced teachers, and offering a way to think about teacher education differently by examining the needs of novice teachers. This research seeks to strengthen the field's understanding of how teacher development can be reconceptualized to support transformative practices relative to student-centered learning.

Limitations

With any study, there are limitations. Throughout this study, the sample size of teachers—especially novice teachers—were limited. The primary DBR study only showcased seven teachers. And, the discussions that came from the larger subset of data, there were only five teachers who were identified as experienced teachers and two teachers who were identified as novice teachers. Given the nature of these small numbers, perspectives and discussions were limited. However, the use of DBR proved to be useful even though the participant pool was low due to its nature in examining problems and constructing interventions in centralized spaces (Bakker, 2019)

Another limitation to this work connected specifically to race. Of the seven participants in this study, everyone identified as White/Caucasian. Over the duration of this study, global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic as well as national events like the murder of George Floyd and the ongoing struggle with social unrest occurred. As teacher participants experienced

these pivotal events throughout this study, they also used these events to help reimagine their teaching practice. However, given the nuances of these national and global events, their discoveries were limited based on the lack of perspectives the group did not have during this time. While DBR did not play a role in bringing other participants into the group, it did, however, inspire these teacher participants to seek more knowledge through book studies, to ask more questions relative to their own teaching beliefs, and to advocate for their students in different ways.

Bakker (2019) views DBR as an ebb and flow that participants experience when working directly with problems and interventions. As teacher participants in this study started to design and test their own versions of the inquiry-based framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022), many of the artifacts created during these stages were never implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closings. Had schools been able to open and teacher participants would have been able to work directly with their students in classrooms, implementation of their work could have provided a different outcome to this study. In lieu of this, however, teacher participants utilized DBR in other ways related to taking risks considering the low stakes teaching spaces the pandemic created with remote learning. Teachers in this study were afforded time and space to not only think critically about their former practices but they were also reflective on implementing new practices as they anticipated their return to the classroom.

Conclusion

As students attempt to navigate and read our ever-changing world (Friere, 1978), exploring the teaching practices of experienced and novice teachers is both relevant and significant. The first manuscript showcases how teachers use networked inquiry to not only collaborate with each other while implementing an inquiry-based social justice framework in

their own classrooms, but to also nurture a space that teachers need in order to change. These changes—in particular to the identities of these experienced teachers—describe the essence of the second manuscript. The final manuscript in this study takes teacher development a step further by examining novice teachers working alongside experienced mentor teachers and experiencing classroom innovation first-hand. By exploring the needs of new teachers, we can then begin to think deeply about the changes teacher education and teacher development programs can do to make learning more socially just. This work not only seeks to support all students in new ways but it especially seeks to engage students in ways they have been often denied in traditional classroom practices.

CHAPTER II: A DESIGN-BASED APPROACH TO TRANSFORMING TEACHER
PRACTICES

“You Have to Find Your People Like I Did at Teacher Church:” A Design-Based Approach to Transforming Teacher Practices

Abstract

This article describes a seven-month, design-based research study that examined how a middle and high school teachers' networked inquiry experience allowed for the co-construction of their learning spaces and transformed their practice when taking on the role of a learner through a series of networked inquiry experiences. A qualitative analysis led to the findings from this study that uncovered what teachers need in order to grow as professionals - such as establishing a community of trust, rethinking teacher identities and purpose, and embracing change as educators. This study demonstrated an alternative perspective on teacher professional development.

Keywords: Design-based research, qualitative methods research, inquiry, social justice teaching, teacher identity, middle level education, secondary education

Introduction

“...You have to find your people like I did at Teacher Church... because I knew I needed to change but I also knew that I couldn't do it by myself.” Teachers like Suzie not only recognized the need to change classroom practices but also acknowledged that this change was not easily achieved in isolation. These changes weren't as simple as experimenting with a new learning strategy or technological tool. Mirra et al. (2015) remind us that “schools are no longer isolated from the world that exists beyond our classroom walls” (p. 54). Students continue to confront global topics ranging from economic stress to climate change to social unrest among many others in an ever-changing world. And, as a response, Suzie wanted to transform her pedagogy to reflect the needs of her students.

When thinking about the needs of students in today's world, it begs teachers to let go of teacher-centered practices and establish learning within the classroom as an experience that not only acknowledges student agency, but also social responsibility. Wesch (2016) notes that “learning is an inherent, fundamental trait - and, learning has been misdefined for us by school itself” (TED, 3:10). Drawing on the traditions of Friere (1970; 2002) and Vygotsky (1987), students learn best when they are invited to explore their interest and also deem the learning material meaningful and important to their lived experiences. In an effort to empower students in their own learning, it becomes imperative to take steps that professionalize teachers to grow and transform their practices as educators. Professional development studies that support teacher growth are not new to the field and evidence suggests that collaborative learning efforts by teachers impact teacher identity positively through improved student engagement, personal well-being, adaptability, and adjustment to current teaching practices (Goddard et al., 2007; Doğan & Adams, 2018; Gore et al., 2017).

Throughout the initial design of this research, a group of English/Language Arts and Social Studies teachers from central Illinois, similar to Suzie, agreed to participate in a study that invited them to collaboratively explore a new way to engage students in socially-driven topics in order to shift their classrooms into more civically-minded and experiential learning. Meeting every Sunday morning from January 2020 to June 2020, this group of teachers coined themselves “Teacher Church.” The creation of Teacher Church not only served as the origin story to this research but it also provided a clubhouse for like-minded teachers to come together, pose their questions, and share their experiences as they attempt to transform their teaching practices in new directions.

To date, few studies have looked at the dynamics of a teacher clubhouse where teachers come together in order to transform their practice to embody more socially-just practices. The purpose of this study was to add to the current understanding of how teachers construct learning together in an effort to transform their current classroom practices using a networked inquiry approach and how that network encourages a new means of supporting teachers as they grow professionally in their practice.

An Argument for Change

Collaborative Inquiry

Pappas (2014) reminds us that inquiry is grounded in social constructivist approaches to learning and focusing on the relationships between prior knowledge and new knowledge constructed collaboratively. Rather than passively receiving information as an individual, Vygotsky (1987) notes that a social constructivist approach to learning invites participants to actively construct meaning together in an effort to develop new understandings relative to the learner. When applied to teachers, collaborative inquiry designs more often have teachers

meeting regularly to construct a shared responsibility for their students' learning success within their classrooms and also provides a heightened sense of professional agency that is specific to teacher participants. In particular, it affords teacher participants time to reflect on the problems of practice within their own classroom contexts and then actively seeks to identify new strategies that address these problems (Buchanan et al., 2016).

Professional learning communities (PLCs) can be seen at the intersection of collaborative inquiry and transforming teaching practices. Lieberman and Miller (2008) define PLCs as “ongoing groups of teachers who meet regularly for the purpose of increasing their own learning and that of their students” (p. 2). Under this lens, professional learning communities have correlated to school reform (Harris et al., 2018), improved teaching practices (Admiraal et al., 2019), and changed the means in which education views teaching and learning (Prenger et al., 2020). It is a reflection on action that provides teachers with opportunities for sharing ideas, looking at practice with a critical eye, collaboratively identifying problems of practice, and hypothesizing about solutions in connection to professional learning communities in education.

However, while PLCs can be seen as an entry point into collaborative inquiry among teachers, it is equally important to acknowledge its critiques. According to Provini (2013), PLCs can be a space of inquiry and growth, but there are many factors that push against its effectiveness, such as insufficient time to delve into identified problems or school leadership not prioritizing the creation of a collaborative, safe space to do the work. Additionally, classroom teaching is foundational to teacher backgrounds, skills, lived experiences and personal biographies (Hargreaves, 2003). When considering the participation in these collaborative communities related to professional development, it becomes essential to pay attention to teachers' priorities (Goodson, 1992; Day et al., 2006). As Hall and Hord (2001) remind us,

change is at the heart of the individual. Teachers must be willing to buy into the PLC framework and have control in its design in order to see its benefits otherwise the success of the PLC could be very limited. As we think about engaging in authentic and transformative professional development for teachers, addressing these barriers must be examined.

Rethinking how we push through the barriers that relate to PLCs can present a key element to changing the way we think about professional development among teachers. Mulholland and O'Connor (2016) emphasize that school leaders play a vital role in securing resources, support, and encouragement for collaboration. Evidence supports that teachers' collaborative practices such as professional dialogue and personal reflection have a positive influence on learning new practices (Weissenrieder et al., 2015), the professionalization of teachers and teaching (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2006), and teachers' participation in professional development (Skerrett, 2010).

Wenger (2011) suggests that teachers' communities of practice improve learning and teaching in PLCs only if teachers collaborate, address hard questions about practices, and actively seek to change their practices. Rising professional development models centered around inquiry afford teachers an opportunity to engage in inquiry as a means of shifting professional practice (Ball, 2009; Campbell et al., 2004). These models support collaborative decision-making that intrinsically drives pedagogical growth and seek to empower teaching professionals (Ball, 2009; Borko, 2004; Butler et al., 2004). Opposed to popular one-shot workshops, inquiry models often create spaces for teachers to draw on resources (i.e., from personal practice, colleagues, professional readings), develop long-lasting inquiries into their personal teaching practices, and promote a continuous self-reflection to encourage ongoing teacher learning (Horn & Little, 2010; Witterholt et al., 2012).

Networked Inquiry

While models around inquiry promote and encourage sustained, long-lasting teaching development, it can also be limiting depending on who might be participating. Seglem and Garcia (2016) stretch the nature of collaboration among teachers by connecting teachers from multiple locations and teaching contexts to come together as a community through the use of online technologies. Booth and Kellogg (2015) recognize how online communities of teachers “co-construct new forms of meaning and understanding in ways that are individually and collectively valuable, and apply that knowledge in their professional practice” (p. 686). This sense of community allows teachers to not only construct sustainable relationships among each other but it also provides the foundations and openness for deeper, more meaningful conversations in connection to growth in practice.

As a means to think about teacher professional development through the intersection of inquiry and technology integration, networked inquiry (Seglem and Garcia, 2016) blends the nature of inquiry, problem solving and criticality of professional learning communities with the ability to network with professionals beyond the personal teaching space. From this perspective, working within a network or community of inquiry creates conditions for teachers not only to access rich resources, but also to engage together in developing practice and learning across teaching contexts. By accessing a variety of resources through networked inquiries, teachers also begin to develop a stronger sense of expertise that invites an ongoing cycle of curiosity, problem solving, and pedagogical growth. These qualities found within networked inquiry served as the bedrock to this study and guided the development of Teacher Church.

The Present Study

The inquiry-based socially just design framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) showcased a path for teachers to not only integrate young adult literature as a window (Bishop, 1990) but it also afforded a structure for teachers to experience inquiry-based learning as socially just classroom practices. Teachers participating in Teacher Church came together initially to implement the inquiry-based framework. And, while they may have been implementing this work in separate classroom spaces, they utilized the Teacher Church community as a form of support as they continue to integrate this work with students.

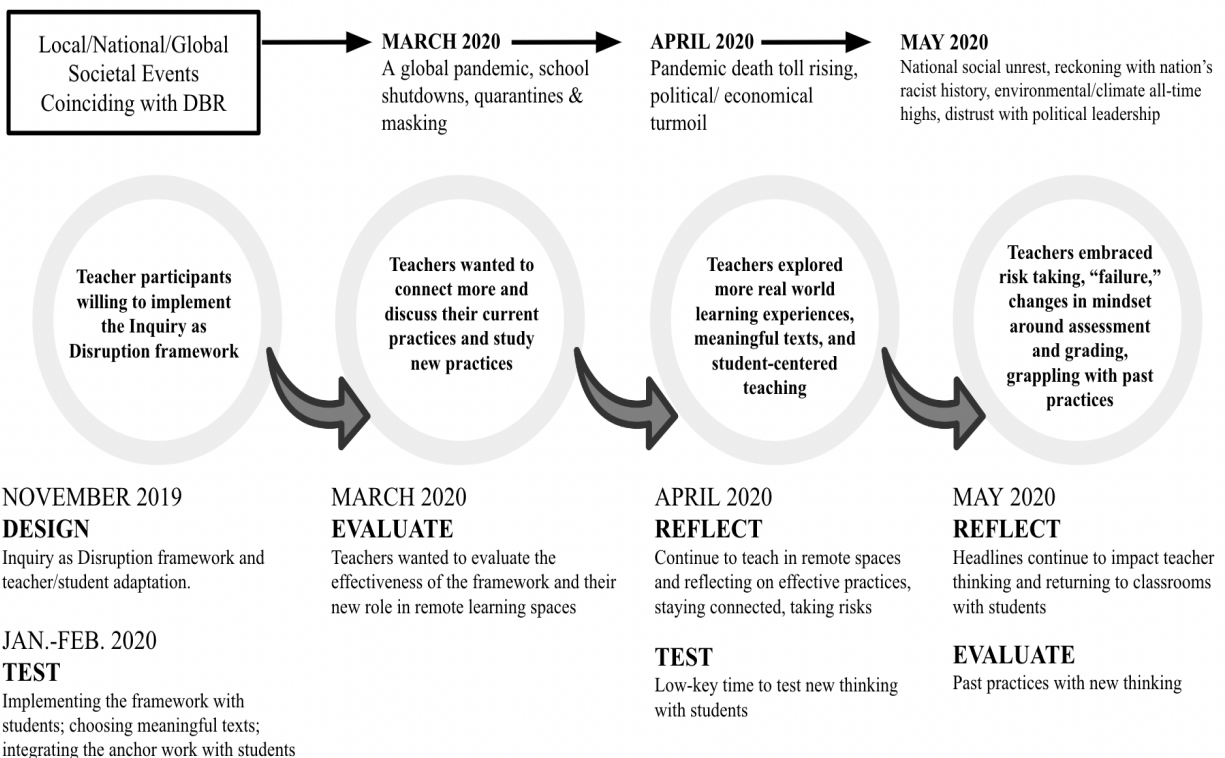
While inquiry-based methods alone offer students the ability to explore a vast collection of questions, Seglem and Bonner's (2022) inquiry disruption framework specifies that inquiry-based practices center specifically around social justice issues. The framework permitted Teacher Church participants to engage their students in socially-just topics that not only called into question their own personal beliefs, but also to think critically about other perspectives beyond their own. The beginning of this study intended to examine how Teacher Church participants adopted this framework into their own classroom learning environments as well as how this framework impacted the shape of their individual professional practice. However, with factors such as schools closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, shifts to remote learning spaces, and the social unrest of our nation throughout the spring of 2020, this collaborative teacher group evolved into more than just learning and implementing a new framework for teaching literature, it became a teacher community (see Figure 2.1).

While this design-based study still centered on discussions around this inquiry framework, this specific group of teachers also emerged as a networked inquiry of professionals wanting to learn from others and to meet weekly in an effort to expand their practice in various

ways, specifically around social justice issues, as a response to the external factors impacting the classroom at that current time and beyond.

Figure 2.1

The Evolution of Teacher Church and the Journey of Design-Based Research



The ebb and flow of this research acknowledged that the teachers who entered this study were looking for a way to become more innovative in implementing literature in their classrooms. Teacher Church served as a way to reflect on their current practices with other teachers who shared similar goals. As a result, the participants of this study collaborated together to explore innovative and transformative ways to change their approaches to teaching. From this evolved experience, the research question for this study became: What do middle and high school teachers need in order to collaboratively transform their professional practice to support student-centered learning?

Methodology

This qualitative research study examined how middle and high school teachers collaboratively co-constructed an online professional development space and how those experiences impacted the transformation of their current teaching practices. The theoretical foundations of this study centered around both critical theory (Friere, 1970, 1978; Vygotsky, 1987) and constructivism (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1936, 1950). For critical theory, teacher participants who entered this study wanted to explore how to engage students in developing their voices related to contemporary social topics, to critically read the world around them, and to navigate these interactions with their students in authentic, meaningful ways that directly impacted their communities.

Design-based research supported the constructivist approach to this work as teachers not only critically examined their own professional practices as a means to make change but also co-constructed space to discuss relative teaching issues and developed new teaching materials to implement with students. The methodology of this work supported a reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using a subset of data from a larger DBR study. The analysis of this subset highlighted constructivist grounded theory due to the role that DBR played in the design of the study itself.

Participants

The participants of this study came from different middle and high school classrooms outlined in Table 2.1. The teacher participants were specifically chosen for this study because of their interest in implementing the inquiry-based socially just framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) in their assigned teaching positions. In addition to interest, the teacher participants also

demonstrated a variety of teaching contexts based on their school populations as well as a vast collection of teaching experiences within their current teaching positions at the time of this study.

Table 2.1

Teacher Participants, Personal Identity, Grade Level/Positions, Years in the Profession, Schools, and School Populations

Participant	Personal Identity (gender/race)	Current Teaching Position (grade level and content)	Years of Service in Position	School	School Population (# of students)
Jim	Male; white	10th-12th Grade High School English	8	River Valley Junior/Senior High School	300-400
Ryan	Male; white	11th-12th Grade High School Social Studies	7	River Valley Junior/Senior High School	300-400
Greg	Male; white	7th Grade Social Studies	15	Eastview Junior/Senior High School	1000-1100
Suzie	Female; white	7th Grade Language Arts	24	Eastview Junior High School	1000-1100
Winnie	Female; white	8th Grade Literature/ Composition and Language Arts	6	Oak Hills Junior High School	700-800
Caila	Female; white	8th Grade Language Arts	3	Central Junior High School	300-400
Kyle	Male; white	Student Teacher	--	River Valley Junior/Senior High School	300-400
Sarah	Female; white	8th Grade Language Arts	14	River Valley Junior/Senior High School	300-400

**School names have been provided with pseudonyms (Illinois Report Card, 2021).*

Taking place over seven months, teachers met regularly using Zoom to discuss their specific progress in working with and implementing the framework in their individual practice.

Methods

Design-Based Research

Grounded in practitioner relevance, design-based research (DBR) seeks to understand the implementation of an intervention in hopes to positively transform learning environments. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) speak to the versatility of DBR by addressing the notion that this type of research does not yield a specific set of research methods; but, asks that researchers engage in methods that are relevant to studying the effects of the intervention itself. Bereiter (2002) explains design-based research (DBR) best by stating, “Design research is not defined by its methods, but by the goals of those who pursue it - it is constituted within communities of practice that have certain characteristics of innovativeness, responsiveness, connectivity, and dedication to continual improvement” (p. 321). Design-based research offers a way to develop theory within the context of real-world practice while producing findings that are not only useful, but can also transfer into classrooms to improve instruction (Reinking & Bradley, 2008; Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

Researcher Positionality

For this study, teacher participants entered this space wanting to explore new ways to integrate literature in their classrooms differently than they had experienced in the past. In true DBR form, teachers served as co-constructors and controlled not only the discourse of this experience, but also the logistics including time, location, and how often the group met with one another. And, as DBR is cyclical and interventionist by nature (Bakker, 2019), participants constructed Teacher Church as a network to support change in their professional practice.

Design-based research is emergent and it continues to inform the design changes and data collection as it evolves. I founded the networked inquiry experience with the study participants at the beginning of the study to provide expertise on the inquiry-based social justice framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022). Through our networked inquiry, it became apparent that the conversations generated in the regular meetings also impacted my classroom practice and desire to grow professionally.

Previous to this study, I co-authored an inquiry framework that invited students to deeply question, explore and take action on social just issues they personally wanted to champion. After experiencing this work first hand in my classroom, I entered a networked inquiry experience that explored the facets of community action and inquiry-based practices. As I participated in both of these experiences, it played a pivotal role in how I transformed my teaching practices with students. These experiences shaped the lens in which I saw both how I personally viewed teaching and learning as well as how I wanted to build the foundations of Teacher Church.

Teacher Church afforded me a space to think about a framework that had already been established in my classroom for several years in new ways. At the time, I needed the support of the Teacher Church to think about teaching and learning in remote spaces. Confidently, I had incorporated inquiry methods into my classroom but never have I facilitated this work remotely. And, as the nation continued to face these trying times, Teacher Church also provided an outlet to rethink and reprioritize the discussions and topics I wanted to engage my students in when coming back to the classroom the next school year. Knowing that we had more questions than answers at the time, participants of Teacher Church redesigned its focus that extended over the course of the study.

Data Sources

Data collection came from four sources in order to identify patterns of findings that thematically emerged across these multiple data sources (see Table 3). The primary data derived from discussions that took place via Zoom that were recorded and transcribed. The recordings captured the contributions and questions of the participants as well as documented the evolution of this group as it shifted to examining other learning growth opportunities beyond studying the inquiry-based social justice framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022).

The second data source came from a series of observational notes (Saldaña, 2009) that captured the primary talking points of the Zoom discussions as well as additional thoughts to coach participants moving forward throughout the time frame. These observational notes were formed as weekly emails to participants to not only communicate the highlighted points of our weekly discussions but also to serve as a form of communication to connect the group together throughout the study timeline.

The third data source emerged from the suggestion of the participants. As the study continued to move forward each week, participants expressed the need to cultivate and archive resources that connected to the online discussions as well as the work being created for students in their individual teaching contexts. The shared artifacts served as a pulse point to teacher thinking and how that influenced the direction and growth among the participants. Ultimately, these shared artifacts were useful in identifying elements that brought about shifts in participant contributions, motivation, and feelings as they moved through the networked inquiry experience.

Last of all, reflexive journaling served as a means to understand the importance of personal values and feelings within this research process. From Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004), reflexivity invites a critical look inward to think deeply about one's own lived reality and

experiences. Mann and Kelley (1997) state that reflexivity is the recognition that “all knowledge is affected by the social conditions under which it is produced and that it is grounded in both the social location and the social biography of the observer and the observed” (p. 392). Since I was positioned as both a researcher as well as a classroom teacher who implemented the inquiry-based social justice framework within a teaching context, the reflexive journal documented my progress of my own learning as well as the learning among the teachers participating in this study. The journal reflections provided insight to the needs of the group as well as supported emerging themes into the elements that added to the definition of teacher development.

The narrative accounts stemming from the group discussions were used in the analysis of data to guide and support emerging categories of this study. These categories were then compared to the other sources of data (see Table 2.2). The shared artifacts curated among the participants, for example, were checked for frequency and consistency with information found in the online discussion transcripts and in cross-reference with my reflexive journal. These multiple data sources enabled a richer understanding of the phenomena being examined from various perspectives.

Table 2.2

Summary of Data Sources

Data source	Number of data sets	Contributors	Intent
Online discussion sessions	12	Participants; Participant researcher	To capture the processes of teachers using the framework and provide information for cross validation.
Observational memoing	38	Participant researcher	To provide record of online discussions for participants; to communicate with participants
Table Continues			

Table Continued

Shared Artifacts	76	Participants; Participant researcher	To curate a collection of teacher-created materials connected to the networked inquiry group
Reflexive journaling	17	Researcher	To capture individual participant's thoughts and learning in connection to the research

Data Analysis

To begin, a reflexive thematic analysis approach was used when adapting Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase analysis procedure: 1) become familiar with the data; 2) generate initial codes; 3) search for themes; 4) review themes; 5) define themes; and 6) construct the write up. For the first phase of this analysis, the transcripts of the online discussions, the observational memos, and the shared artifacts were read several times to allow for an in-depth understanding and appreciation of the details of the phenomena found within the study. This subset of data from a larger design-based study included details of the ongoing evolution of the online discussion, the conversations and interactions that took place in those spaces, and the emotions and feelings experienced and other influences captured throughout the transcripts.

Entering phase 2, this study used inductive coding as a means to approach the data and generate initial codes. Charmaz (2014) notes that inductive coding "helps us preserve participants' meaning of their views and actions in the coding itself" (p. 64). The nature of inductive coding invites almost every line of data to receive its own code (Saldaña, 2009). For this analysis, I immediately started reviewing and becoming familiar with the data after the first few online discussion sessions and then continued forward with each session. Searching for themes and coding were conducted throughout all of the data sources once it had all been collected and not in a specific order. Table 2.3 provides a snapshot into the inductive coding

processed throughout this second phase of analysis. The table highlights an entry from my observational memos after meeting with study participants over Zoom.

Table 2.3

Inductive Coding Sample from Observational Memos

Sunday, January 26, 2020 - AFTER Zoom Meeting

I thought the meeting this morning went ¹ really well. As when anything gets started, there's always a moment of ² being uncomfortable. As I started our conversations today with ³ my own memo and reflections, my hope around this idea centered at ⁴ inviting others to share their ⁵ thoughts, concerns, and questions about the topic. Not sure what this would look like, the ⁶ team began to open up when they talked about the ⁷ fear we have as teachers about doing things that ⁸ push against traditional practice. Whether this is from a ⁹ fear cultivated by the colleagues we teach with on an everyday basis or it's a fear of personal failure, or even a fear of student/parent response when attempting something new - it became clear that ¹⁰ everyone feels a level of fear.

- 1 "Positive meeting"
- 2 "Being uncomfortable"
- 3 "Shared personal thoughts"
- 4 "Inviting others to share"
- 5 "Specific share outs"
- 6 "opening up"
- 7 "fears in teaching"
- 8 "resisting traditions"
- 9 "fear origins"

10 "everyone feels fear"

The group made two primary ¹¹ decisions around our networked inquiry group: 1) ¹² creating a Google folder for resources and a Google doc to communicate with each other (reflections/questions); and 2) deciding to meet every three weeks. Those dates have been predetermined throughout the rest of the semester.

- 11 "group decision making"
- 12 "logistics"

For phase 3, codes from my reflexive journal as well as the other data sources collected for this study were then organized into categories based on patterns discovered throughout the data. A codebook was generated to organize these categories. The categories developed throughout this codebook included: 1) professional fear; 2) resisting classroom complacency; 3) being uncomfortable; 4) empowering and reimagining classroom actions; 5) grappling with race; 6) changes in teaching practices; 7) personal vulnerability; 8) safety and security in employment; and 9) greater purpose beyond "just reading the literature." A sample codebook of these categories can be seen in Table 2.4.

For stage 4 and 5, I identified three primary themes as a result of the categories discovered in stage 3. Table 4 highlights a sample of the study's codebook and how the data

categories were collapsed into larger themes. These themes will be further explored throughout the study’s findings. In regards to the trustworthiness of this analysis, the data was triangulated among Zoom transcripts, observational memos, reflective journaling, and teacher-created artifacts. As both participant and researcher throughout this study, I maintained regular member checks with the teacher participants across a seven month time span.

Table 2.4

Sample Codebook for Study Themes

Categories	Definition	Sample Data Excerpts
Professional fear	Statements about how teachers feel fear when attempting to make changes to their classroom practices.	<p><i>...when teachers find themselves like giving up control sometimes they like that will take it right back because it doesn't go well the first day or something and so they don't have like this more longitudinal approach to like "oh I'm gonna do this day one will be slightly chaotic day two less chaotic and day three they'll know what they're doing and it'll be better than it's ever been ever."</i></p> <p><i>...to kind of make that big leap because you know the current school system and the resources that we have are you know fairly well set so how can we overcome these difficulties to really bring inquiry into the classroom</i></p> <p><i>...when we go against those systems to promote new thinking and change there's kind of a bit of fear that kind of grows in there so if you speak about logistics what are some things specifically that you're thinking about anybody</i></p>
Resisting classroom complacency	Statements about pushing against complacency in the classroom setting	<p><i>I really wanted to do something new because I just didn't want to see my teaching career be like Groundhog Day with Bill Murray and just the same things over and over again</i></p> <p><i>...you have to kind of unschool our kids because they're not used to this you know oh you're letting me be in charge of my learning I don't understand what you want me to do with this and so there there's a lot to be said and I love how the the books you</i></p>
Table Continues		

Table Continued

know if picked well like well written good books can just inspire a lot of really good conversation from all of that

I needed to give up those things I needed that purge I needed to start over and rethink things because we have completely different kids every year that have different needs and I need to be responsive that instead of getting comfortable and making things easy for me that's not the point and I was very transparent with with my all my stakeholders

Working through vulnerability
Statements about feeling vulnerable when reflecting on past practices as well as the positionality/ responsibility of teaching

I have to be okay with letting go letting the kids contact these community members inviting the community members to come in whether that be face-to-face or through digital spaces you know so to speak

I'm not the expert in a lot of these situations - I am I'm a white teacher...there's limitations to what I can say and do and talk about

I think it's important to recognize that you don't have all the answers and you yourself having those questions as well so when you find yourself in a place of vulnerability as a teacher that also creates an invitation for students to be welcoming in their questions too

Findings

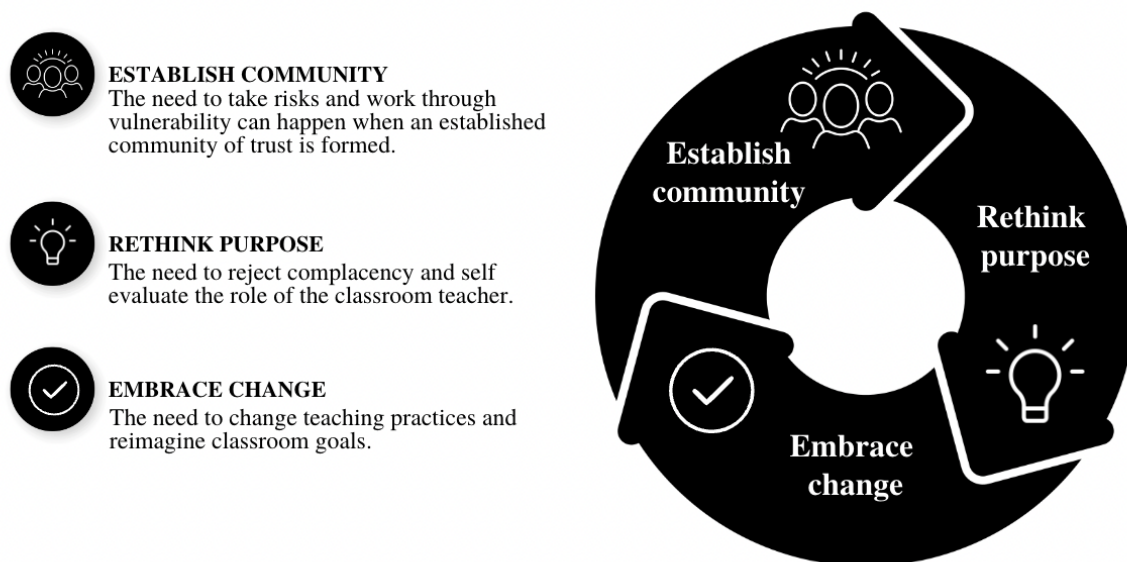
The teachers' aspiration to change their professional practice to embody a more student-centered approach to teaching literature served as the primary catalyst as they initially stepped into this study. Seeking change but not knowing how to specifically make changes to their professional practice became prevalent among the teacher participants as they agreed to this design-based study. Data analysis led to the construction of a series of needs (see Figure 2.2) that supported teachers throughout this transformation process. Those needs included: 1) the need to establish a community of trust related to teaching and learning; 2) the need to rethink the purpose

of teaching and learning and how their teaching identities played a role in this space; and 3) the need to embrace change to their classroom practices as they co-constructed new learning.

Figure 2.2

Needs of Teachers Seeking Professional Transformation

Needs of Teachers Seeking Professional Transformation



Establish Community

As teacher participants entered this work, feelings of fear and vulnerability often became a prevalent theme throughout the Teacher Church transcripts and my observational memos. The need to establish a trusting community to voice these fears and vulnerabilities developed into a core principle of this participant group. As Teacher Church unpacked the framework, participants showed evidence of vulnerability and fear related to the changes the framework inspired to their already existing practices. For teachers like Winnie, she explained that as she stepped into the beginning stages of the inquiry framework, she had questions around one of the anchor activities. This activity invited students to interview outside experts related to various roles within the

novel she and her students were studying at the time. While she saw the need to bring in outside voices to better support her students' questions, she shared her hesitations with Teacher Church in connection to parents and outside community members by saying:

I remember being hesitant to allow so many voices in... I remember feeling when you can't control what outsiders may say to the kids, like, there's this little bit of a "oh where are you gonna go, what are you gonna say, what kind of parent email I'm gonna get it" as a result of this person coming.

While Winnie wanted to expand the boundaries of her classroom by inviting a variety of community experts to speak to her students, her hesitancy toward this practice stems from not having complete control of the messages her students would receive. Other fears manifested among Teacher Church participants in connection to other colleagues.

Suzie noted throughout this experience that, as the team leader for the Language Arts department, she felt that this framework pushed against the work she had constructed with her other colleagues in her school. Many of the texts and artifacts that had been created by Suzie's colleagues were developed to create consistency among the classes. These artifacts included pre-selected texts, specific themes and projects, as well as co-developed rubrics to work associated with their determined texts. However, as Suzie implemented the inquiry framework, she feared repercussions from her peers because she did not see a connection between what was created by her colleagues and the work she was doing with her students.

Kyle also noted a sense of fear even though he had experienced the framework with me as my student teacher. His fear did not resonate with entering this framework with students, but he shared his hesitancy toward this work being a new teacher. Kyle observed and participated in the inquiry framework but, similar to Winnie, he, too, was concerned about parent perceptions

when infusing social issues in his practice with students. Noting his lack of experience in the field, he acknowledged that his fear not only centered around justifying these practices to outside stakeholders as a nontenured teacher but to also have the words to support this work if he were challenged by someone outside of the classroom.

The fear of what others outside of the classroom - administrators, parents, community members, specifically - might say toward this framework or toward themselves as professionals was acknowledged among the teachers across the transcripts. Of the 12 transcripts collected throughout this study, 9 transcripts highlighted a sense of fear related to these outside factors and how these influences allowed these teachers to feel fear and hesitation toward implementing this work. For these teachers, Teacher Church served as an established community that allowed participants to acknowledge these feelings of doubt and fear as they continued to move forward in implementing the inquiry framework.

Along with experiencing fear from the unknown of outside influences, a sense of personal vulnerability occurred throughout many of the teacher participants. Admitting to not being the expert or not having all of the answers proved to be an ongoing message across transcripts and observational memoing. Suzie captured this sentiment in Teacher Church when she spoke about implementing the framework with her students, her teaching context, and how she has navigated this experience with her students. She noted:

I'm scared to admit to anybody else I'm doing this - if I just do it with my students that I know at least they're with me and they'll get something from it - but the more I've come to speak confidently about it, the more real that I've opened myself and my students up to a lot more opportunity.

Admitting fears and becoming more vulnerable happens when we feel safe to express these feelings. As Suzie confessed to being afraid, she had the other teacher participants' support to not only see past these fears but also discover ways in which she can be empowered to feel more comfortable with herself and her students. Specifically speaking, many Teacher Church participants responded by sharing stories about their fears starting this work. Many stories included how teachers were worried to speak to their administrators about this work because they feared they would not receive support. Also, in that same conversation, Teacher Church participants encouraged Suzie to proudly own the work she was doing with students and that this type of change was both "messy and meaningful."

To add to this, personal vulnerability also surfaced among the teacher participants when it came to grappling with conversations around race in their teaching contexts. Throughout the duration of this study, the spring of 2020 not only proved to be a challenging year as we all entered a global pandemic; but, within the United States, we all felt the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery along with the social unrest that followed. As seen in both my reflexive journaling and the group transcripts, white teachers in this study expressed a sense of vulnerability when they shifted their thoughts from the logistics of the inquiry framework and centered their conversations around returning to students the following school year and how necessary this work was because of these events. For Greg, a white male teacher, he recognized that these troubling events played a role in his Social Studies classroom both in remote spaces as well as anticipating conversations into the following school year. Greg spoke about the nature of his students' questions throughout this time with Teacher Church. Greg stated in the transcripts:

I appreciate the fact that they're questions now and that they're not statements because once they turn into statements, they're there's a little bit more of a deeper level of damage

there than it is just by asking questions - and so, you know, I mean, I may find myself to be uncomfortable because I don't always know what to say about it [race], but we can, like, explore the questions together and I'm ok with that.

As we saw Greg appreciate his students' asking questions, he also noted a sense of vulnerability in not knowing the answers and how that can be an uncomfortable experience for white teachers navigating the conversations of race in the classroom. However, as he continued, such hard topics like race can present opportunities for teachers to explore this work together with their students. In effort to be accepting of this practice, Greg needed to be vulnerable with his students as he positioned himself more as a learner than as a teacher. And, while Greg is an example of vulnerability, his story is representative of the larger set of data among the white teacher participants within this study. Because of Greg's line of questioning and experiences with his students, it invited Teacher Church participants to explore a variety of literature together around race, pose their own questions to the group, and share experiences in their own teaching contexts as they continued to craft learning opportunities around race.

While participants crafted new directions in their teaching practices, trying new things also invited failure. As the participants continued to learn, expand, and transform, they also channeled a sense of vulnerability by dissecting their failures as they attempted to make tangible changes to their professional practices. The safe and trusting relationship established among Teacher Church afforded a space to productively and collaboratively solve individual failures in an effort to redirect and motivate participants to take action in their own teaching contexts.

Winnie journaled about when she discovered that her students were not responding well to the initial stages of the inquiry framework:

I am ending the week with an array of emotions. It seems that the unit is resonating more with some classes than others. When collecting wobble journals [student journal writings] and anchors from our 1st hour, my co-teacher and I needed an umbrella because it was raining excuses in that room. Many [students] did not do the anchor [assignment] at all and several didn't complete hardly anything on their wobble journals all week. We cannot attribute all of these behaviors to accommodation needs. The lack of effort, motivation, and pride are heavy in our hearts going into the weekend as we attempt to brainstorm some appropriate responses to this [lack of] turnout.

For teachers like Winnie, seeing this response from students could have potentially served as a perfect storm to walk away from this inquiry work and shift back to more comfortable, complacent teaching practices. However, as her reflection was written on a Friday and she met with Teacher Church on that Sunday, Winnie shared her failures with the other participants in an effort to push her work forward with her students. She said during the Zoom meeting, "I'm thankful I can come here and talk about this with you...there aren't many I can have this conversation with and I feel better working with my students this week." Not only was Winnie taking a risk in shifting her practice with students but she felt confident to explore why her students weren't responding to these changes and vulnerable enough to share these failures with others as a means to problem-solve. The existence of our trusting community - our Teacher Church discussions - allowed Winnie to share her concerns, brainstorm possible solutions, and regain confidence to keep trying this work in order to move forward with her students.

For high school teachers like Jim and Ryan, they too, expressed a sense of vulnerability within the Teacher Church community in connection to the community they serve. Both teachers knew their students would readily engage in this work but noted that possible barriers may exist

among the classroom shareholders - administration, school board, parents, other influential community members to name a few. Rather than focusing on the barriers of this work, Jim and Ryan wanted to generate solutions. Recognizing this early on, Jim noted that in order to ensure the success of his professional changes in the classroom, he needed the support of his classroom shareholders. Jim stated in a Teacher Church conversation:

I know this work is important and I know I need to think differently about the work we [him and his students] do in class...I feel it's important to communicate our work to families and hold that level of transparency but I'm afraid I'll fail before I get started.

For Jim, stepping into a space like Teacher Church meant that he would be faced with challenging his current teaching practices. The trust established within the church community afforded him an understanding of why he needed to transform. However, as he continued to develop trust among his teacher colleagues in Teacher Church, he emulated this same need among his classroom shareholders. This level of transparency had not been a part of Jim's teaching practices in the past but, as a way to ensure that these new practices would be successful in his classroom, Jim made this a priority. As Jim and Ryan both worked in the same building and shared many of the same students, this type of transparency was something that they saw as a risk they were willing to take together knowing that they had the support of their church colleagues.

Working through their feelings in Teacher Church, participants like Greg and Suzie shared a sense of vulnerability when working directly with their students as they shifted their positions from teacher to learners. For teacher participants like Winnie, she expressed vulnerability when working through her professional inner monologue as she experienced both new teaching practices with her students and navigating the mixed responses she received from

them upon initial implementation. Teachers like Jim and Ryan revealed a sense of vulnerability when they discovered their need for richer transparency of their classrooms for their classroom shareholders. Teacher Church not only served as an established space to share teachers' fears and barriers, but, due to the trust forged by the participants, it also invited dialogue that inspired solutions and action.

Rethink Purpose

While participants aspired to work through their fears and vulnerabilities within the safe spaces of Teacher Church, ongoing discussions also led teachers to resist teacher-centered practices. Of the 12 transcripts and 38 observational memos noted during this time, resisting complacency stood out 14 times. To be more specific, resisting complacency in this study meant that teacher participants resisted teacher-centered practices observed among their other colleagues (examples of these practices included using the same units or texts every year, teaching to the textbook, or teaching specific comprehension/ lower level thinking practices to name a few). As teachers in this study began to resist these teacher-centered practices, it brought light to rethinking their purpose as educators. Especially as many of the experienced teachers reflected on their teaching practices both before and throughout this inquiry framework, it was important for them to recalibrate what they felt was important to their understanding of teaching and learning. Jim noted this specifically when thinking about his role as a classroom teacher by saying:

I needed to give up those things... I needed that purge... I needed to start over and rethink things because we have completely different kids every year... they have different needs and I need to be responsive instead of getting comfortable and making things easy for me. That's not the point.

In a moment of retrospection, Jim spoke to his need to rethink his positionality as a teacher and how this impacts his students directly. As he placed his students in the forefront of this thinking, his purpose as a classroom teacher began to shift as he placed his students before the curriculum. Throughout that same Teacher Church conversation, Greg added by saying, “I really wanted to do something new and rethink who I wanted to be because I just didn't want to see my teaching career be like *Groundhog Day* with Bill Murray and just do the same things over and over again.” Whether it was connected directly to uprooting already established teaching practices or thinking more critically about students, we saw both of these teachers rethink their purpose with their students.

At the beginning of this work, teachers in this study wanted the opportunity to rethink what it meant for them to engage students in ways that matter to them directly. For the English/Language Arts teachers in this study, rethinking purpose started when many of them examined how they utilized class novels in their classrooms. Teachers like Suzie and Winnie existed in a department structure within their school district. Prior to this study, Suzie co-developed curriculum in her department with the expectation that it would be implemented by every teacher. Winnie, on the other hand, worked with a pacing guide created for her department by the district. And, for teachers like Jim, he felt that his work with students had to be comprehension-based - writing papers, taking tests and quizzes, constructing culminating projects that provide a sense of rote memorization to the studied material. However, as these teacher participants started implementing the inquiry framework, these set parameters started to feel disconnected as they began to see a new purpose for their roles as classroom teachers. Expanding beyond just text comprehension, Jim used his text selections as a way to integrate community. Readjusting his views on implementing class novels, he began to think about the

power of community and needed the support of “Teacher Church” to help him make those connections. From the transcripts, he noted:

Who can I bring in to answer some of these questions for my students?”... And that inspires, you know, bringing in more outside community members or additional resources that kind of lend to that thinking.... I can't presume to be the one and only expert in the classroom under a framework like this...but I need help thinking about this...

As shown above, Jim began to rethink his connections with his community and how that impacted his students. While Jim developed these questions, he also recognized that he needed support in answering them. Winnie started to branch out and rethink her purpose with students as she, too, wanted to bring in outside community voices to her students. She stated in that same conversation with Jim, “I really felt like I had to control the role of people... I had to let go of other experts coming into the space to know that I'm not equipped to tackle all conversations but it doesn't mean that those questions and topics can't be tackled in our classrooms...” Knowing that neither one of these teachers does not have to be the sole designer of learning opened up the possibilities to rethink how English/Language Arts learning could be facilitated for students.

For Social Studies teachers like Ryan and Greg, this same sense of rethinking purpose weighed heavily with their practices as well. As the creation of the C3 framework (National Council for the Social Studies, 2022) presented a shift in Social Studies curriculum, teachers like Ryan and Greg noted how their perspectives have changed in regards to their purpose as classroom teachers. And, while these standards asked both Ryan and Greg to think about pedagogical changes, they struggled with how to make an inquiry framework function in their classrooms on an individual level. Greg specifically highlighted this in a conversation on Zoom when he spoke about his role as a classroom teacher and his work around inquiry:

I had to really kind of self-examine the “why” behind why I'm choosing to do this because I think once I discovered that and once I was able to put that into words... that translated over to my students, my parents, my admin [administration] and it provided that focus that needed to happen.

With the support of the inquiry framework, Greg had the opportunity to rethink his purpose by examining his “why” with students. Because of this, Greg was able to articulate his professional decision making to the communities connected to his classroom. Ryan also spoke to this shift in purpose when he stated:

I can incorporate, you know, these multicultural, multi-generational discussions not just in the school, not just in the classroom but I... like my big goal is to get it outside the four walls is to, you know, get this into the community, to get them to do something with this.

Taking on more of these community goals and infusing more community voices not only centered teachers in this study to rethink what it means to be a learning facilitator, but also to rethink the goals and purpose of themselves as teachers.

Embrace Change

Teacher Church established a safe space for teachers in this study to share their fears around implementing change and gave these participants permission to feel vulnerable as they attempted to evolve their practice. For these participants, changes to their own teaching contexts often meant that they were alone in the professional decision making process. In an effort to embrace change, teacher participants noted how the courage to change did not happen by itself but rather with the support of the other teachers. Discovered in the data, 5 out of the 12 transcripts as well as 13 combined notes from both my memoing and journaling, the nature of

Teacher Church inspired teachers to embrace change in two primary ways: 1) embracing changes to teaching and; 2) embracing changes to learning or classroom actions by students.

Teacher Church participants not only began to let go of previous teaching practices, they also started to embrace changes to the way teaching was structured in their classrooms. As Greg worked with the inquiry framework, he observed his students asking questions that went beyond his expertise. He realized that in order for this framework to be effective among his students, he needed to expand the boundaries of his classroom community to incorporate other voices. Prior to this experience, Greg controlled all of the questions and texts his students would use in his classroom. However, as a result of working with the framework, he embraced change to his teaching practices when reflected on the role of community. Greg noted:

I've been really kind of heavily thinking about the role of community because I think without community this framework almost kinda falls flat and and I know that's kind of a bold statement but I think the more I work on it, the more I reflect on it, the more I see students engage, the more I believe that.

For Greg, he observed the value of expanding his learning community in connection to both student engagement and how that impacted how he restructured teaching in his classroom. As we've seen teacher participants think more deeply about community, embracing the outside community in their teaching practices served as a turning point to their work among each other as well as their students. Especially as community responses turned into encouraging partnerships, Teacher Church participants thought differently about how to both teach and engage their students. Winnie highlighted this in Teacher Church when she discussed reaching out to her students' parents as a way to network beyond her classroom and evolve her teaching to include more outside voices:

I've just been so shocked that just parents saying "hey I know this person has gone through something similar. I really think that would be a great person for your students to talk to" and so it's a lot easier than I thought in that sense to find community members that want to share.

Ryan continued these thoughts as he reflected on changes to his teaching practices by saying, "...what if we never did any of that type of work or never had those conversations and the punitive strings that come with, you know, those lack of decisions." In this context, the punitive strings related to the harm he felt that would be done if he did choose not to structure his teaching around social topics and inviting students to think critically about the world around them. Ryan especially reflected on his teaching practices through this framework as he thought deeply about anchor activities and how these could shift his work around teaching Jim Crow laws to his high school Civics students. He stated in Teacher Church:

I think you could take this anchor idea and build like three different experiences around different kinds of activities - text thinking - that got them [students] thinking about different directions that the Jim Crow exists today so that they're not just from inside [the history textbook].

Jim - who worked with Ryan in the same teaching context alongside the same students only in an English classroom - followed up by saying "I wonder how we can continue to build out this framework to help grapple a little bit more with those points of divergence." Seeing these areas of 'what if' provided insight into the changes these participants were experiencing as a result of embracing change in their teaching practices. As Winnie, Ryan, and Jim tested the fences of their newly adopted changes, they, too, demonstrated a sense of reimagination to their teaching practices the more they worked with each other and with the inquiry framework.

Teacher Church participants embraced changes to their teaching practices thinking deeply about the learning activities they designed for their students. Not only was this proven through conversation, but also seen through teacher-created artifacts. Learning experiences constructed by teacher participants took on another level of design as it paid specific attention to student safety to ask questions and explore social topics. Greg spoke about the connection between social issues and his students in Teacher Church when he said:

...this is really serious for them [students] and I think to acknowledge that, you know, these questions are in a safe space, you know, there's no judgment on these questions, these are things to discover and uncover as they align with your personal belief system [individual student belief system].

Other artifacts from the Teacher Church archive emphasized a sense of “why” behind their work. Of the artifacts collected, 21 had explicitly connected the learning experience to a specific purpose and related it to the classroom’s bigger picture thinking. A common example of this was seen when interviewing community members. Teachers constructed artifacts around community interviews not only addressing why this interview was necessary to the learning experience but also how the answers collected from those experiences impacted their ongoing learning around their in-class inquiries. As teachers continued to embrace their own changes to their teaching practices, it became clear that they were also passing along those same changes to their students.

Discussion and Conclusions

The origin of Teacher Church started simply as a research focus group of a few teachers willing to implement an inquiry-based framework centered around social justice and disruption. However, as 2020 turned a hard corner in the spring and teachers were asked to leave their classrooms for the semester, Teacher Church evolved into more. Design-based research (Bakker,

2019) –or DBR– supported this evolution as teachers within this study co-constructed the parameters of Teacher Church and; therefore, saw the need to not only pivot their discussions around the inquiry framework but also worked together to support each other while seeking professional change. Essentially, it became a sanctuary for teachers wanting to think critically about their practice with students. As Durksen et al. (2017) reminds us of the influence that collaborative learning can have on teacher motivation, the sense of community during a time of isolation motivated these teacher participants to meet more often than originally agreed upon when first entering the study and created a bond that still continues to this day. Reflecting upon the nature of this community and the teachers' needs in relation to transforming their practices, there are three identities we must nurture within teachers to assist them in this transformation: teachers as learners, teachers as innovators, and teachers as change agents.

Teachers as Learners

Teacher Church participants started this journey by agreeing to “do something new” with their students. Participants knew that they would be supported throughout this process and they had access to a group of teachers who were integrating the same practices. However, what these teachers didn't readily expect - including myself as both a participant and a researcher - is how time and trust impacted the relationship we had toward learning. Most of the teacher participants in this study were experienced teachers. Learning in a professional development context meant they were expected to sit through long presentations sponsored by district leaders and very rarely be held accountable for its content (Kennedy, 2019; Borko, 2004).

As Teacher Church evolved into a trusted community of learners, the participants took charge of the questions, the book studies, the resources, the discussions, and even established an accessible archive of artifacts that could be implemented by anyone in the group. Members of

Teacher Church had established an appreciation of expertise around each other and how we shared it was not only valued but genuinely heard. Rather than listening to an arbitrary lecture of a one-day workshop, the networked inquiry approach afforded teachers time to study, learn, and grow together.

At the heart of Teacher Church, teachers were positioned as co-creators of learning. While I initially invited teachers to participate in this study related to implementing a social justice-oriented inquiry framework, members of this group became the core foundation to its function. The teacher participants were the driving force behind all of its efforts. What happens when we ask teacher networks to co-construct professional development together? Affording time for teachers to develop and explore their interests ultimately welcomes a deeper sense of curiosity and motivates teachers to both reflect and change their current practices. As our students need agency and purpose in their learning experiences, so do teachers. By asking teachers to be a part of the learning process by co-creating their work together not only provides a richer experience but also strengthens their communities.

Teachers as Innovators

Tuominen and Toivonen (2011) remind us that innovation goes beyond just creativity and generating ideas, but it includes the adoption and implementation of those ideas and solutions. When we think about teachers as innovators, it became clear that the professionals within this study needed time to connect with one another, seek out support in the innovative work they were doing with students, express their feelings in a trusted environment, and generate a sense of meaningful purpose within their learning communities. Participating in Teacher Church made all of us feel like we were together in a time when COVID-19 kept us away from our regular daily lives in the classroom but inspired a teaching renaissance that invited us all to think differently

about our practices. Even as we rejoined our students the following school year, we felt empowered to push beyond our traditional practices and seek new ways to engage our students because the world itself had experienced change. Thankfully, we all had Teacher Church to come back to for support as we collaboratively developed and implemented new teaching with our students.

For teachers like Winnie, she sought innovation when she was motivated to implement this framework earlier on with her students the following school year. Even through remote learning, she observed the framework's success with her students and acknowledged that implementing this work in person had the potential to be stronger than before. She knew that she couldn't do this work on her own and demonstrated a sense of individual vulnerability that brought her questions and hesitations back to the teacher participants. She depended on Teacher Church to work through the logistics of this framework as it translated back into the classroom setting for the first time.

For teachers like Greg and Suzie who experienced the inquiry framework throughout the Fall of 2019, their time in remote learning the following semester afforded them both time and space to think about how they wanted to integrate this framework with their students the next school year. Their reflective thinking about what was happening in the real world and how this framework could invite their students to ask questions related to these issues set Greg and Suzie on a trajectory to find ways to grow this work with their students. And, true to innovation, this experience allowed them to be a team of teachers that experienced a series of firsts - first to integrate outside community members into their learning spaces, first to rethink traditional grading policies that hindered the student-centered work in their classrooms, and first to push

against the traditions of classical young adult texts to advocate for reading inspired by contemporary issues.

As we rethink professional development structures in education, it invites a spirit of innovation when placing teachers in the forefront of this work. While Teacher Church is not a blueprint for professional development, the teacher's need to innovate and be empowered to do this through their own collaborative discoveries is invaluable (Klaeijsen et al., 2018). And, as we broaden our network of professionals, similar to the teachers who participated in Teacher Church, it can provide room to innovate teaching practices and challenge the traditional structures that currently exist. As Provini (2013) reminds us that PLCs come with limitations regarding the quality of time needed to identify problems and make change. The networked inquiry experience of Teacher Church afforded teachers to not only identify problems of practice within their own spaces but regularly worked to construct solutions and cultivate new classroom practices.

Teachers as Change Agents

Moving forward, bringing teachers together from different teaching contexts to connect with each other in meaningful ways has the potential to shift the way we think about professional development. Members of Teacher Church connected with one another to learn and grow their craft which then strengthened their position as a classroom teacher in their own individual districts. While these participants may have been alone in their teaching efforts at the time, it also introduced their school contexts to new teaching practices. Church members became agents of change among their colleagues.

For teachers like Jim and Ryan who both serve the same community and work with the same students within their high school setting, they both noted that they wanted to broaden the

walls of their classrooms to integrate more expert voices in their work with students. Bringing in these various perspectives has contributed to a disruption of tradition that has been an overcast in their positions at a small, rural school. And, while bringing in guest speakers is not an uncommon strategy used in teaching, connecting students with expert voices to talk about hard topics with the use of student-generated questions had not been a common practice within the classrooms that both Jim and Ryan currently serve. To further, these expert voices and the connection to community has inspired the creation of the high school's first student-led podcast and have created relationships with experts that are now regularly a part of the classroom experience.

Throughout the study, Teacher Church participants were empowered by one another as they continued to share their stories and insights related to the inquiry framework as well as overall shifts in teaching practices. Many of the changes that happened within these classrooms happened because one teacher brought the question, shared the resource, or could anecdotally talk about how new strategies impacted their own work with students. As Jim noted in Teacher Church, "I knew I could do this work because I have Sarah in the building...she paved the way." Jim embraced change because he knew I had already exposed his students to the inquiry framework several years before they entered his class. As both Jim and I continue to work together, we have noticed how our administrators mantle us as teacher leaders as well as how our colleagues ask questions about the strategies we use to make this work possible.

While this study did not go into depth about classroom assessment practices, student portfolios, one-on-one conferencing, or thinking about learning holistically, these are only some of the changes Teacher Church participants made to their practice as a result of this group continuing beyond the parameters of this study. Furthermore, Teacher Church expanded their

community by welcoming more members to its congregation as a result of the changes happening in individual classrooms. Teachers interested in the work Teacher Church participants were doing in their own classrooms created a sense of interest to join by other teachers.

To Conclude

When we establish professional communities beyond the walls of our own classrooms, we have the potential to listen and learn from others. Thinking about the needs that teachers have in connection to transforming their professional practice - the need to exist in a safe space, the need to rethink their purpose as educators, and the need to embrace change - it invites us to think differently about the current structures in place that promote teacher growth. And, as we think about the participation of these networked communities, it invites thinking around how these connections can continue to inspire change in ourselves as teachers, how those changes can ultimately impact how educators can design meaningful learning experiences for our students today to be successful in an ever-changing world.

CHAPTER III: EXAMINING THE FIGURED WORLDS OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS
SEEKING TO TRANSFORM PRACTICES

“I Saw the World Around Us Changing... and I Wanted More”: Examining the Figured Worlds of Experienced Teachers Seeking to Transform Teaching Practices

Abstract

Transforming teaching practices can be regarded as a complex process nuanced with student needs, community expectations, and societal demands. Using Holland et al.'s (1998) figured world concepts of cultural artifacts, discourse, and conceptual/procedural identity, this article explores the journey of five experienced teachers with five or more years in the middle school/high school classroom) as they seek to shift their classroom practices from traditional methods to inquiry-based teaching. Findings from this study discuss what happens when experienced teachers let go of traditional teaching expectations and reimagine new teacher identities. This article concludes with implications about the versatility of identity theories to both study and facilitate teacher transformation and its impact on teacher professional development.

Keywords: Design-based research, figured worlds, transformative teaching, teacher identity, middle level education, secondary education

“I was just wanting to seek change. I saw the world around us changing and, you know, what I do doesn’t make sense anymore, and I wanted more....but I didn’t really know how to do that.”

-Suzie

Introduction

In the spring of 2020, I formed a focus group of teachers who were originally interested in implementing an inquiry-based framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) that embodied an innovative approach to teaching young adult literature in the classroom. However, due to the challenges of that year - COVID-19, school closures, social unrest, to name a few - the group’s dynamic shifted rapidly and the teacher participants insisted on meeting on a weekly basis every Sunday. Named by one of our participants, the group called themselves Teacher Church playing on the Christian tradition of holding religious services on Sundays. Teacher Church attendees were not only looking to process the local, national, and global events happening around them that year but also figuring out how to go back to a classroom feeling more equipped to have meaningful conversations with their students.

For many teachers, including myself, what mattered and what we prioritized in the past within our classrooms didn’t seem to connect anymore with student needs and Teacher Church came together in the spirit of finding answers. Building the foundation of our time together meant that there was an emphasis on disrupting the practices we habitually gravitated toward in the past in an effort to integrate more contemporary topics students could connect to in present time. While many educators fear the repercussions of incorporating topics related to social justice into their curriculum - a lack of administration support or community backlash, for example - it often keeps teachers locked into safe teaching spaces that rarely push beyond the mainstream narratives. These questions became the bedrock of Teacher Church as this group of

teachers explored these ideas both collaboratively and individually. Rather than focusing on the fears that come with teaching social justice-oriented topics, what happens if we never invite students to think critically about the world around them? What happens when we abandon inquiry for inquiry's sake and develop something real with our students? And, what happens when we invite our students to take action in the ideas and concepts that they care deeply about as they continue to process what's happening around them? This study focused on examining the changes middle and high school teachers from various teaching contexts made when seeking to transform their teaching practices using an inquiry-based framework. Using a figured world lens, a concept first constructed by Holland et al. (1998), I analyzed how teachers think, speak, and form identities around making changes to their professional practice in their own classrooms. Drawn from a larger study about teachers participating in a networked inquiry experience, it provided new insights into how teachers transform their practice, and how they grapple with the existing traditions and the needs of their students in an ever-changing world.

Review of Literature

The current study examines the shaping of experienced teachers' identities in connection to their own personal experiences, the new learning constructed among the networked inquiry of other experienced teachers, and the relationship these connections have toward transforming instructional practices within their classrooms. Situating this work on the decision making of experienced teachers, there are various aspects to consider within the literature: 1) exploring the context of professional teacher identities, particularly discipline-specific identities that exist among teachers in middle school and high school; and 2) considering the nature of transformational learning.

Professional Teacher Identities

Teachers' identities connect to the ways in which teachers think about themselves (Chavez Rojas et al., 2021; Gallchoir et al., 2018), their classroom roles (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013), and how that may agree or contradict identities formed in their early careers (Solari & Martín Ortega, 2022). Teachers' identities are multidimensional and always in flux, as argued by Grier and Johnston (2009), state that "Teacher identity is based upon the core beliefs one has about teaching and being a teacher that are constantly changing and evolving based upon personal and professional experiences" (p. 59-60). Schultz and Ravitch (2013) remind us that teachers' professional identity emerges from their own experiences, as well as the way they interpret their experiences. Cohen (2008) argues that "teachers' identities are central to the beliefs, values, and practices that guide their engagement, commitment, and actions in and out of the classroom" (p. 80). With this logic, experiences continue to mold teachers' professional identities as well as their decision making toward their instructional practice with students. The current study examines the shaping of experienced teachers' identities in connection to their own personal experiences, the new learning constructed among the networked inquiry of other experienced teachers, and the relationship these connections have toward transforming instructional practices within their classrooms.

Teachers in this study were experienced teachers with five or more years of teaching in middle and high schools teaching backgrounds. It is important to consider their identities as experienced teachers as well as consider their identities held within their specific teaching contexts. Schachter and Rich (2011) note that teachers should identify with the discipline they are teaching as they pay specific attention to the social identities, the roles of each discipline, and

the cultural norms that exist in those areas (Neumann et al., 2002; Beausaert et al., 2013; Lindblom-Ylännea et al., 2006).

For example, thinking about this in practice, English/Language Arts teachers in middle school and high school hold cultural norms, expectations, standards, and outcomes within these spaces (Beausaert et al., 2013). Therefore, related to both the lived experience as a learner as well as early on as a novice teacher, English teachers develop a teacher identity specific to the discipline. And, while this discipline-specific teacher identity can provide positive foundations for students developing their own relationships with literature and writing, it can be hard to reimagine this teacher identity to be anything beyond the situated cultural norms. As a result, breaking through these traditionally formed norms can be easier said than done as teachers reimagine the purpose of their specific discipline identities and how that impacts the needs of students in today's classrooms.

Experienced Teacher Positionality and Transformation

Freire's critical pedagogy (1978) reminds educators of the exceptionally vital responsibility they have toward students in regards to not only being critical of texts produced within such a large playground of information but also recognizing that students have the power and ability to take action in efforts to seek justice. In considering the needs of students in today's world, it invites educators to re-evaluate their teaching practices, identify areas of change, and seek transformation by means of new practices. Rooted in constructivism, transformation asks us to step outside of the comfortable and seek change in our surroundings.

For experienced teachers, comfort manifests in repeated curriculum. While that once designed curriculum may have been key at the time of conception, teachers reusing the same lessons and units and not considering the needs of students can be seen as problematic (Iqbal et

al., 2021). In order to embrace change and go beyond those comfortable spaces within teaching, it starts with a willingness to become uncomfortable in order to deeply examine teaching and learning from different perspectives. The ability to ask questions centered around teaching practices affords teachers time for criticality and a means to create dialogue among each other (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

If teachers are positioned to ask questions while reflecting on their current classroom practices, then as they seek to take chances and make connections with these new ideas, it becomes essential to think of teachers as learners. Mezirow (2000), speaks to teachers as learners through a transformative learning perspective and claims that learners transform as they adapt “a problematic frame of reference to make it more dependable” (p. 20). Under this lens, transformation occurs as learners elaborate on existing meaning or create new meaning. This focus implies that transformative learning is solely about intellectual development rather than the change in one’s “ways of being.”

For many experienced teachers, professional development structures or district initiatives often feel forced and unsupported (Spelman & Rohlwing, 2013; Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). To engage in sustaining, long-term change regarding intellect takes time in an effort for professionals to explore their own understandings and draw their own conclusions. Mezirow and Taylor (2009) argue that there are “extrarational, emotional, and spiritual dimensions” of transformative learning that should also be addressed and several theorists have asserted that transformative learning must go beyond simple modifications in thinking to a shift in identity, characterized by new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting (Cain, 1991; Meyer & Land, 2005; Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Wenger, 2011; Wilson & Parrish, 2011). Through this shift, teachers have the ability to re-evaluate their practices with students and also remake them. Alongside reflective

thinking and leaning on Mezirow's transformative learning lens, teachers have the opportunity to develop their own strategies and solutions to identified problems. Engaging in dialogue, analysis, and reflection can all lead to a new paradigm shift of doing things differently with students.

Theoretical Framework

Franke and Kazemi (2001) remind us that “identity does not sit separately from knowledge and skills; acquiring new knowledge and skills plays a critical role in reshaping identity” (p. 128). Teachers work directly with the human experience. The lived experiences of both themselves and the learners they work with invite an ongoing exploration into implementing new practices. As identities continue to take shape among learners, the same can be true for teachers as identity development connects to social interaction (Verhoeven et al., 2019; Garner & Kaplan, 2019; Cooper & Olson, 2020). Holland et al. (1998) broadly defined figured worlds as “socially produced, culturally constituted activities” (p. 40–41) where people come to produce or perform new understandings. This framework served as the theoretical framework for this study as it unearthed experienced teachers' perceptions of inquiry-based teaching and their perceived role of their teaching identity in their practices. As teachers in this study willingly implemented new classroom practices, the journey to transform their teaching also connected directly to their own personal shifts in the teaching identities.

According to Holland et al. (1998), figured worlds have four primary characteristics: (1) Figured worlds serve as cultural phenomena in which people are invited and continue to develop through the work of its participants. (2) Figured worlds work as meaning makers - social encounters have significance, people's positionality matters, and are situated in particular times and places. (3) Figured worlds organize socially and people learn to relate to each other in

different ways. (4) Figured worlds classify people by relating them to activities that contain familiar social types.

Keeping these figured worlds characteristics in mind, there is an emphasis on cultural artifacts, discourse, and the shaping of identities. Holland and Lave (2001) remind us that cultural artifacts serve as tools that better help us understand how teachers transform their teaching practices. Artifacts assume both conceptual and material aspects. For this study, experienced teachers identified abstract artifacts such as the positionality of their students within their classroom spaces as well as concrete artifacts such as the nature of text selections. Within figured worlds, people learn to assign meaning to artifacts such as objects, events, discourses, and people in connection to a specific world. Additionally cultural artifacts help navigate both the thoughts and feelings of individual participants (Holland et al., 1998). This navigation ultimately leads to identity processing, influence positionality, and impact world making.

Holland et al. (1998) argue that socially defined worlds shape and impact the way people interact. Through these interactions, identities are formed and this formation continues to shape the individual's world. This shaping develops elements such as self purpose and defined expectations related to social interaction. Holland et al. punctuates how both cultural artifacts and discourse impact these elements that are expected in a specific figured world. Through these connections, social identities are established. Holland et al. (1998) describes discourse as the way in which participants in figured worlds process their cultural artifacts. Such areas include institutional expectations, interpersonal relationships, and personal interpretations of roles within those worlds. These areas continue to shape the discourse and offer insight to a figured world.

Along with cultural artifacts and discourse, Holland et al. (1998) also discusses the importance of personal and social identities within the figured world. These figured worlds

provide contexts for identity work and offer “guidelines” or “social forces” that influence behaviors in those worlds (Hatt, 2012). Within the context of these identities, it includes the negotiation of positionality, a space of authoring, and the production of world making.

Positionality

Positionality refers to the positions “offered” to people across different figured worlds (Holland et al. 1998) and is readily defined by discourse. In this context, positionality refers to teachers’ understanding of their roles as teachers as agents of change in connection to the work they do with their students in the classroom. Additionally, one’s positionality is not only constructed by lived personal experiences but continues to be shaped by the social constructs that make up those experiences (Dahl, 2015; Herr & Anderson, 2005). Given the nature of our global society that endures a world-wide pandemic, social unrest, environmental instability, and political turmoil, the positionality of the experienced teachers within this study shifted to an approach that pushed against traditional literacy practices as a means to empower themselves to dissolve their control over students and reimagine the learning environment. It was with this dedication to maintaining student-centeredness that led to embracing a new teaching identity which positioned these teachers into thinking broadly about their influence on how students can think proactively about the communities they belong to.

World Making

A third component connected to the production of identities relates to world-making. Holland et al. (1998) highlight that through “serious play,” new figured worlds may emerge (p. 272). With social play, participants can potentially develop new competencies or further strengthen these new figured worlds. New figured worlds can invite the possibility of making or

creating new artifacts, discourses, acts, and ways of design. Developed fully, Holland et al. conclude that world making circles back to the figured worlds.

Methods

While there are vast collections of literature related to teachers' professional identity development, sparse research exists in connection to how experienced teachers enter into new pedagogical spaces related to inquiry-based learning and how those new spaces impact a transformation in their professional teacher identity and practice (Chen & Moore-Mensah, 2022; Solari & Martín-Ortega, 2022). This study seeks to explore experienced middle and high school teachers' conceptualization of their teaching identities as they enter a collaborative learning space dedicated to changing classroom practices by addressing the following research question: What does a figured world of an experienced teacher look like in terms of transformative practices?

Study Design

Throughout the 2019-2020 school year, teachers engaged in implementing a critical paradigm known as the inquiry as disruption framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) with their students. The teacher participants in this study were specifically chosen for this study because of their interest in implementing this framework in their assigned teaching positions. Design-based research served as the methodology to this study because it invited teachers and myself to co-construct and collaborate with each other as we continued to implement this framework (Reinking & Bradley, 2008; Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). Because design-based research is interventionist in nature, teachers in this study not only wanted to understand how to implement this framework but also collaboratively explored how to rethink their current teaching practices because of this new experience (Bakker, 2019). The data for this analysis came from teacher

reflections, interview transcripts between teachers and the researcher, and transcripts of collaborative online discussions between participants.

Study Participants

Participants in this study were from different middle and high school classrooms: two middle school Language Arts teachers, one high school English teacher, one high school social science teacher and one middle school social science teacher from a variety of school contexts. In addition to their present-day classroom contexts, teacher participants in this study bring a collection of teaching experiences that serve a variety of school sizes. The experiences of these teacher participants are highlighted in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Teacher Participants, Grade Level/Positions, Years in the Profession, Schools, and School Populations

Participant	Teaching Position (grade level and content)	Years of Service in Position	School	School Population (# of students)
Jim	9th-12th Grade High School English	3	Woods High School	50-75
	10th-12th Grade High School English	8	Eastview Junior/Senior High School	300-400
Ryan	11th-12th Grade High School Social Studies	7	Eastview Junior/Senior High School	300-400
Greg	7th Grade Social Studies	15	River Valley Junior/Senior High School	1000-1100
Suzie	9th-12th French	5	Hoopeston Area High School	300-400
	7th and 8th Grade English	5	Hoopeston Area Middle School	200-300

Table Continues

Table Continued

	7th Grade Language Arts	24	River Valley Junior High School	1000-1100
Winnie	8th Grade Literature/ Composition and Language Arts	6	Oak Hills Junior High School	700-800

**School names have been provided with pseudonyms (Illinois Report Card, 2021).*

Data Collection and Analysis

Collaborative Online Discussions

Data collection for this study started in November 2019 and ended in May 2020 with teachers coming together every three weeks - as initially decided by the participants. Teachers met regularly using Zoom to collaborate and participate in discussions centered around the progress of implementing the inquiry framework. However, as schools shifted to remote learning throughout March 2020, teachers collectively decided to meet weekly rather than only every three weeks. This weekly Teacher Church meeting tied directly to design-based research as teachers approached the problem of feeling disconnected around this work and developed a solution that allowed them to meet more frequently and collaboratively.

Teachers participating in these regularly scheduled online meetings spent an average of an hour to an hour and half discussing their thoughts with one another. On Zoom, teacher participants interacted with each other through conversations that shared their experiences in their own teaching contexts, invited more questions, and encouraged meaning making collaboratively. This created a learning community for the teacher participants that not only established trust but also served as a support that enriched their experiences. The video data collected during these meetings were then uploaded to a private YouTube channel and saved in a shared folder accessible to all who participated in the study.

Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

In addition to 9 collaborative Zoom meetings, 11 individual interviews total were conducted between all of the teachers and myself. Participant interviews encourage the ability to form collaborative relationships that could enrich the topics of discussion and reflection throughout the study (Kvale, 1996; Charmaz, 2014). Since this design-based study was co-constructed, interviews with the participants ranged due to readiness. For Greg and Suzie, I was able to interview them 6 of the 11 interviews because they were directly working with me as our students collaborated together across schools and classrooms. Winnie, however, was interviewed three times throughout this process. Her first interview captured her thinking as she initially entered this work and then two more times throughout the framework as she continued to implement it with her students. As for Jim and Ryan, they were each interviewed one time because they were stepping into this work at a time that worked best for their comfort and readiness.

Teacher-Constructed Artifacts

Teachers worked collaboratively to both share and construct their teaching materials within Teacher Church as they implemented the framework with students. These planning materials were shared in a Google folder between the participants as it was created throughout the study experience. With a nod to design-based research, teachers not only constructed this archive of teaching materials, but often referred back to these materials as a means to reflect, analyze, and rethink these materials when implementing them into their classrooms. These artifacts provided insights into their collaboration, as well as into their successes and struggles.

Reflexive Journal

As qualitative research shows, reflexivity begins by acknowledging as well as understanding the importance of one's personal values and feelings within the research process. From Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004), reflexivity invites a critical look inward to think deeply about one's own lived reality and experiences. In continuation, Mann and Kelley (1997) state that reflexivity is the recognition that "all knowledge is affected by the social conditions under which it is produced and that it is grounded in both the social location and the social biography of the observer and the observed" (p. 392). Since I positioned myself as both a researcher as well as a classroom teacher who implemented the inquiry-based social justice framework within my teaching context, my reflexive journal served as a documentation tool that recorded the progress of my learning and the learning around me while participating in both roles.

Validity, Reliability, and the Researcher's Role

Throughout this study, the data collected over a four month time span triangulated through the transcripts from the online meetings, individual teacher interviews, and teacher-constructed materials. It was coded in multiple cycles (Saldaña, 2009). Since the inquiry-based framework served as the catalyst to the data collection process, data coding started with a holistic approach. As Saldaña (2009) supports, this provided a starting point for data analysis as a means to understand many of the general ideas captured in the data itself. Using holistic coding, the data was "chunked" to look specifically for evidence of change among the experienced teachers and their professional practice. As anticipated, categories of text selections, and teaching strategies emerged, reflecting not only the collected teaching experience of these educators but also connects to the inquiry-based framework related specifically to the integration of literature and social justice themes.

Additionally, categories such as the roles that factor into designing learning experiences (i.e. administration, parents, community), the shared attributes and mindsets of teachers seeking to change, and the challenges teachers face when met with new ideas that push their existing practice emerged. The data examined among the transcripts and the teacher-constructed materials alongside the reflexive notes generated during this study deepened an awareness of what experienced teachers need in order to transform their teaching practices.

Along with being the primary researcher, I was also a participant within the Teacher Church. Additionally at the time of the study, I was teaching middle school language arts and have twenty years of classroom teaching experience. My identities within this study are a source of bias, especially since I am the co-creator of the inquiry as disruption framework and I served as a mentor to the teacher participants working to implement this framework in their own teaching contexts. I practiced reflexivity (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) with consideration and attention to participants' voices and separated my experiences from that of the participants.

Limitations

This study emerged within the larger data set from a design-based research study related to the networked inquiry experience among the Teacher Church participants. The knowledge demonstrated and collected from this study is not generalized given the small number of participants who volunteered to step into this study. Every participant in this study brings a nuanced lens that is informed by a collection of teaching experiences throughout different schools, pedagogical awareness and practices, as well as a variety of lived experiences despite their collaborative nature within Teacher Church. No one story captured can represent the transformative nature of experienced classroom teachers.

Findings

Experienced teachers approach their practice with an established sense of self-as-teacher based on their own experiences in school, experiences as a learner, and how their formative experiences in the classroom. The positionality of these experienced teachers shifted when they agreed to transform their teaching practices by infusing an inquiry-based framework differing from their existing pedagogy. Through in-person meetings and on-line networked, teachers in this study used the inquiry-based framework as a catalyst to examine their own teaching practices. This spark afforded teachers an opportunity to grapple with letting go of traditional expectations and ultimately yielded new thinking in five areas: 1) text selections, 2) learning communities and spaces, 3) students and their role in the classroom, 4) failure in the learning environment, and 5) grading practices.

Text Selections

For this study, cultural artifacts emerged in both material and conceptual forms. Holland et al. (1998) emphasize the importance of cultural artifacts as not only the existing balance between human identities and action but also as the psychological tools meant to evoke figured worlds. In regards to material forms, text selections among teacher participants developed extensively throughout and across the data. Text selection became a catalyst for inquiry and transformation, particularly how teachers positioned themselves in relation to knowledge and students' interests in the classroom. While student interests, engaging stories, and well-known authors drive the decision making process for educators, text selections afford an opportunity to expose students to social issues that inspire inquiry. For teachers like Winnie, text selection invites new ideas to her ongoing practice as she stated:

I'm thinking about like as we move forward into like next year how would the conversations and inquiries go around the novels if started the year with a unit like this versus, you know, ending the year because I'm thinking a little more critically about the books and things we're reading because there's a need to explore media more.

Having the autonomy to pick texts that incorporate contemporary themes also invites teachers to see the value of ongoing design connected to meaningful learning experiences for students. For Winnie, her experience with text selection served as a catalyst for what she could do in Language Arts beyond engaging students in reading a novel. Not only did she recognize the strength of a year-long inquiry experience, but she also addressed a sense of criticality that could be infused in this work. As Winnie worked with this specific text with her students, thinking broadly about the questions her students were asking led to consider other areas of study. She noted this when she spoke about incorporating media.

Winnie continued to think more divergently about novel reading with her students as she also acknowledged the impact it had on her students' conversations. She noted:

I never thought kids would land on it [social topics] but they did - that's the great part about books that invite those really important conversations...you just don't know where they're gonna go with it but it's really exciting too because that means they're truly in control of this and you're just kind of there as a support.

As Winnie considered areas like media in her work with students, she also thought about the nature and ambiguity of her students' conversations. These conversations allowed Winnie to discover her students' thinking and questioning. From these small shifts, Winnie was able to mantle her students' voices and afford them the autonomy they needed as learners to engage in critical work.

For Jim, the learning standards for his high school classroom required him to teach Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960). While he may not have the text autonomy to select his texts like Winnie could in her teaching context, he started to think differently about his ability to implement the required texts among his students. He said:

So, I think there's this notion of school where we're going to come in and read *The Outsiders* (Hinton, 1967) or we're going to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960). I don't think there's anything wrong with reading classics, but I do think that there's so much room to read texts that our kids relate to and to read texts that are based on their world...I'm dealing with the base story of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and how these different parts of society work...I think that's something that I need to investigate further in how to implement this into an inquiry project to inspire action moving forward.

As Jim grappled with the constraints he had on required texts for his class, he also saw this as an opportunity to make contemporary connections to canonical texts. Being a part of Teacher Church, Jim experienced a series of conversations among teachers who were already implementing the inquiry-based justice-oriented framework and engaged by thinking critically about his work with students. While he did not fully enter the framework at the time of data collection, he considered how this framework could evolve his curriculum in his classroom by thinking broadly about modern social issues as well as investigating how to make these changes. It is with this acknowledgement that transformation within an already established practice can be possible when invited to think differently about the required texts placed in states, districts, and grade levels that can be taught to students in a present-day world.

Teachers demonstrated shifting their current practices away from their previous experiences as a means to becoming more student-centered on issues relative to the

contemporary world. All acknowledged that their figured worlds pushed against what they knew as developing teachers and the curriculum they had grown to repeat over the duration of their teacher careers. Intentionally, the teachers were trying to explore new practices, observed how their students as well as their classroom stakeholders responded to these changes, and were willing to let go to construct a space of authoring that rewrites the role of the classroom teacher. For them, Teacher Church served as a space of authoring that afforded them to express their internal dialogues to others and invite others to participate with them. Essentially, this permitted the experienced teachers to process their thinking, find affirmation, and reject or accept their initial positionalities.

We see this with both Jim and Suzie and recall how they thought about text selection. For Jim, as he wanted to integrate more community and real world experiences into his practice, he grappled with how those required texts mandated in by his learning standards played a role in this need for change. Jim stated:

I feel drawn to these classic texts but the value it's not in the words, it's not in the author recognition name, it's in the message. So I tried to find books we can relate better to to pair with these required books. It is something that I changed.

As Jim noted that he had to keep his assigned texts in his class, he was beginning to rethink how those texts could be implemented with his students. Not only does this thought walk away from comprehension-based work, but it also invites Jim to change how he approaches the teaching of these texts. By pairing contemporary texts with the canonical ones, he created a space that can impact his students' experiences with real world issues.

While Jim This can also be said about Suzie, as well. She noticed that her experience with Ahmed's young adult novel, *Internment* (Ahmed, 2019), earlier that school year proved to

be a direction she wanted to move her students toward when it came to interacting, discussing, and thinking about texts. While she still wanted to cling to texts like *The Giver* (Lowery, 1993) after this inquiry experience, she confronted her past teaching practices around this particular text. Rather than being consumed with student comprehension, she approached her next unit with *The Giver* (Lowery, 1993) as she did with “her friends participating in a book club experience.” In this space of authoring, Suzie spent time with students discussing the points they wanted to discuss from the text, explored their shared curiosities as a class, and invited students to create their own products to demonstrate their own learning experiences. While this study did not focus on assessment practices directly, it can be noted from earlier that Suzie experienced a shift in thinking toward her grading practices. This experience prompted a new space of authoring related to assessment practices. Suzie was inspired to rethink her grading policies - specifically in connection to reading comprehension among her students.

While the readiness of professional educators to evolve or transform classroom practices differs in various ways, the same can be said for the experienced teachers within this study. We see this as both Jim and Suzie grappled with text selections. As Suzie continued to cling to *The Giver* (Lowry, 1993), this experience allowed her to rethink how she approaches this work with her students. Through discourse, she realized that her priorities had shifted from comprehension-based ideas to center more on her students’ questions and thoughts in the moment. From these experiences, Suzie created a new line of thought that prompted her to think about a more inquiry-based approach to her teaching. She explained:

I’m trying to push myself next year in going there a little bit more difficult with content, asking some tougher questions, bringing in some more social justice, bringing in some more diversity, really kind of pushing my kids a little bit more.

As Suzie noted the changes she would like to make in her classroom regarding class readings and learning experiences, she also acknowledged elements that will assist her in thinking about texts in a different way. Noting that she wanted to push herself further in her practice, she is creating a new world that encompasses practices she had not considered before stepping into this work. These new thoughts around text selections and teaching practices will afford Suzie a new paradigm when approaching her work with students.

To further this, Jim engaged in world making by noting how his practice shifts when he reconsidered the role of students in his classroom. When embracing student-centered inquiry, Jim discussed his newly formed values in positioning his students in the forefront of learning decision making. Specific to this, Jim highlighted the importance of purposeful learning experiences that connect directly to the real world. He continued by saying:

I had gone away and I was doing things for the sake of doing them without having that purpose in mind. Whereas this inquiry method really focuses on purposeful learning in my lessons and elevating the product that I'm expecting from the kids. You know, we talk a lot about authenticity with the lessons and trying to get things that connect back to the world. Instead of stretching this traditional curriculum to try to make it - inquiry is this natural avenue....We want them to grow and stretch with us and this puts them in charge. This gives them the ownership of where we go and what to do as opposed to just being zombies for 8 hours!

As we see Jim rethink his positionality as a classroom teacher, he started by reflecting on his current practices that he had maintained over the years and how those practices were not supporting the students he currently teaches. This study allowed experienced teachers like Jim to grasp what it takes to construct a classroom practice grounded in student-centered inquiry

learning. In addition to shifting teacher thinking in new directions, this study also reminded experienced teachers to reflect on why transforming their practices to meet the needs of their students attempting to read today's world was more valuable than addressing individualized learning standards or continuing to implement work designed decades ago.

Expanding Learning Communities and Spaces

As experienced teachers continue to meet with each other regularly over the course of this study, their ability to reimagine communities and spaces became an ongoing theme throughout the data. Specifically across this theme, communities and spaces were broken down into three primary findings: 1) abandoning the notion of the classroom teacher being the only expert in the learning space; 2) expanding the definition and utilization of outside classroom experts; and 3) transformation among the participants was possible in a space where educators could grapple with problems collaboratively rather than individually.

Abandoning the Solo Expert Identity

As teachers worked with the inquiry framework and the impetus to follow students' questions about contemporary life, teachers needed to give primacy to students' questions and this required teachers to follow the lead of those questions, turning to new perspectives and outside experts. Following these leads required teachers to abandon their sense of self as teachers as expert and sole designers of inquiry in the classroom and instead position them as collaborators with students situated in a community of experts.

From implementing other inquiry-based frameworks to discussions to alternative research practices, teachers willing to transform exhibit a drive that, as Greg states, "goes beyond surface learning like worksheets and packets." The nature of the inquiry-based framework that began this project invited teachers to examine social issues that existed in real life. From this

examination, teachers started thinking more broadly about their learning communities and who beyond the classroom boundaries could support student learning.

In addition, an emphasis on a broadly defined sense of community appeared within the data among the teacher participants. For teachers like Greg, Jim and Ryan, class community became a cornerstone to the work they did with their students. In order to safely and effectively discuss topical issues in their classrooms, they focused on building a community of trust. As a means to build these communities, these teachers engaged their students in a variety of Socratic discussions, collaborative research experiences, and questioning techniques. The investment these teacher candidates placed on their own classroom communities not only mentored students as experts within their own class environment but it also - in Greg's words - fostered a "we not I" mindset in regards to learning.

Expanding Classroom Experts

Channeling experts within and around the community proved to be an important centerpiece to teacher participants. As teachers worked with the inquiry framework and nurtured authentic student questioning, the need to integrate more perspectives and experts into the learning context became a primary finding for this study. For Suzie, she and her students read Samira Ahmed's *Internment* (2019). Bigger themes throughout that young adult novel related to immigration, racism, religious intolerance, and resistance. While Suzie had years of experience working with middle school readers, she acknowledged that she needed to broaden her community and bring in voices that could help speak to these bigger themes. One such example of broadening her community can be seen in one of her reflections connected to her work with *Internment* (Ahmed, 2019):

I really liked it in the beginning - even though it was a book that took place in the future - there were some things that happened in the beginning of the book that had already happened. And having the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] representative talk to the kids about that really helped the kids see that this is connected to some real things. What's funny - I had to remind the kids more than once that this hadn't happened then throughout the whole book - because then they were like 'yes there was the Japanese internment' - this Muslim internment thing didn't happen but it all seemed real to them, which is good. It could seem like a real thing, but - because there are somethings that Ed talked to them about...here's what we did in response to some things that really happened and then the kids throughout it - but they saw them as this could happen to real people. So I think starting with that conversation with the ACLU really helped the kids see it as a real issue.

Realizations like these can help teachers abandon the expectations to be the only expert in the classroom and cultivate a broader community of experts that provide students with deeper insights into real life issues. While Suzie chose Ahmed's book and wanted her students to engage in those bigger themes, she also realized that she could not do this work alone. Suzie continued by saying:

I was inspired to bring in more outside community members and additional resources that lent itself to that [her students'] thinking...I can't presume to be the one and only expert in the classroom when doing work like this.

Making this discovery and seeking outside community members as a solution to support her teaching sparked a change that invited Suzie to see the benefits of broadening her classroom space by going beyond her four walls. As Suzie made this discovery, Jim, too, was sharing his

thoughts about expanding the boundaries of his classroom. In his interview, he noted this by saying:

I need to realize that my classroom is not an island - I think an evolution is happening slowly but surely now that we're getting away from the repeated recognition of facts and phrases to trying to get real world questioning.

For Jim, inquiry allowed him to reflect on his practice in a sense that made him rethink his space out of necessity. Throughout his experience, he recognized that he needed other experts to help support his students' questions and in-class discussions. Jim saw value in creating a space for other voices to be present as a means to further support his learners. Additionally, as he considered incorporating outside community members into his teaching practices, he also acknowledged that past practices feel outdated and ineffective. This dialogue provides an insight to the criticality and analysis teachers need in order to entertain new ways of thinking.

Throughout this study, teachers became highly aware that this work went above their knowledge and expertise and the need to broaden their learning community was necessary. The social issues students addressed in the teacher participant classrooms went beyond their own knowledge and identities and invited a shift in teacher positioning from sole expert to novice learner alongside their students. Greg and Suzie collaborated to expand their community by infusing community experts into their lesson designs. From the integration of TED talks to in-person interviews, Greg and Suzie redefined community for their students by providing opportunities to expand voices and perspectives around the topics their students cared deeply about. Seeing this emphasis take shape in their classrooms, Greg and Suzie shifted their thinking on the role of community after participating in the inquiry framework and furthered this work throughout their school year. While it is not the focus of this study, for teachers like Greg and

Suzie, their experience inspired a sustaining change to their ongoing practice in connection to integrating community.

For participants like Greg, Ryan and Suzie, they saw the need to expand their communities in physical ways by bringing in outside voices to address many of the questions their students were asking. They also saw a need to reexamine the culture of their classrooms to embrace a stronger sense of belonging as they spoke about the nature of “we.” To continue, teachers like Jim discovered the need to expand his community by broadening his outlook beyond the island of his classroom. He stepped into a space that allowed him to think differently about the structure of his learning environment. These instances from the teacher participants all highlight the element of change in regards to rethinking what a learning space may mean to students in today’s classrooms.

Collaborative Grappling and Rethinking Space

Similar to the nature of people participating in communities, - book clubs, running groups, religious affiliations, community service efforts - teachers can achieve bigger goals when they stay connected with others especially when confronting past practices and seeking change. The beginning of this project provided teachers with a space of authoring that allowed them to explore their positionality and beliefs around teaching. These internal dialogues described by Holland et al. (1998) surfaced as the experienced teachers reflected on their previous experiences in the classroom and the need to grapple with change. While this study did not explore the intricacies of the Teacher Church dynamic, it did become a key factor in this grappling among the participants. Similar to the nature of people participating in communities, - book clubs, running groups, religious affiliations, community service efforts - teachers can achieve bigger

goals when they stay connected with others especially when confronting past practices and seeking change. Winnie noted this connection in a Teacher Church discussion:

I really used you guys a lot, honestly, I think it it validates what I'm doing otherwise at first when I was talking about it especially to my co-teacher - who just really gets me - even she was “like are you coming up with this stuff on your own - how do you know that there's any validity to what you're doing right now?” and that's when I'm like “well there's a bunch of teachers doing this and it's working” so I think just yeah kind of using the experts - the people that are doing it - as the support as your support group but also validation and evidence for other people that were not alone in this.

As Winnie illustrated, she drew strength from her teacher community to move forward in the practices she wanted to embody in her classroom. For many experienced teachers, staying connected to their teaching communities proves to be worthwhile in order to avoid being alone. Grappling with change can be easier when teachers see this work occur in real time and have each other for ongoing support.

When teachers think about their purpose with students first rather than prioritizing texts or topics, it can offer an opportunity to expand learning in a way that makes it more authentic for the learner. Acknowledging that authentic learning experiences highlights a transformational shift in thinking when it relates to the types of experiences that can be constructed for all learners. In connection to the previous artifact related to learning community spaces, there was also an emphasis around physical spaces among the teacher participants as well. Understanding that creating physical space for his students in an inquiry framework, Greg noted in his interview that developing those spaces also strengthened his classroom community:

I really like the idea of just creating space for that [inquiry] kind of work - because like there's a lot of value in it and un-siloing our school - I think it's really important and it helps students learn....it really does.

Greg continued his thoughts by speaking about the physical changes he made to his classroom in an effort to better support his students throughout the implementation of the inquiry framework. While he had tables and chairs in his classroom prior to the experience, he and Suzie both noted how they took down the collapsable wall that separated their spaces and rearranged classroom furniture to meet student needs. Along with classroom furniture, Greg also spoke to the need to create a space that supports research. In reflection, he noted:

One of things that we've been doing a lot of ground work on is trying to make this more of an authentic experience for students rather than just researching because that's kind of where our [NCSS C3] framework has been - we research something and then we do something based on our research. But what we really haven't been doing is capturing the stories behind some of this and making the research more relevant to themselves and the community, the school, beyond, something that connects.

Greg acknowledged that authentic research experiences were necessary for his students but also noted that research was more than just investigating sources. He continued to talk about the need to capture stories and how that impacted his classroom space. Not only collapsing his shared wall with Suzie impacted how students connected with each other, he also saw a need to incorporate a variety of collaborative spaces in his classroom to support his thinking around research and relevancy.

Along with Greg, Suzie saw the need for change in physical spaces and resources for her classroom, as well. As noted above, she collaborated with Greg to collapse their shared wall in

an effort to broaden their learning space; but, when also speaking about her classroom, she also discussed potential barriers before starting her work with inquiry. In her interview she stated:

I'm very interested but I'm just kind of hung up on the logistics of getting started...the current school system, the parents, the administration are all there, too, and the resources that we have are, you know, fairly well set, so how can we overcome these difficulties to really bring inquiry into the classroom.

For many experienced teachers, this work stops before it even begins because of the barriers that Suzie acknowledged in her interview, especially when it comes to classroom resources. For Suzie, she and Greg both noted many physical needs their classroom lacked and were unsure of how to secure these resources as they pushed against the materials already provided from their district. Teachers who have regular experience with inquiry understand that the nature of this work is not straightforward as it embodies authentic student questioning and student-driven action and, in order to support students, space must also be created as well. However, as teachers first enter inquiry, the fear of the unknown can be enough to discourage work like this in classrooms with students. As Suzie touches upon this briefly, she also demonstrates the desire to rethink and seek solutions to these barriers as she committed to stepping into this work with her students especially in connection with the needs of her classroom space.

These experienced teachers often thought of space as a barrier. Prior to entering this study, many of the teacher participants focused on time - reading a novel at a certain time of year, being on time and pace with other colleagues in their department, or having the amount of time to cover material within a designated school year. However, as student-driven practices and inquiry came to the forefront of their work, their focus on time pivoted toward a focus on space.

For Greg and Suzie, they created a physical space where they rearranged their schedules in order to co-teach their lessons together in an effort to facilitate their learners' experiences together.

While embarking on inquiry studies that involve contemporary social issues with students can be a world that teachers avoid imagining because of outside extenuating factors - fear of backlash from the community, control or censorship from administration, or even a lack of resources to materials to name a few. Winnie highlighted the power of broadening the boundaries of our learning environments as she created a world that invited parents into her classroom as an integral part of the inquiry framework. She stated:

The reception I've gotten is so unreal. I've gotten so much insight from parents just about the way that they view the changing world and so many parents have commented saying that they are totally in support of these types of discussions. They wish there were more of them in school - they're like, "My kid goes through so much more than I ever did and I'm so glad somebody is willing to talk about it with them! We would love to know what you're doing so we can continue the conversations at home." It's just amazing how I just didn't see that the parent is so willing to be involved in that way.

Winnie's response shows how the support of outside communities can factor into making these transformative experiences within the classroom. Continuing to develop this work throughout the semester, Winnie could envision a world of teaching that involved a more community-based approach to student-centered inquiry around contemporary social issues which differed from her long-standing figured world of teaching. While teachers like Winnie still continue to work and make changes in their classroom practices at a pace that aligns with processing, there are definite similarities to the identity formation illustrated by Holland et al. (1998). Participating in this change allows teachers to deeply examine their positionality, engage in a space of authoring, and

develop new figured worlds that transform the trajectory of their professional practice. When experienced teachers take time to examine the other possibilities in teaching that stretch beyond their current practices, they also build connections to communities that shape their identities as student-centered educators as means to construct a world completely different from their own lived experiences.

Rethinking the Role of Students

The work rooted inside this inquiry-based framework challenged the participating teachers to reevaluate their roles within the classroom setting. For these experienced teachers, their stories in the field began with teacher-driven practices. When committing to a framework that encouraged students to examine issues that mattered to them and use their own voices to advocate for those issues, the role of the teacher changed. Teachers in this study willingly wanted to engage in practices that would both challenge and improve their work as professionals but grappled extensively with the tension that existed between their past understanding of the teacher's role and what their students were experiencing in the classroom. Simply put, it was hard to give up teacher control. Jim stated in his interview:

I'm trying to get more towards that path of giving them [his students] the driver's seat but it is hard...I mean some really struggle with these questions or they don't want to ask a question because they'll be like "well this is a stupid question" but it's it's really a not... it might be a lower level question but you gotta start there to get to the deeper stuff and some of them don't want to share and I want to help them, like, do it for them sometimes but I know I can't.

For Jim, giving up control meant that he needed to commit to his students' doing the work regardless of the outcome. His concern for quality experiences among his students challenged

him to rethink his role as a facilitator in his classroom. For as much as teachers like Jim want to protect their students from those moments when students may not be confident in their questioning abilities, it is also a moment that students can learn from these experiences the more times they engage in these practices. While Jim wanted to help his students in times where his students demonstrated struggle, he resisted. Not only does Jim provide insight on how hard it is to shift the roles of teachers and students in a classroom, but he also takes it a step further by acknowledging the resistance he had to maintain in order to allow his students to learn from these experiences.

Working within this framework, teacher participants concluded through their discussions that students both needed more support than what they anticipated throughout this framework as well as more practice with this type of inquiry-based thinking. As Jim created platforms that allowed students to formulate their own questions, he also grappled with how he needed to let go of that teacher-centered role that controlled the questioning process. For Greg and Suzie, their co-taught experience using *Internment* (Ahmed, 2019) invited students to create their own questions and then it was taken a step further by folding those questions into an action-based project. From this stance, there was a definite shift in student power and ownership within the learning space. Not only did Greg and Suzie ask students to design their own questions but there was a sense of dependency on those questions to use throughout their research and drive their student-designed projects. Greg spoke about his students in this role by saying:

I think one of the things that I thought was really really cool in the unit was when we got to the phase when the kids started making their projects... There was a lot of work that the kids had done to get to that point but, you know, you get to the end and it's relatively open ended and I was really impressed with how a lot of the kids really found something

that was of interest to them...I think there were kids - kids are really really good at identifying and connecting with racism in the American context, but when you talk about like people being treated differently because of their religion or sexual orientation, it - their connection with it won't always be the same. I'm painting with a massively broad brush because that connects strongly with a lot of our kids but it depends on who they are...Like, if you would have told me when we did this that we were going to have projects on climate change, that would have been like “no, that doesn't make any sense.

While the young adult novel presented concrete themes such as religious intolerance, racism, and rebellion, Greg was surprised by the variant studies his students were inspired by as a result of the learning experience. Shifting that role of students in this experience, Greg and Suzie were able to see their students broaden their curiosities and explore issues that took them beyond the initial unit of study. As Greg acknowledged, it took a lot of work to get to the point where students can be in a position to drive their own learning. However, as we hear Greg explain it, this experience afforded a space for student agency in their learning and invited them to shape their own personal identities around the issues that matter the most to them. In Teacher Church, Greg also pointed out that the change to empowering students to take ownership of their own learning has reshaped how he uses his class time with learners. Adopting student-driven learning afforded Greg more time to conference with his students and the ability to tailor learning to their specific needs. Seeing these acts come into fruition became a turning point in how these teacher participants viewed learning and pedagogical design in their classrooms.

When examining the transformative nature of the experienced teachers within this study, it became clear that as new information continued to influence the classroom context, teachers also needed to evaluate their past ideas and understandings as they not only shifted their

worldview but also challenged the status quo of teacher identities. Throughout this work, teachers went beyond acquiring knowledge for themselves and experienced fundamental changes in their perceptions of how learners connect to learning. Additionally, they noted how teachers can play a pivotal role in this process when open to prioritizing values that reflect both student agency and real world applications.

Greg spoke about this when reflecting on his experience with Suzie and his students unit connected to *Internment* (Ahmed, 2019). As his students engaged in the inquiry framework and began asking questions relative to social issues, he discussed the need to be a learner in this position as well by saying “...sometimes the best way to address ethical questions in the real world aren't clear, so by asking questions myself and with my students, it's a way to investigate them without coming to a teacher-driven conclusion.” Greg acknowledged his position as the classroom teacher in the moment but, rather than forming that position as the sole expert in the class, he positioned himself as a learner alongside his students.

Celebrating Failure

As the data supports, teacher participants shared similar mindsets when engaged in inquiry. These mindsets were identified as celebrating failure and staying connected to supportive communities. In many classrooms, the term “failure” often correlates with punitive consequences. Yet, for teachers in this study, failure became a celebration among themselves and their students. Teacher participants viewed failure as a sense of being uncomfortable, trying new things, and a willingness to fail in front of their students and classroom shareholders. Ryan described failure as “something that makes him uncomfortable but you’ve gotta go for it.” For him, it was a humanizing component to his classroom. Having a mindset that celebrated failure provided an unspoken permission to his students that they could do the same in an effort to learn

from those moments. Ryan described that by modeling this mindset, he wanted his students to embrace this feeling of being uncomfortable and coached his students on how to positively respond. Additionally, for teachers like Greg, he noted that failure was a “healthy addiction.” Comparing his mindset on failure to those of stand-up comedians, Greg thrived on failure because it made his work with students stronger. Failure allowed him to rethink why and how he was constructing learning experiences for his students. And, like Ryan, he, too, wanted to exhibit a sense of modeling for his students that offered a way for them to see adults grapple with failure.

Seeing failure as a learning opportunity rather than a punitive outcome became a mindset that many of the experienced teachers faced when working with their students. As Jim continued coaching their students toward this mindset shift, it was hard to conceptualize for himself. He, too, needed help with failing. When Jim decided that he wanted to incorporate the inquiry framework into his work with his high school juniors, he realized that the amount of texts he had worked with in the past were too many if he wanted to go deeper into the material with his students. Afraid that he was going to fail by not covering the prescribed amount of texts for junior year English, he needed support in taking risks because he equated failure with the possibility of losing his job. To work past this sense of failure, he spoke about needing a safety net. Jim noted:

I think the fact that I was tenured at the end of last spring gave me a little more freedom. I'm sure the freedom was there before that - but this is just kind of like you know a little safety net. And, obviously having you in the building - someone who has done this before within the district. Um, people are more accepting to see it done.

While Greg sees failure in his own teaching context in front of students as a healthy experience, Jim was more cautious going into this work. While he encouraged his own students to construct their own questions, discover facts independently, and formulate their own personal viewpoints, his own personal hesitation to fail resulted in growing doubt. Teachers like Jim and Ryan admittedly wanted to change their practices for quite some time, however, were only prompted to take action when they achieved tenure in their district. Citing that they both felt “safe and secure” in their positions as classroom teachers, they were more comfortable trying new practices with their students because of the positive relationships they had with their administrators and strong connection they had with their students’ families in their communities. When both Jim and Ryan felt they had the trusting support of their administrators, especially, their conversations around “failing” in this work shifted. Concerned that they would not be adhering to the district or long-standing community expectations of their positions, knowing that their administrators viewed them as professionals and trusted their professional decision making allowed them to deeply explore their work within their content areas, expand their ongoing work within their classrooms, and rethink failure for both themselves as well as among their students.

Shifting Grading Practices

Experienced teachers in this study faced a crossroads that challenged their previous practices and sparked a new perspective on students facing issues within their communities. Greg discussed this shift in his students’ thinking as he highlighted the “superficial nature of school vs. what the real world demands” when he addressed the need for integrating social issues in his classroom. He noted that he observed a tension between school and learning and, while he “couldn’t change the entire school experience for students, he can change what he does in his classroom to make it more relevant.” The need to incorporate social issues in the classroom

became a shared belief among the participants. However, among this shift to empower students and rethink the learning community, traditional grading practices came into question throughout this study as well.

To go back to Suzie and Greg's ACLU video conference related to their work with *Internment* (2019), they noticed the questions, responses, and further thinking this experience created among their students. For Suzie, she noted that she had to push past her feelings of being uncomfortable as she acknowledged that her past self would have wanted to "give students a grade for a written summary of the interview experience with the ACLU—but that's not what mattered at that point." Expanding the boundaries of her classroom by inviting more experts into the learning space changed her outlook on what really mattered in the moment. This reflection served as a catalyst for new thinking around grading and assessment for Suzie as she shared her thoughts with Teacher Church the following week. She recalled this story to the teacher participants and engaged further in grading discourse by noting that she wanted to rethink zeros in her gradebook because of this experience because, for her, "zeros didn't make any sense anymore." This same experience allowed Greg, too, this same moment of reflection as it prompted him to rethink his entire grading practice. He commented in the same Teacher Church discussion that he was looking into implementing a feedback-based grading system. As he was seeing the questions and thinking students were producing throughout this experience, traditional grades did not assess this work in meaningful ways. Greg stated:

...you know, like, I can't give a number or a percentage to, you know, a student who is formulating ideas and trying new things...feedback makes more sense to me and, like, thinking about learning holistically, I want to do more [feedback] with my students.

Greg was beginning to see the need for change as a result of his work in an inquiry framework. Traditional grading practices were now being challenged and, as he shared with Teacher Church, his rejection of these practices prompted him to question and investigate new practices that support the work happening among his students.

Winnie spoke about assessment, grades and feedback as well throughout her time in Teacher Church. Her school implemented standards-based grading two years prior to this study. Winnie and her department constructed shared rubrics and, as part of her practice, she had to implement these rubrics into her work with students. When Winnie and her students began working with the inquiry framework, they were able to read their class novel and cultivate questions and research topics. After students curated a list of research topics, however, Winnie's school closed due to the pandemic. While Winnie thought her work within the framework had officially come to an end, her students continued to engage in their research and constructed their awareness campaigns around their chosen issues. Winnie noted that while she continued to use prescribed rubrics mandated by her department, she felt the need to both invite students to self-assess their work as well as provide more feedback due to the nature of the work. She described her need for feedback by saying:

I was talking to Sarah about how long it took me to give feedback the other day - it took forever because I wanted to comment on so much... but it was such a great process because so many of them in their assessment of their own learning have said "oh my gosh, I've never been able to just research what I want to research - I'm getting so much out of this!" and, like, holy cow, there were countless kids saying that... so, yes, okay this is what it's about and that's my motivation right now.

Standing at the crossroads of what it means to be a learner and how teachers develop their craft in the classroom, experienced teachers like Suzie pushed past the need to assess the final product and discovered value in the process. For teachers like Greg and Winnie, they witnessed their students owning so much of their learning that practices like percentages and rubrics did not equate to the needs of their students at the time. They both noted the power of feedback and how that can directly impact student growth. Thinking about how we learn, how we think about learning, and how we spend time in the messiness of learning proved to be a change in discourse around grades, a value that surfaced with these experienced teachers and how that changed the trajectory of their practices.

Conclusions and Implications

This article began with a quote from one of the experienced ELA teacher participants as she reflected on starting her journey to transform her teaching practices using an inquiry-based framework. Suzie's comment speaks to the need teachers have when it comes to the evolution of their practices while working with learners in a modern, ever-changing world. Stacks of literature or research could not touch the irreplaceable connections, discussions, and pedagogical shifts these teachers experienced within this study. The ways in which this opportunity invited teachers to rethink their positionality with students and allowed for them to control the why, how, and what of their practice left a substantial impression on how they view teaching and learning. In particular, Chavez Rojas et al. (2021) remind us that teacher identity development is rooted in a collaborative sharing of teaching experiences and the willingness to self-reflection. Teacher professional development structures can benefit strongly from looking at the figured worlds of experienced teachers wanting to transform their classroom practices as a means to empower professionals to participate and develop communities that strengthen them, similarly found in

Teacher Church. The work displayed throughout this study disrupted traditional professional development practices through the attentive use of video conferencing, personal reflections, and individual discussions. Additionally, this work expands transformational teaching practices and seeks to encourage experienced teachers to engage and develop their own teaching communities that strive for innovation and student-centered learning.

To be noted, this study did not pressure experienced teachers toward action as they confronted and reflected on their work in the classroom. Change - especially after many years of established experience with learners - inevitability takes time. Although teachers in this study were open to change and wanted to evolve their personal practice, the time frame of this study was not devoted to exploring how these changes came into specific lesson design. However, it does acknowledge a fundamental starting point in challenging one's established beliefs and highlights the external factors that contribute to the barriers experienced teachers face when embarking on this journey. Taking these first steps and exploring solutions to these barriers ultimately leads to action. Because the span of this study lasted only a semester, there was not enough time for teachers to go past this acknowledgement and dive deeper into sustainable, transformative changes to their practices. Further steps in this study would benefit from more inquiry due to the evolutionary nature of the study.

Traditionally-minded teaching figured worlds started as a barrier to this journey. Nonetheless, the teachers in this study had the drive and motivation to change because they all wanted to do better and be better for their students. Working through those barriers with these teachers proved that change in professional mindset, values, and practice are possible and offer hope for change in others. With the differences that exist between the world making of experienced teachers and the learning that our students should experience to belong to an

ever-changing world, teachers in this study both collaborated and supported each other in an effort to make a shift to student-centered inquiry practices. While this study first began examining how teachers implement an inquiry-based approach in their own classrooms, it evolved by altering their identities centered around the role of students, the texts they choose, and how they position themselves as learners when expanding the boundaries of their learning environment to name a few. Affording teachers time to come together and push beyond the existing narratives around teacher expectations served as a new path to transform how teachers reflect, understand, and change their professional practices.

CHAPTER IV: INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF NOVICE ELA TEACHERS MENTORED
BY EXPERIENCED AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATORS

**“You’re Letting the Kids Really Go There”: Instructional Practices of Novice ELA
Teachers Mentored by Experienced and Innovative Educators**

Abstract

As teachers continue to leave the classroom due to unrealistic expectations and deprofessionalizing decision making, the need for strong student-teacher mentorship becomes necessary to explore in connection to teacher retention. Adolescents continue to face a fast-paced, confusing world and actively look for ways to process their surroundings. When it comes to cultivating a collaborative, justice-oriented, inquiry-based classroom community with middle school students, this article seeks to explore how the impact of having an innovative experienced teacher throughout student teaching can have on a novice teacher in their formative years in their own classroom. Data collection for this study occurred over the span of 5 months and included interview data, artifacts, and observational notes. Findings show the potential to rethink how teacher preparation programs place their student teachers in field experiences as a means to foster innovation inside the English/Language Arts classroom in regards to (1) letting go of past classroom practices both as a learner and as teacher candidate, and (2) evoking change through the implementation of purposeful reading experiences, integrating new teaching strategies, and infusing a value of community both in and outside of the classroom setting. Implications include how mentoring student teachers using authentic inquiry models can help teacher preparation programs to imagine new ways to think about teacher candidate placements and how this mentoring can ripple beyond the time in a university setting to influence a new outlook on classroom development.

Keywords: middle school, inquiry, mentoring, student-centered learning, novice teaching,
English/language arts

“When you do an inquiry framework and you're letting the kids really go there with their questions and you're not telling a kid that their question is right or wrong or that it doesn't fit on the test, or it's not on the quiz or we're not going to talk about it or it's not the reading guide - you let them wrestle with whatever questions they're talking about or whatever topic they're talking about...with inquiry, you just see such a higher level of engagement and critical thinking and that's where I'm more willing to let go and try new things.”

–Caila

Introduction

Caila, a novice middle school English/Language Arts teacher in central Illinois, spoke these words in an interview that asked her to reflect on her personal teaching experiences related to implementing inquiry. Her message captures the nature of this study designed to examine the power that strong mentorship can have on new teachers when experiencing inquiry in a modeled form. Leaning on Caila's thoughts, it invites us to rethink how we structure teacher mentoring experiences for newer teachers who especially want to do more meaningful work with their students.

While many new teachers want to engage in meaningful, student-centered work with their students, there are factors that can potentially inhibit novice educators from stepping into these spaces - lack of administration support, community backlash and district-mandated curriculum, to name a few. For any teacher in the field, we know that learning from experience matters (Jenset et al., 2018; Grudnoff, 2011). While experienced teachers have the potential to evolve their practice based on their experiences with a variety of learners, new teachers entering the field have the potential to repeat the teacher-centered practices observed as both a learner and a preservice teacher (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Le Cornu, 2015).

As we seek to keep new teachers thriving in our profession, it becomes essential to rethink how mentoring can play an ongoing role in this fragile space. What happens when teacher preparation programs stretch their outreach into schools who house strong, innovative teachers to place their teacher candidates with for a period of time? What happens when developing teachers have the opportunity to bear witness to adaptability and real-world connectedness within the classroom? And, what happens to the trajectory of professional decision making from that new teacher's experience when stepping into their own classroom for the first time? These questions served as the spark that ignited a deeper look into the relationship and connection between student teachers, strong cooperating teachers, and how this relationship impacted the trajectory of new teachers taking on their own classrooms.

This is the tale of two teachers - Caila and Kyle. Both of these teachers student-taught with me throughout separate school years and went on to take over their own classrooms. This project was developed to investigate how the relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher impacted the experiences of novice teaching. Throughout this study, many benefits came from these interactions between the three of us but the heart of this work focuses primarily on the instructional practices and professional decision making of new teachers. Ultimately, this work urges us to rethink the ways in which new English/Language Arts (ELA) teachers can be supported in their formative stages as new educators.

Making the Case to Change

It's not an understatement when we say that teachers of all backgrounds are drastically leaving the profession. When thinking about the reasons why teachers on any level are walking away from the classroom, much of the research points to the increase of standardization (Gore et al. 2022; Elfers et al., 2022), deprofessionalizing moves such as inequitable compensation (Van

Eycken et al., 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020), the growing amount of unrealistic expectations placed upon teachers in today's classrooms (Zhu et al., 2020; Torres, 2020), and the lack of mentorship new teachers especially need when shaping their own teacher identities (Stoetzel & Shedrow, 2021; Hulme & Wood, 2022; Moseley et al., 2022). As research supports many reasons why teachers are exiting the classroom, it becomes necessary to think critically about teacher preparation and induction in order to preserve the longevity of the profession itself.

ELA Teacher Preparation

Specifically examining the preparation of ELA teachers, Smagorinsky & Whiting's (1995) national study highlighted the means to which universities prepare English teachers. The study confirmed that the English discipline itself did not have a clear outline of what constitutes a preparation program that meets the needs of ELA classrooms. Furthering the work of this study, Caughlan et al. (2017) notes that many of the challenges within ELA teacher preparation are curricular, political, and cultural (p. 266). In regards to curriculum, initiatives like "college and career readiness" (CCSSI, 2010) have prompted ELA teachers to integrate more nonfiction texts while leaving less time for literary analysis. Goldhaber et. al (2017) confirms that nationwide political initiatives toward educational reform related to the measurement of student growth - like No Child Left Behind or Race to the Top (U.S Department of Education, 2009) - along with other high-stakes standardized tests continue to leave their imprint on ELA classrooms as teachers feel pressure to teach writing through the use of testing prompts.

Along with outside factors directly impacting the shifts in the ELA curriculum, teacher preparation programs have faced challenges culturally as the percentages of White, middle-class candidates grow at the university level yet the students in today's classrooms represent diverse demographics (Lee & Lee, 2020). With this in mind, teacher education programs continue to

have a history of scrutiny and criticism in connection to preparing future educators and meeting the complex needs of the classroom (Cochran-Smith et al. 2013).

In thinking about present-day teacher preparation, König et al. (2017) discuss the effectiveness of teacher education programs in connection to the success of new teachers and their students. This direct connection can greatly influence the foundational beliefs and values of a beginning teacher entering the classroom for the first time (Pasternak et al. 2018).

Darling-Hammond (2006) speaks to the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs that specifically focus on bridging theory and practice together through field-based learning experiences. Acknowledging that there are complex layers that live within the teacher preparation programs and their ability to connect preservice teachers with mentor teachers, the need to be intentional in these placements still remain the same. Future educators need to participate in targeted clinical observations, experience teaching in the PK-12 setting, and engage in critical professional self-reflection as a means to not only strengthen their longevity as a teacher but also to build the skills necessary to an evolving profession.

ELA Teacher Mentoring and Induction

Weiss and Weiss (2001) argue that “cooperating teachers are the most powerful influence on the quality of the student teaching experience and often shape what student teachers learn by the way they were mentored” (p. 134). Teacher mentors can be an intricate component in the development of new teachers especially when thinking about providing valuable feedback, designing curriculum, and navigating administrative tasks and educational policies to name a few (Callahan, 2016; Daresh, 2003). Odell (1990) noted that mentors are “the most significant source of support for beginning teachers” (p. 21). Boreen et al. (2009) remind us that mentors can also provide a sense of emotional support as new teachers continue to strengthen their professional

craft and shape their teacher identities. Mentors have the ability to work in conjunction with new teachers to not only reflect on their own professional practice through a critical lens, but also find ways to improve their instructional strategies by having more than one teacher in the classroom community (Gagen & Bowie, 2005).

Thinking beyond the mentorship needs of the student teaching experience, teacher induction, or more specifically identities as the first 3-5 years a teacher is independently working in the classroom (McCann et al., 2005), can also be considered a critical time of support for new teachers. As new teachers directly face the obstacles that often push teachers out of the profession (standardization, unrealistic expectations, etc.), they also face a time where they leave university methods courses and form their own teacher practices (Goldrick et al. 2012). As the ELA classroom seeks to develop and retain highly qualified teachers, identifying and selecting strong ELA mentor teachers within this formative stage of novice teaching is not only essential, but should be a priority. And, leaning back to Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) national study of English teaching methods, how this foundation is shaped among novice ELA teachers becomes key to the future of English classrooms.

Student-Centered Teaching

Informed by constructivist and socio-cultural theories, student-centered teaching places practices like inquiry as a fundamental root as students work with skills that are necessary for today's world. From as far back as theorists like Dewey (1938) and Piaget (1936, 1950), constructivist theories center students as active participants. Students construct new knowledge by formulating connections between new information and their existing knowledge, experiences and ideas. While studies shaped around constructivist theories connect directly to student-centered teaching, it also asks teachers to explore various ways students learn and

connect to their prior experiences (Aguilar, 2012). To add to this, socio-cultural theories of education impress that teaching and learning occurs within a wider social and political context. As we see through Vygotsky's work, he suggests that social contexts are fundamental to learning. Bridging student-centered teaching practices rooted in constructivism and socio-cultural theories together welcomes the integration of social justice practices in the classroom as well.

In thinking about social justice practices in the classroom, Adams (2007) claims that teachers must "pay exceptional attention to balancing students' emotional needs with their own cognitive ones, acknowledge students' personal experiences, tend to group dynamics, seek out opportunities of reflection, and appreciate awareness, growth, and change" (p. 33). As educators reject the complacency of standardization and texts that promote the single story (Adichie, 2009), action among classrooms must be taken to address these societal needs. To be engaged and informed citizens, youth need to have an opportunity to critically evaluate situations and then be able to take action (Thomas et al., 2014). Freire's (1978) critical pedagogy reminds educators of the exceptionally vital responsibility they have toward students in regards to not only being critical of texts produced within such a large playground of information; but also recognizing that students have the power and ability to take action.

Positionality

Being a middle school teacher for twenty years, I have always stood out among my colleagues for teaching differently. Every school year, I challenged myself to incorporate new strategies and designed new learning experiences for my students. Entering my tenth year of teaching, I decided to shift to gradeless assessment practices and promoted more social action among my students related to topics that mattered to them and their communities. It was at this point when I viewed teaching, learning, and justice as mutually fundamental to the learning

space I shared with students. Bringing new teachers to work alongside me in my classroom served as the inspiration to this study. Because I teach differently, I wanted to see how their experiences during student teaching impacted the way they navigated their own classrooms. This thinking led to the development of my research question: How do teacher to student-teacher mentorships rooted in collaborative, justice-oriented inquiry shape the instructional practices of novice teachers?

Methodology

This qualitative study stemmed from a larger design-based research study I conducted related to teacher transformation. Design-based research served as the methodology to this work. Drawing on works from both critical theory (Friere, 1970, 1978; Vygotsky, 1987) and constructivism (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1936, 1950), design-based research seeks to develop theory within the context of real-world practice while producing findings that are not only useful, but can also transfer into classrooms to improve instruction (Reinking & Bradley, 2008; Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). The original study centered on a teacher focus group over a five month time span - that included both Caila and Kyle. Reviewing the collected data, it became clear that both Caila and Kyle prompted a closer look into their experiences as new teachers. Given their experiences with me as their former cooperating teacher, inspired a new line of questioning related to the development of their own personal teaching practices. As a means to understand this further, I created a substudy to focus primarily on the novice teachers and their instructional practices within their own ELA classrooms.

Context of the Study

Caila and Kyle both served as focal participants in a broader study that took place through an online networked inquiry experience. When collectively looking at the data from the

broader study, I noticed trends in the data that specifically related to the novice teachers participating with experienced teachers (or teachers who have been in the classroom longer than 5 years). These trends led to a variety of sub-questions that emerged when examining these novice teachers closely because what experienced teachers had claimed as transformation served as standard practices for our novice teachers. In two separate semesters, Caila and Kyle each began their teaching careers by student teaching with me in an 8th grade rural ELA classroom that is a part of a school that serves an average of 380 students. Of the 380 students who attend, the demographics of race within the school show 92% White, 4.5% Hispanic, and less than 1% of students identify as two or more races (“Illinois Report Card” [IRC], 2021).

Caila identifies as a white female who accepted her first teaching position after student teaching in a suburban district with a demographic makeup with 74% of students identifying as White, 5.6% as Black, and 12.8% as Hispanic (IRC, 2021). For the first three years of her teaching experience, she taught 8th grade ELA and had the support and interest of both her administrators and co-teachers. Seeking to move closer to family, she accepted a second 8th grade ELA position after ending her third year in the classroom. At the time of this study, Caila entered her fourth year in the junior high ELA classroom but her first year in a new school. Although she didn’t attend the school of her second teaching position, there was a strong familiarity with the community and the students she served in this position. This suburban junior high school is made up of an average of 853 students who are 74% White, 1.6% Black, 19% Hispanic, and 1.6% Asian (IRC, 2021).

As for Kyle, he identifies as a white male who attended a neighboring school system parallel to his student teaching district. After leaving student teaching to work in his own classroom, he accepted an 8th grade ELA position in Caila’s first school district. They both had

hoped to work with each other on a teacher team, but personal decisions to be closer to family led Caila to leave her first position and work for another district. While Kyle noted that Caila leaving served as a minor upset at the time of the study, he accepted the position and proceeded to work his first year in the classroom. Interestingly to be noted as well, both of these teachers had accepted new positions - Kyle to his first classroom and Caila to her second ELA classroom - they also both experienced school lockdowns and remote teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection

Collaborative Online Discussions

Along with other experienced teachers in a focus group, Caila and Kyle participated in online discussions using video tools like Zoom. Data collection for this study started in November 2019 and ended in May 2020 with teachers coming together every three weeks - as initially decided by the participants. However, as design-based research supports, teachers within this study collaboratively noted that they wanted more online discussions as a result of school closings. Online teacher focus group discussions centered around inquiry and teaching practices. These online meetings were in addition to individual teacher participant interviews conducted in person. While participation in this focus group was voluntary, Caila and Kyle both participated in four online discussion meetings with other teachers throughout the five month duration of this data collection.

Collaborative online meetings lasted an average of an hour to an hour and half discussing and responding to various aspects of teacher practices. While some meetings were facilitated by Sarah, many of the meetings coordinated over that timespan were guided by the participants. This experience led to the formation of a learning community for the teacher participants that not

only reconnected Caila and Kyle with me but also to other experienced teachers in the field as well. The video data collected during these meetings were then uploaded to a private YouTube channel and saved in a shared folder accessible to all who participated in the study. The collaborative online discussions helped formulate the primary research question of this study because of the participation generated by both Caila and Kyle throughout this experience. While they started both of their teaching experiences with me in my ELA classroom, their ability to connect and expand their pedagogical knowledge continued within these online spaces.

Individual Interviews

In addition to 9 collaborative online meetings, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted between each teacher participant and myself. Data collection for this study started in November 2019 as Caila and Kyle were asked to reflect on their experiences with the inquiry as disruption framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) throughout their student teaching experiences and their current teaching practices. Drawing on Charmaz (2014), semi-structured interviews encourage the ability to form collaborative relationships that could enrich the topics of discussion and reflection throughout the study. While these participants collaborated with me during their student teaching experiences, they also took the instructional practices we used to develop their work with students in their own individual classrooms. Semi-structured interviews afforded me a new understanding into how both Caila and Kyle viewed the inquiry framework as well as how they carried this framework forward into their own spaces. For both of their individual interviews, Caila and Kyle were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Tell me about your overall experience with the inquiry-based social justice framework during your student teaching experience and/or current teaching experience.
- What event or events stood out to you the most over the duration of the 9 week unit?

- What were you thinking when this event or these events occurred and how did it make you feel?
- What do these events teach you about learning? About teaching?
- What, if any, changes might you make to your approach as a result of these events?
- Why would you make these changes or why do you feel no changes are needed?
- How might participating in the implementation of this framework influence or impact future classroom practices?

Teacher-Constructed Artifacts

Because the nature of this study focused on the instructional practices of novice teachers, it became essential to study the artifacts that were both created and implemented by Caila and Kyle for their students. Both participants developed an online website for their ELA classrooms. Planning materials that were not accessible through the public website were shared in a Google folder between the participants and the researcher. Caila and Kyle submitted their planning materials to this folder in agreement for this study. Planning materials constructed by both Caila and Kyle provided an insight into their own personal understanding of pedagogical design.

Reflexive Journal

Within qualitative research, reflexivity both acknowledges as well as attempts to understand the importance of one's personal values and feelings within the research process. Reflexivity invites a critical look inward to think deeply about one's own lived reality and experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). Additionally, reflexivity is the recognition that "all knowledge is affected by the social conditions under which it is produced and that it is grounded in both the social location and the social biography of the observer and the observed" (Mann & Kelley, 1997, p. 392). Because I was not only the mentor teacher to the participants as well as the

primary researcher in this study, my reflexive journal served as a documentation tool that recorded the observations of the novice teachers.

Data Analysis

Since I wanted to examine the instructional practices of novice teachers who had participated in a collaborative mentorship around socially just inquiry methods, I focused on the actions and interactions relative to the participants’ classroom experiences. To begin, I first used process coding (Saldaña, 2009) by reading the transcripts and artifacts multiple times to determine the ongoing actions and interactions participants in this study demonstrated when speaking about their own experiences as classroom teachers. The first cycle of coding through the use of memoing resulted in 25 codes, which were added to a datasheet. A sample of this data sheet can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Sample Process Coding Datasheet

Process Coding

TRYING/ EXPERIMENTING	DISCOVERING	HELPING STUDENTS	ACKNOWLEDGING	PROBLEM SOLVING	REFLECTING	OBSERVING
Pushing traditional practices	Wobbling in thinking	Strategies to support	Privilege	With text usage	Self reflection on practice	Interactions with
Adapting new strategies	strategies	New thinking	Students’ needs	With new practices	In the moment with students	Mentor teachers
In new directions	approaches	Shape personal beliefs	Ineffective v. effective teaching	With outside sources	Effectiveness of teaching and learning	Student actions & decisions
	Texts		Where students come from		Change over time	Settings (small town)
	Trying new things		Where community comes from		Role of race	Decisions - parents and admin

From there, I coded the data a second time using memos and values coding (Saldana, 2009). In order to “tap into the subjective experiences of the participants,” I coded comments that expressed “participants’ values, attitudes, and beliefs” as well as emotions recalled or experienced by the participants or that I inferred (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75). The codes were then compacted into a datasheet. A sample of this datasheet can be seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Sample Values Coding Datasheet

Values Coding

VALUES	ATTITUDES	BELIEFS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Innovation requires letting go ● Literature circles/lit circle units ● Texts kids can connect to ● Full class novel studies ● Student connections and interest ● Being uncomfortable ● Being present when kids speak around issues ● Community voices ● Representation of real life ● Strong student teaching experience ● Hard work behind the scenes ● Anchor activities ● Thinking critically and engagement ● Student centered learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Energetic to do the work ● Hopeful for change ● Reluctant to change ● Brave to let go ● Cautious toward student interactions ● Confident with support ● Proud of students ● Positive about texts that create uncomfortable feelings ● Happy when being a facilitator ● Surprised by not reflecting sooner ● Shocked by book choice ● Disbelief that innovation exists in classrooms ● Nervous about student collaborations ● Shocked at the change between being a former learner, teacher prep program, and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional practices are the past (teacher-centered) ● Learners are disconnected with learning ● Grades are disconnected with learning ● Change is difficult ● Inquiry is needed in student centered learning ● Rural spaces are sheltered ● Rural spaces lack diversity ● Teens are still forming beliefs ● Kids repeat messages at home blindly ● Teens want to talk about issues ● White people have privilege ● Anti Racist work should be done on our own ● Find answers before drawing conclusions ● Kids love to play school because getting them to think about hard things takes time ● Students need to work leading up to genius hour

After completing the second cycle of coding, Saldaña (2009) recommends a “top 10” strategy that looks across codes in order to arrange them in various ways. In this arrangement, a series of categories surfaced. I collapsed the data and created a third datasheet to help ensure the accuracy of the identified categories. Another layer of codes were defined once I developed the third datasheet. A sample of this datasheet can be found in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Sample of Third Datasheet

Theme: Letting Go of Past Classroom Practices			
Subtheme	Code (no. of data excerpts)	Definition	Sample Data Excerpts
Letting go of teacher-centered approaches	Past practices as a learner (11)	Statements about how novice teachers experienced learning in the classroom.	The experience that I have had had, they had been more of your traditional, traditional language arts experiences with, um, specific types of writing like argumentative, and narrative and focused more on the writing aspect, so I hadn't got to do the reading part (<i>reading contemporary texts</i>)
	Traditional canon in ELA classes (5)	Statements about how traditional canon cannot be the only texts used with students today.	So, I think there's this notion of 'school' - there's been this notion of school that - err, even language arts, more specifically, where we're going to come in, we're going to read <i>The Outsiders</i> or we're going to read <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> or those traditional texts, those classics, and for what it's worth, I don't think there's anything wrong with reading classics, but I do think that there's so much room to read texts that our kids relate to and to read texts that are based on their world.
	Teacher prep program experiences (8)	Statements related to university clinical teaching experiences and novice teaching experiences.	My clinical experiences were very teacher centered. Me telling students the answers, students memorizing the answers and spitting them back to me. The difficulty of their work was determined by the lexile or levels of the books they were reading, not by levels of thinking, analysis or any actual "doing."
Letting go of hesitation and fear	Text selections (8)	Statements about selecting texts that could cause controversy.	I immediately loved the book. But, I was really nervous as soon as I read it because, like, not having done something like this before, I knew that it could be, there are topics, although they shouldn't be controversial, are. And, so knowing the dynamics of a small town and understanding how politics can play a role in understanding where we are today, um, that was something really nerve-wracking for me.
	Being alone (4)	Statements about feeling alone in the work done with students.	I was excited hearing words and phrases like "student centered", "grades free" and "inquiry". These were buzzwords that I had only read about in my textbooks as a preservice teacher. They were happening in spaces far, far away, not in any classrooms I experienced in my clinical settings. However, with Sarah's help, I felt myself begin to let go, and truly start to believe in the power of inquiry and a student centered model of learning. It's lonely because like no one else is doing this stuff around us, though. I had talked about new texts, I kinda got comfortable with the same book because this is a lot to take on - it is. And, when you're the only teacher doing it in your school, you get a lot of crap for it for lack of a better word. So, it's like this part of me that wants it to be comfortable and the whole point of it is that I'm not and we're not. School isn't a place that we're all supposed to be comfortable all of the time.
Letting go of control and power	Teacher and student autonomy (9)	Statements about the value of both teacher and student autonomy in the classroom.	When you just have like the kinds of conversations that these kids are capable of having and then you like think about having them going back and taking a unit test - I just can't even - I don't even see the argument any more - I'm just like "no" (laughter) You can't - it's not going to happen here - like no - like test prep, like when I think of taking time away from the things we're doing to think 'let's prepare them for the PARCC test' I'm like 'no' - I just can't see - I can't anymore.
	Not being the only expert (4)	Statements about teachers giving up the expectation of being the only expert in the classroom.	When reading <i>The Hate U Give</i> , it's irresponsible for me to stand up and like say what it's like to be part of a Black Lives Matter space - that's irresponsible and so bringing in those outside expert sources is smart

In true connection to design-based research, the ebb and flow of this co-constructed work depended on member checks with the participants throughout the duration of the study. Given the closeness I had with the participants, I reduced the bias in my analysis by relying on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria. Specifically when attempting to make sense of the theme connections developed throughout this analysis, I relied on peer debriefing and member checks with colleagues to determine a consensus. Additionally, I used data triangulation among the raw data collected to determine codes and collapse into themes.

Limitations

This study only focused on the stories of two young, white, middle class rural educators. Being involved in such a tight-knit community of teachers—both in student teaching with me and

the networked inquiry group of other experienced teachers—Caila and Kyle may have felt compelled to discuss instructional practices in more affirmative ways that align with the teacher group. I attempted to control this by asking the participants to contextualize their experiences from their own practices, share examples, and specific details. I directly quoted from these participants so that their responses can be viewed by readers.

Additionally, this small specific sample inhibits generalizability, and cannot be guaranteed that this sample is representative of all teachers. However, generalizability was not the focus of this study. This study aimed to provide an insight into the experiences of two novice teachers which themes can offer considerations for teacher education and induction.

Findings

When considering the themes that emerged during analysis, I was able to uncover two primary themes that occurred throughout the conversations and work demonstrated by the teacher participants. These themes provided insight into understanding the practices of novice teachers who experienced working with mentor teachers that implement authentic inquiry and promote justice-oriented learning. The two major themes of this study included: 1) rejecting initial conceptualizations of teaching; and 2) empowering students as catalysts for learning.

Rejecting Initial Conceptualizations of Teaching

When it comes to being a justice-oriented and student-centered educator, rejecting traditional forms of teaching, boxed curriculum, and tools such as pacing guides is not surprising. Letting go of these former practices leaves space for teachers to reimagine teaching and learning in new, innovative ways in an effort to connect learners with the world around them. Very often, teachers connect their own learning experiences to the ones they create for their own students. Traditional patterns and practices continue to be recycled because it's comfortable, safe,

and easy. However, as these teacher participants in this study reflected on their own positionality as both learners and clinical students at their universities, it became clear that tension existed between what was happening and what was best for student learning. As Kyle expressed:

My clinical experiences were very teacher centered. Me telling students the answers, students memorizing the answers and spitting them back to me. The difficulty of their work was determined by the lexile or levels of the books they were reading, not by levels of thinking, analysis or any actual “doing.”

After spending a semester with me and our 8th graders, Kyle felt disconnected from the previous clinical experiences he observed compared to his student teaching experience. He went on to say:

So, I think there’s this notion of ‘school’ - there’s been this notion of school that - even in language arts, more specifically, where we’re going to come in, we’re going to read *The Outsiders* (Hinton, 1967) or we’re going to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960) or those traditional texts, those classics, and for what it’s worth, I don’t think there’s anything wrong with reading classics, but I do think that there’s so much room to read texts that our kids relate to and to read texts that are based on their world.

While there can definitely be value in reading traditional texts found in Language Arts spaces, it is connected to how we interact with these texts with our students that matter. For Kyle, he associated traditional texts with traditional teaching practices and; therefore, felt disconnected to this work because he - like many of our students - needed to see the “why” behind these studies.

In addition to rejecting traditional, standardized practices associated with teacher-centered classrooms, the teachers in this study also identified moments they learned about power structures that exist in a classroom. Specifically to these participants, they thought

deeply about the power and control teachers *can have* in a learning environment versus what they *should have* in connection to their students. Here, they described moments from their own experiences as young learners as well as their university clinical experiences and how they observed teachers asking the questions, selecting the readings, designing the lessons to meet the needs of the learning standards, and reflecting on texts in artificial ways. Most frequently discussed were examples when teachers observed mentoring teachers implement low-level comprehension strategies or standardized assessment practices with students related to studied texts in the Language Arts classroom. For example, Caila spoke about how her students frequently engaged in higher order thinking questions around text connected to their own personal experiences and interests. She continued her thoughts by saying:

When you just have like the kinds of conversations that these kids are capable of having and then you think about having them going back and taking a unit test - I just can't even - I don't even see the argument any more - I'm just like "no" - You can't - like when I think of taking time away from the things we're doing to think 'let's prepare them for the PARCC [standardized state] test' I'm like 'no' - I just can't see the point - I can't anymore.

Both Caila and Kyle demonstrated fence testing to their work with learners - while they participated and observed in standardized, traditional learning spaces - they also believed that their students were capable of doing more and wanted to engage in practices that extrapolated these thoughts.

Power and control resonated with these teacher participants in not only pushing the boundaries of their own power as educators and what they could do with their students; but, the pressure and control of being the only “expert” in the classroom shifted as well. For example, Caila had the opportunity to integrate young adult literature into a unit related to her students’

interests and questions at the time. As her students read, her classroom culture provided a safe space for asking questions and discussing pointed topics. Throughout this experience, Caila found herself at a crossroads - continue to control the class narratives by presuming to be the only expert in the room or invite outside experts into her learning space and give up the teacher-centered control that she had observed for so long. She noted:

When reading *The Hate U Give* (Thomas, 2017), it's irresponsible for me to stand up and say what it's like to be part of a Black Lives Matter space - that's irresponsible and so bringing in those outside expert sources is necessary.

While this shift in power and control within the classroom demonstrated a sense of logic, it also highlighted a sense of hesitation and fear among these new teachers. Throughout these conversations, Kyle began to reflect on the crossroads teachers face when approaching change - moving in a safe direction that emulates what he saw as a young learner or moving in a direction that features many unknown variables like student responses, parent reactions, and the messages of outside experts to name a few. As Caila noted that she had a responsibility to her students to give up pieces of her classroom control, Kyle initially struggled to conceptualize what this could look like in practice. He explained this as he spoke about wanting to study Samira Ahmed's *Internment* (2019) with his students by saying:

I immediately loved the book. But, I was really nervous as soon as I read it because, like, not having done something like this before, I knew that it could be, there are topics, although they shouldn't be controversial, are. And, so knowing the dynamics of a small town and understanding how politics can play a role in understanding where we are today, um, that was something really nerve-wracking for me.

Teachers in this study emphasized the importance of how hard their work can be with students and how that can be translated to the stakeholders connected to their classrooms. For Caila and Kyle, the choice to integrate meaningful inquiry experiences by infusing contemporary texts as well as affording students space to investigate the issues that matter the most to them were easy pedagogical decisions to make. However, they also described the hesitation and fear they must work against when attempting to move forward in their critical work with students as they continue to reject familiar teacher-centered practices. For Caila, hesitation came in the form of being alone. She observed this work happening in her student teaching placement with me but did not have any models before or after this time. She spoke about being alone by saying:

I was excited hearing words and phrases like “student centered”, “grades-free” and “inquiry.” These were buzzwords that I had only read about in my textbooks as a preservice teacher. They were happening in spaces far, far away, not in any classrooms I experienced in my clinical settings. However, with Sarah’s help, I felt myself begin to let go, and truly start to believe in the power of inquiry and a student centered model of learning. It’s lonely because like no one else is doing this stuff around us, though.

Even though both Caila and Kyle experienced teacher-centered learning as students and then again observing these practices throughout their university preservice programs, their work with students pushed against traditional models of teaching. They both saw what teaching could be like in a student-centered learning environment. As they dissolved their preconceived notions of what it means to be a teacher, they also developed a core belief in centering their students at the heart of learning.

Empowering Students as Catalysts for Learning

While formulated in different ways, both Caila and Kyle emphasized a high importance on centering students in the pedagogical design of their classrooms. The teachers not only spoke about their student-centered practices throughout their reflections but they also showed evidence of their thinking through their classroom artifacts. Both highlighted the importance of regularly integrating inquiry, student interests, and contemporary social issues. For these teachers, authentic inquiry was an embedded practice within their classrooms. The nature of inquiry invites students to not only shape the ongoing work through questions and topics but it also creates a community of shared decision making. Caila spoke about the intersection of these ideas as she reflected on her decision to implement inquiry in her classroom practices. She noted:

When you do inquiry and you're letting the kids really go there with their questions and you're not telling a kid that their question is right or wrong or that it doesn't fit on the test, or it's not on the quiz or we're not going to talk about it or it's not the reading guide, so we're not going to talk about, you let them wrestle with whatever questions they're talking about or whatever topic they're talking about... the quality of critical thinking - it's just not even comparable any more... with inquiry, you just see such a higher level of engagement and critical thinking.

As Caila outlined, centering student questioning was foundational to her work with learners. To her, questions served as an entry point into critical thinking and sparked a new level of engagement among her students. Similar observations were made in connection to combining contemporary social issues with inquiry and student decision making as Caila connected to her work with Genius Hour. Inspired by Google's 20% working model for engineers, Genius Hour is an inquiry framework that invites students to explore their own passions and creativity toward

personal interest topics (Juliani, 2022). As Caila reflected on implementing Genius Hour with her own students, she stated:

Genius Hour, letting them [students] take on any topic and getting used to that freedom of inquiry and wonder like bringing that back into the classroom. Selfishly, me as their teacher, I need it now because going back to the way I used to think, I just think of how much creativity is just not there anymore.

Caila noted several times that students were at the center of not only the design of her curriculum but also the conductors of meaningful learning. This student-centered approach invited Caila to think differently about her practice in regards to what mattered to her students and reflected on the skills needed to enter those important spaces. Relying on students to determine the questions and the direction of classroom learning, it is fair to acknowledge that this “unknown” might be intimidating to many teachers. But, as we see by Caila’s thoughts, the fear of the unknown didn’t readily exist. In fact, it can be said that she depended on her students to guide the direction of her Language Arts classroom.

To continue, Kyle empowered his students to think about the world around them when he decided to integrate inquiry into his classroom practices using a literature-based inquiry framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022). The framework asks ELA teachers to use contemporary literature as an entry point into researching and taking action on social issues. Kyle saw what this framework did in his classroom. He noted by saying:

...That was mind-blowing for me because I think we look a lot of times at middle schoolers and we say “oh we can’t do this” or “they can’t do that” when the reality is, if we give them the opportunity, they can do that. And, our kids came up with some really great things.

Reflecting on the power of this work, he continued by thinking more broadly about the nature of inquiry and how - if exposed to this type of learning before entering his 8th grade classroom - it could greatly strengthen his students' abilities to question and speak up about social issues. He stated:

...it would be really cool to see what that would look like had they, had they been more ingrained in like, inquiry processes before going into that text, but especially like this being one of the very first times that real student-centered inquiry, um, student-driven, student-centered inquiry is something that they did - it was really cool to see what they were able to do.

As contemporary issues, inquiry and student interest continued to embed in the work of these participants, it also emphasized the importance of empowering student voices. While Caila implemented frameworks like Genius Hour (Juliani, 2022) - which invites students to explore their own passions as a way to tailor personal learning experiences - she took inquiry further by encouraging their students to speak up and speak out about the social issues that mattered the most to them in the moment. For Caila, empowering students' voices defined learning as well as served as a catalyst for community building for both she and her students. She noted:

It's that idea of just giving them [students] a little bit of buy-in of "you do matter, your voice matters here," I'm interested in what you want to know about...like that little shift can just really change the way we learn.

For Kyle, many of his teacher artifacts pointed to mantling student voices. Attached to his public class website, students participated in a unit entitled "What does it mean to be a teen in today's world?" This unit title and essential question took his students on a journey to develop a

collaborative student podcast series that involved a collection of various social issues relative to his students' lives. As Kyle stated on his unit for his students:

If literature can be seen as a mirror into modern society, then it's essential that we use literature to grapple with conflicts that teens face in our current world. In the safe environment of the classroom, we can read, question, explore, discuss topics that teens interact with, and unpack such topics through the comforts of characters and fictional stories. In connection with these fictional texts, we'll be using the podcast, NPR's *This American Life*, to explore true-to-life stories in connecting themes.

Young adult literature served as a launch pad into these questions and investigations by students but the end resulted in students being empowered to authentically construct something that represents not only who they are but how they view the world.

For many teachers, empowering student voices could be seen as a triggering experience for both the classroom teacher and the stakeholders connected to the learning space (parents, administrators, community members to name a few) as it could potentially invite negative attention. As teachers today face the scrutiny and criticism of infusing personal agendas within the classroom - especially when focusing on controversial topics - centering students' questions and partnering that with their own research discoveries creates a community of learners. For Caila, she viewed student voice as a vital component to her work with adolescents because it afforded the development of key conversations and questions in her classroom. She noted this by saying:

To be able to watch kids stand up and talk about gun violence and talk about gender expectation and research it and be able to stand up there...that speaks more than me saying it [inquiry] works.

Caila witnessed these social topics integrate into her classroom because she empowered her students to think, question, and research the issues that mattered to them the most. Providing this power to students established an entry point to meaningful, critical work that learners need when shaping their own personal beliefs and identities.

Adolescence is a pivotal time to explore what it means to be ourselves as well as a time to discover how these identities play a role in today's world. Because of the nature of Caila and Kyle's student-centered mindsets, it only makes sense that identity became a core theme among their conversations and artifacts. Encouraging students to speak out about issues that matter to them equally required students to investigate their personal beliefs and values. As Language Arts teachers, the teacher participants in this study found a path into identity work through young adult literature. Reading contemporary literature connected to personal stories and a variety of experiences opposite of their students created a space for questions and conversations. Caila highlighted this need to discover identity and the integration of contemporary young adult literature by saying:

...they're [students] saying things that they hear at home that they're not really understanding the severity of what they're saying... but again that's why I had a lot of success though with a literature circle unit with them where I gave them some of the titles like *Internment* (Ahmed, 2019), *Dear Martin* (Stone, 2018), *The Hate U Give* (Thomas, 2017) and *Speak* (Anderson, 1999)...and they loved it. They started figuring out the things they wanted to believe in.

She went on to say “my lit circle unit was about identity...we talked about what does that mean to you, how does that speak to you, and what does that say about you.”

In contrast, Kyle approached identity work with his students through writing. Using a multi-genre writing approach to his work, Kyle introduced the writing process to his students while also emphasizing an importance on individual student identities. He challenged his students to construct a series of writings - each written in a different genre - and centered around stories about them as people. In addition to this assignment, Kyle referred to his students as “authors” and provided a sense of agency and importance to this work. He noted on his unit with students:

...what if we could think about writing in other ways? The purpose of this unit explores writing on various levels and introduces authors to a collection of writing publications. In addition, authors will be able to write in a variety of ways by reflecting on what it means to be themselves.

As these examples highlight, the decision to center students in learning spaces among the study participants varied from how questions and topics were formulated to the text choices that these teachers implemented as a means to explore students’ personal beliefs and values. Not only were these teacher participants valuing their students’ as equals in the learning community, but this student-centered mindset allowed these teachers to rethink what teaching and learning can truly mean to their future practices with students.

As teachers, change is something that we experience on a daily basis. From constructing meaningful lessons to integrating the latest research findings, we reflect in order to do what is best for all of our learners. But, how often do we ask our students to both design and experience change? How often do we ask our students to get uncomfortable with learning? As teachers, we may be familiar with the notion of change but is it the type of change that completely uproots our comfortability in an effort to stretch the boundaries of what we can do with students? Teachers in

this study reiterated the need to not only evoke change in our professional selves but also what evoking change looked like among their students - especially as these teachers used young adult literature as a conduit for this change. Repeating the same practices in our classrooms - especially when it comes to the text choices we provide our students - can bring comfort to teachers. Caila spoke about her inner struggle with getting comfortable and why she aspired to make changes despite how those changes may take her to uncomfortable spaces:

I had talked about new texts, I kinda got comfortable with the same book because this is a lot to take on - it is. And, when you're the only teacher doing it in your school, you get a lot of crap for it for lack of a better word. So, it's like this part of me that wants it to be comfortable and the whole point of it is that I'm not and we're not. School isn't a place that we're all supposed to be comfortable all of the time...I'm trying to push myself next year in going there a little bit more difficult with content, asking some tougher questions, bringing in some more social justice, bringing in some more diversity, really kind of pushing my kids a little bit more.

Through this reflection, Caila began to reflect upon the importance of being uncomfortable due to her work with inquiry and student-centered practices. As she situated her definition of school being a place where learners go to stretch and grow their thinking, she acknowledged that what she asked of her students, she must ask of herself. Teacher participants view change as an endless cycle of aspiration and discovery. For Caila, she aspired to integrate more depth into her beginning practice but - as many new teachers do - took small steps to develop her learning culture over time.

In addition to inquiry models, texts can also represent those entry points students and teachers need when contemplating change. In thinking about the nature of many Language Arts

classrooms, there's a reason why canon exists. Texts that continue to be manted and repeated in the classroom year after year become a staple to many Language Arts educators. Many teachers justify their text choices through their state's learning standards, limit access and availability of texts, or even the simple reason "because it has always been done in this class." Discourse around canonical texts and contemporary texts continue to grow among English teachers. And, while both Caila and Kyle were both required to incorporate more traditional texts into their teaching practices, they also implement and value contemporary texts. Regardless of the publishing date, the texts that are infused in our Language Arts classroom - according to the study participants - should be purposeful with students. Kyle connected to purposeful reading by saying:

Kids show up and they want to read what they want to read and want to go to school and they want to discuss...they're dying to tell you their ideas about the world.

Taking time to observe how students think, write, speak, act, process the world around them invites a conversation around the way we as teachers interject texts among our learners. Kyle extended these thoughts as he reflected on the decision to integrate Samira Ahmed's *Internment* (2019) with his work with students:

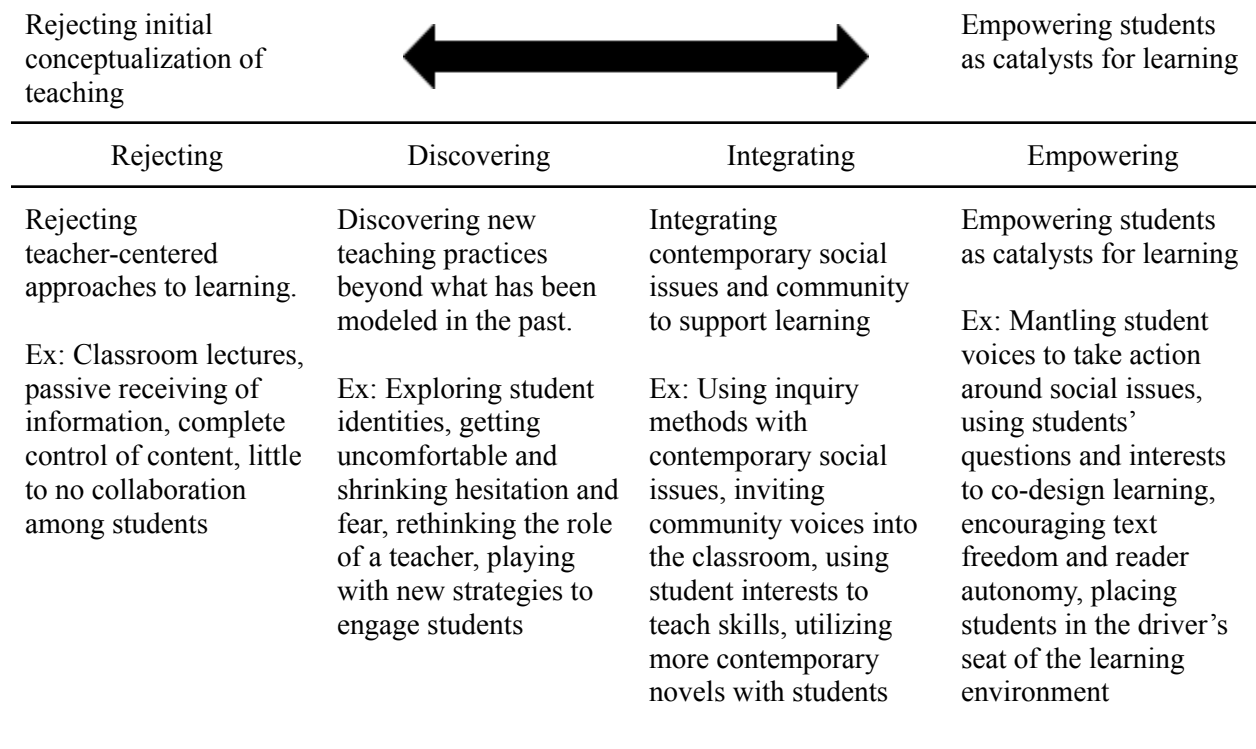
We started out talking about internment camps, and somehow we've got kids who are doing entire [awareness] campaigns on mental health. And, so the critical thinking that they were able to do as far as like what's happening in our text, and seeing that there are these deeper issues - even if they're not 100% highlighted, it was really cool to see how they could make real world connections with the text and pull things out that maybe aren't...that go beyond the surface level.

Just like Caila experienced with her students and Genius Hour, Kyle demonstrated a similar line of thought when he infused young adult texts with inquiry principles. For both of these teacher participants, change continued to be an ongoing theme because of how the decisions they implemented as teachers ignited students to think differently about themselves and as well as their communities.

Thinking back to the driving question of this study related to the instructional practices of novice ELA teachers mentored by innovative experienced teachers, I constructed a continuum (see Figure 4.1) to not only illustrate its two major themes but also to highlight the journey these teachers traveled as they entered the profession on their own. The themes presented in the study’s findings served as bookends to the constructed continuum. However, the journey of these two teachers allowed the middle of the continuum to take shape.

Figure 4.1

Instructional Practices Continuum of Novice ELA Teachers



As findings demonstrated that both Caila and Kyle rejected their initial understanding of teacher expectations and classroom instruction, their journey proved to be a focal point in the data from the larger design-based research study. Beyond rejection, teachers in this study began discovering what other practices could be done with students when they chose to let go of teacher-centered instructional practices. Going back to when Kyle noted that his students read a novel about internment camps and they generated questions about mental health, he discovered, in his words a “teachable moment to have conversation about mental health stigmas,” and began to think about how he could approach his students’ curiosities in meaningful ways. This small spark of discovery allowed Kyle to move forward on the continuum when he wanted to integrate more texts about the nuances of mental health based on his students’ thinking. It was Kyle who wanted to bring in our school social worker and psychologist to speak about mental health in connection to teenagers as it was mirrored in the book and by the reality of his students at the time.

For Caila, this continuum holds true for her as well as she reflected on her beginning days as a student teacher with me. She recalled having a conversation with me about the third day in a row that she implemented a lecture-based powerpoint presentation with our students and her teaching choices. We developed a plan to engage students in different ways that centered more of their interests and learning styles and she began to see the value in these changes through the actions of her students. As we continued to work together throughout her student teaching semester, she became more comfortable with trying new strategies and conferencing with student groups during our regular reading and writing workshop sessions. The semester continued by us working together to connect students with various community members relative to our class novel and eventually empowering our students to develop public service campaigns to create

awareness around social issues that mattered to them. When she gained her own classroom, she furthered this work by implementing Genius Hour in her classroom.

And, as this article began, Caila reflected on her student teaching experiences with me and how those experiences carried forward into her own classroom infrastructure. Her comment speaks to the need new teachers have when it comes to seeing inquiry and student-centered teaching in action. Piles of literature or research could not replace the invaluable discussions, connections, and curriculum design efforts shared between Caila, Kyle, and myself throughout their student teaching experiences as well as the impact that had on their own work as educators. It became clear that because of these opportunities, both participants were able to think divergently about their craft and understand fully how their mentorship and guidance impacted their teaching after leaving the university setting.

Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

Pasternak et al. (2018) reminds us that there is so much meaningful and important work still to do in ELA classrooms. Findings from this study point to the notion of rejecting past practices as we seek to shape and innovate the ELA discipline. In this tale of two teachers, Caila and Kyle both started their journeys by rejecting past conceptions of what they believed teaching should look like. As an example, Kyle noted that so much of his learning experience was rooted in teacher-centered learning practices - lectures, rote memorization activities, desks in rows to name a few. It was when he discovered new ways of teaching and learning that he was able to conceptualize a new inner framework for teaching. This discovery allowed him to integrate more risk taking like bringing in community members and empower his students to design and publish a class podcast.

The nature of this study invited young teachers who worked with me in the past to share how those student teaching experiences impacted their own teaching development. Although the teachers in this study openly shared their insights and stories related to their professional practice, the time frame of this study was not devoted to exploring the turbulence behind these beliefs. As these teachers shaped their craft in new ways under these themes, it can also be considered a very new - possibly threatening - means of teaching for others. The global pandemic challenged teachers to think of new avenues of teaching (Stacki et al., 2021; Francom et al., 2021) and the struggle to continue this important work became real.

For teachers like Kyle, he knew that his work was essential to students but felt deflated when he couldn't connect with his students' interests in real time. Being able to see the work in action and having the support to infuse student-centered practices (Hanewicz et al., 2017) still mattered to Kyle's development as an educator. Having since reconnected with students, Kyle remains committed to student-centered learning principles. However, for teachers like Caila, professional bullying took its toll on her confidence. Rather than establishing an ongoing mentorship in her school district, teachers in Caila's ELA department vehemently worked against her and her classroom practices with students. And, while Caila had the positive support of her students, families, and administrators, she ultimately left the classroom permanently due to these negative interactions.

On the other side of these stories, it's important to note that Kyle stayed connected with me and the other teachers participating in the networked inquiry I put together. He regularly came to Zoom meetings and met with me often to co-construct learning experiences with his students. Caila did not. After leaving her student teaching placement with me, we stayed in contact regularly throughout her first year of teaching but began to drift after that. Now that we

can see the impact of placing student teachers (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008) with innovative, experienced mentor teachers, it begs a call to action to change teacher education programs along with ongoing mentoring programs rooted in school districts.

While the limitations of this study show only two participants, it does acknowledge that strong mentorships can fundamentally impact how new teachers approach their practice (Hulme & Wood, 2022; Goldhaber et al., 2017). As teachers in this study demonstrated, they didn't have any previous experience with the teaching approaches I used with my ELA students. How can teacher education programs infuse more of these student-centered practices into the work they do with preservice teachers? And, additionally, how can teacher education programs continue to cultivate these strong mentorships for their teacher candidates? As we see by both Kyle and Caila's stories, these first steps create an invitation for more exploration. If we hope to not only change the trajectory of teaching practices to meet the needs of our students in an ever-changing world and hope to retain strong teacher candidates, we must be willing to think differently (Gore et al., 2022). And if we plan to encourage novice teachers as they dig deeper into the instructional practices continuum (see Table 4) by empowering their students to think about the world around them, then how do we continue to support their efforts? The span of this study lasted only a semester and there was not enough time to dive deeper into these questions. Due to the evolutionary nature of this design-based research, further steps in inquiry would benefit this study.

While Caila and Kyle's stories ended differently from one another, their shared student teaching experiences proved that change in teaching practices is possible. It also offers a sense of hope as we look to the future to rethink and evolve our current classrooms. As this study started with attempting to understand novice teachers' insights working in an inquiry-based classroom,

it matured to examine the relationship between novice teachers and their experiences with innovative teacher mentors. Nevertheless, as ELA classrooms seek to find and retain strong teachers, where our teacher candidates are placed, what they observe in the classroom setting, and how they absorb pedagogical knowledge can serve as a new path to letting go of old practices and usher in a new way of teaching for all students.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study began in the fall of 2019 and continued into the spring of 2020. As Teacher Church evolved over the spring semester, this small study opened up the possibility to rethink current teaching practices found in classrooms but also challenge the way we think about teacher preparation. As the manuscripts highlighted the many facets of this research by exploring both experienced teachers and novice teachers, they also offer additional insights into this work. This chapter will discuss those insights as well as the implications this study offers related to teacher education, classroom teachers, administrators, and future research.

Summarizing the Findings

Key Findings

Throughout the first article, as inquiry created the foundation of this work, it became only natural that it connected to the study's primary findings. Teacher participants throughout this study uncovered the nuances of teacher identity. As teachers worked collaboratively together using design-based research (or DBR), they discovered that within this work they, too, can become learners, innovators, and change agents from their work in the classroom. In order to embody these identities, however, the study confirmed that for teachers to do this, there needed to be 1) an established sense of community—as seen among the teachers in Teacher Church; 2) a reimagined sense of purpose to their roles as teachers in the classroom setting; and 3) an embrace toward change (i.e. content, text selections, student positionality to name a few).

As the second article examined the identities of experienced teachers—or teachers who have five or more years of classroom experience—critical pedagogy played a significant role in how these teachers were examining their overarching “why.” Teacher participants knew that they needed to change but didn't know how to change, how to be critical, what they needed in order

to be critical and Teacher Church became a cornerstone to their new understandings as professionals. Leaning into transformative theory (Mezirow, 2000), they shifted their identities allowing them to become more critical of text selections and the power texts had in a learning space. Additionally, their perspectives evolved when thinking about both community and learning spaces. Experienced teachers throughout this work embraced a broader definition of community by incorporating more expert voices into the classroom as well as began to think critically about the role of students and their part in the learning journey.

Finally, throughout the third article, the continuum designed for this study underpins the beliefs that the teacher participants had toward student-centered practices. From what they said to their artifacts, student-centered work embedded in an inquiry framework specifically connected to socially just practices became the bedrock to new discoveries. Their experiences allowed them to ebb and flow on the continuum from rejecting the initial conceptualization of teaching to empowering students as catalysts for learning. Much of the commentary throughout the data—specifically through interview data and collaborative inquiry recordings—played a significant role in the continuum development including its pillars focusing on 1) rejection; 2) discovery; 3) integration; and 4) empowerment.

Extending the Field

This study extends the field of education by not only providing interventions in smaller microdoses—true to DBR—but it also invites larger explorations around these piloted interventions. In regards to evolving professional development structure for teachers, this work could help expand and implement networked inquiry frameworks (Seglem & Garcia, 2016) in connection to empowering teachers across contexts and disciplines. Similar to the experiences illustrated in Teacher Church, networked inquiry frameworks have the power and ability to

transform teaching practices in more authentic ways given its nature to be controlled by teachers and not by outside shareholders (i.e. administrators).

Along with reimaging teacher professional development, this work also invites a critical examination into understanding how teacher education programs are formed, how they create disconnect among preservice teachers, and how opportunity to evolve these spaces could be futile to the future of the profession itself. Learning from Caila and Kyle's experiences in the classroom that prominently differed from their preparation program coursework and how that impacted their decision making as novice teachers in the classroom, sparks a new wave of thinking to consider when approaching teacher education programs. Not only does this work provide space to explore these areas, but it also may very well be key to teacher longevity.

Lastly, at the core of this study, an inquiry-based framework connected to social justice pedagogy still remains as the reason why networked inquiry groups like Teacher Church were formed. This study extends the field by inviting teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and professional development creators to think critically about the power inquiry frameworks can have on both teaching and learning. Having a baseline like Seglem and Bonner's (2022) inquiry framework afforded teachers time to adopt new pedagogical practices, reflect on their own personal practices as the framework required them to shift their past decisions as classroom teachers, and ultimately transform teaching practices and pedagogies to embrace the idea of centering students in the driver seats of their own learning.

Implications for Design-Based Research

This study initially focused on teachers seeking change in how they approached working with literature with their students by implementing an inquiry framework that infused a sense of socially just innovation. At the time of the study, the teacher participants met collectively around

every 3 weeks on Zoom and I was supporting their journey with resources or fielding questions but things were moving along until mid March 2020.

While the design-based research (DBR) had occurred before March 2020—teachers drove the networked inquiry experiences around the inquiry framework and DBR took on another meaning when teachers started to meet weekly and wanted to question and talk around other ideas beyond just the framework. True to DBR, teacher participants were eager to theorize, design, and test new classroom practices as they experienced this shift in interaction with students. As this work was formulated on a small scale, the findings support implications for several arenas of the education field. Regardless of level of placement, experienced teachers and novice teachers show needs in different ways. The nature of DBR can be found in the implications of this research and how those experiences can better help understand current practices in today’s classrooms.

Implications for Teacher Education

While this study did not directly address teacher education programs, several implications can still be drawn from this work. The teachers that entered this study willingly wanted to explore literature in new ways with their students. As teachers opened up to the idea of inquiry and what the inquiry-based framework (Seglem & Bonner, 2022) was asking them to do in their classroom, it also felt very foreign to these teachers to engage in these practices. The framework highlighted a variety of skills that students needed in order to participate in this work—formulating research-based questions, deciphering between fiction and nonfiction, and constructing authentic writing aligned to student interest, to name a few. While students were challenged to implement these new skills, teachers were equally challenged to teach those skills

to their students in ways that met their needs as learners. Ultimately, this framework pushed both teachers and students to think, act, write, and speak differently.

For teachers to be able to step into spaces like this, teacher education programs can promote studying the nature and needs of learners (Dole et. al 2016; Grudnoff, 2011). With teachers like Suzie and Jim who were inexperienced with student-driven inquiry, letting go of past practices and readjusting their perspective to prioritize their students' needs over the need to cover learning standards proved to be a pivotal point in how their view changed within teaching practices. The study itself asks teachers to not dismiss learning standards or discipline-driven objectives, but to reimagine pedagogy so that it becomes more centered around collaboration, solidarity, and cooperation (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021). Designing learning experiences with this in mind begs teaching to reevaluate its role in the classroom (Kahl et. al 2010; Brenchley, 2014). Teacher education programs must consider this reevaluation and play a part in modeling this change by not only rejecting teacher-centered practices still being implemented but also maintaining strong connections to primary and secondary educators who continue to implement innovative practices with students.

By rejecting the use of lecture-based, teacher-centered practices in teacher education programs, there is an opportunity to model these pedagogical practices for all teachers entering the field (Kahl et. al 2010; Stoetzel & Shedrow, 2021; Caughlan et. al 2017; Barrett, 2016). Prior to student teaching, Caila and Kyle reminded us that they had observed a limited number of teaching strategies throughout their time as a learner as well as a preservice teacher in their preparation programs. The student-centered learning practices they experienced during student teaching were only discussions and very rarely modeled for them as developing teachers within their university programming.

As we see in many teacher candidates, there is a growing disconnect between what learners in the classroom need and how these needs are modeled in teacher education spaces (Jenset et al., 2018; König et al., 2017). All of the teacher participants in this study benefited from modeling where they could see how these student-centered practices played a role in classrooms.

Shifting to student-centered practices meant that we—myself and the other teacher participants—not only put students first in the pedagogical decisions we made in the classroom but intentionally went beyond that to position our learners as the core decision makers of class curriculum. By empowering students to engage more in their learning, we strengthen our roles as facilitators in an effort to reimagine how learning standards were implemented in our classroom spaces (Hanewicz et al., 2017). While learning standards and objectives play a role in design, student-centered practices rooted in inquiry and socially just innovation frameworks can often lead to integrating more skills than if they were identified by the teacher (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Grossman et al., 2019). As learning standards and objectives often serve as a guide for learning experiences in the classroom, there are limitations when presented in isolation. The processes integrated in standards and objectives afford teachers an opportunity to channel student interest and agency while also providing space to practice the skills embedded in concepts. For example, when Suzie rejected past units grounded only in standards and implemented student-driven book club experiences instead, she broadened her students' learning, provided a heightened sense of student agency to her learning environment, and integrated more learning standards than her original work intended. By modeling and practicing inquiry in teacher education methods classes, there is an opportunity to witness firsthand how these strategies can look and feel in a classroom (Lammert, 2020).

Beyond modeling student-centered practices in teacher preparation courses, teacher education programs can also reconsider how preservice teaching placements are assigned. As we saw in both Kyle and Caila, placing novice teachers with experienced, innovative educators has the power and influence to ripple into future classrooms (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Kretchmar & Zeichner, 2016). These intentional placements provide teacher candidates with experience in this work in both safe and meaningful ways. When entering my classroom, Caila and Kyle knew they wanted to do this work but they did not feel confident or comfortable doing it on their own. Over the course of their semester-long student teaching experience, I worked alongside these candidates to co-design as well as co-teach within the inquiry-based framework. Rather than student teachers controlling the classroom for a semester or a year by themselves, intentional placements and an emphasis on collaboration and co-teaching can promote more confidence and; therefore, create a more meaningful student teaching experience (Pasternak et al., 2018).

Implications for Classroom Teachers

Naturally, the implications for this study greatly impact practicing classroom educators because our ever-changing world demands that teachers must evolve their practices to better support their students (Darling-Hammond, 2018; Plutzer et al., 2020) . Teachers within this study reflected heavily on their current practices and, specifically, how those practices met the needs and skills of today's growing world. For teachers like Jim, Winnie, and Suzie, they grappled with the aged expectations of their English classrooms and what they had always been told English teachers had to do. At the time this study began, these teacher participants were still assigning 5-paragraph essays, working through plot diagrams, and using text-specific questions from a textbook implemented by their departments. And, yet, as these skills are a part of English/Language Arts, when they are taught separately without any meaning or personal

connection, it generates a feeling of disconnection among students. However, throughout this study, as teachers thought deeply about the needs of their students participating in their own personal learning spaces, their outlook changed as they searched for new practices relative to their students' lived experiences to integrate into their classrooms (Friere, 1970; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Farrell, 2020). By reflecting on what the world demands compared to the demands and emphasis in classrooms, it becomes imperative for teachers to reevaluate strategies and practices to determine what is best for students.

This reflection takes time and also a sense of vulnerability by teachers to reposition themselves as not being the only expert in the learning space. For teachers like Greg and Ryan, they both took a strong interest in building a sense of community by expanding the boundaries of their learning space. While teachers like Jim, Suzie, and Winnie grappled with letting go of their traditionally-rooted classroom practices (such as 5-paragraph essay writing styles or text-specific comprehension questions) in English/Language Arts, Greg and Ryan already started to see teaching differently prior to entering this study due to their work around civics.

Beyond their classrooms, Greg served as a local election judge and Ryan ran for an elected board seat in his community. Being in a position of service to their communities, they understood the value of outside voices and understanding issues from various perspectives. While they both knew the value of community voices given their own lived experiences, they struggled with integrating them effectively into their classrooms. Once they started to bridge their community work and their classroom work, they discovered the potential for richer learning experiences among their students.

They remind us that teachers do not have to be at the forefront of knowledge. In fact, the establishment of community - both inside their classrooms among their students and connecting

with experts outside of the classroom - proved to be a vital component to deepening their students' ability to ask questions and formulate research. It is important for teachers to reflect on the voices being muted in their classrooms (Daniel et al., 2019). Rather than holding on to being the singular expert in the room, establishing a culture that supports a variety of voices can allow students to not only ask more questions but also afford them space to critically think about and formulate their own personal beliefs around key issues.

Being open to a variety of perspectives and voices in the classroom also means that it is equally vital to listen to students as they share their needs and interests as learners. This study invites teachers to think about the power of listening to students and how their ability to drive learning can not only change the trajectory of how we engage learners but also how to transform the role of teaching among educators. For many students, school is disconnected from learning (Loprest et al., 2019). As teachers rethink their positions in the classroom it becomes equally important to think about how school and learning can once again reconnect to offer more meaningful experiences to learners. Providing students time and space to voice their thoughts in the learning process invites new perspectives into teaching.

For teachers like Suzie and Winnie, they saw the benefits of listening to their students when they invited them to ask questions around their class novel. Their questions allowed them to seek out more outside voices, find more resources to support their students' questions, and allow students to shape their questions into meaningful products that cultivated awareness around issues that mattered most to them. Witnessing student agency firsthand motivated Suzie, Winnie as well as the other teacher participants to explore this work further. By letting students guide learning, it can welcome teachers in designing a curriculum that regularly integrates student agency (Kuh, 2008; Kajamaa & Kumpulainen, 2019; Dole et al., 2016).

Establishing a community of support among other educators strengthens the potential to design curriculum centered around student agency (Gore et al., 2022). For Teacher Church members designing this work for the first time, they needed a safe space to try new ideas, reflect on past practices, rethink their positions as teachers, and explore new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. Teachers who consider making changes in their own classrooms by integrating more student agency and voice should participate in those same actions. Having the motivation to change teaching practices is certainly a primary step into this work; however, taking time to understand why this work matters, how to implement this type of teaching and learning with students, and what will be needed as a result of this change all factor into making sustainable progress (Cleveland, 2018). As Teacher Church had each other to grapple with these thoughts, they had an established community that made them feel safe to explore these ideas in various ways. To be clear, not everyone in Teacher Church made drastic changes to their teaching practices. Nonetheless, it was the safety and open nature of the group that afforded teachers time to reflect, ask questions, and make changes to their practices in new ways.

Seeking out or forming communities like Teacher Church can support teacher development and growth beyond the confines of professional learning communities regularly assigned by administrators and districts. Networking with educators outside of the home school district provides an insight into perspectives, resources, and experiences of other teachers (Seglem & Garcia, 2016; Stoetzel & Shedrow, 2021). Along with this co-created space, teachers have the opportunity to construct and share resources relative to their work with students as well as explore other topics that are central to pushing their work further in the classroom.

Implications for Administrators

In order for teachers to transform their teaching practices, it is imperative to examine the implications of this work on administrators. Both Jim and Ryan admittedly stepped into this framework because they were both tenured within their district and felt safer in their teaching positions. However, it is with this thought that prompts a conversation around supporting teacher risk taking. Jim, Ryan as well as the other participants in this study felt like they were all taking risks by trying new practices with their students in their own teaching contexts. While this work speaks directly to the fears and hesitancy connected to change, it is vital for administrators to support the autonomy teachers need to rethink and redesign their curriculum to meet the needs of their students. This can be accomplished by creating a culture that communicates the acceptance of risk taking to both teachers and the outside community (Gore et al., 2022; Lee & Lee, 2020). Through this culture, administrators can celebrate with their teachers moments of risk taking. Similar to how both Greg and Ryan recalibrated their thoughts around failure, administrators can embrace teacher risk taking regardless of the outcome.

As administrators are positioned to be the curricular strong arms of schools, they, too, can promote teacher transformation by encouraging as well as providing time for teachers to reflect on their current practices. Rather than promoting an already established agenda, administrators can empower teachers to reflect on their own classroom practices as a way to ask questions, seek additional resources and support for those questions, and encourage change based on those findings (Zhu et al., 2020). Through this study, Teacher Church can be seen as a model to promote a broader PLC experience that goes beyond the echo chambers found within in-district spaces to help connect teachers to other professionals that show strengths in student-centered practices.

So much of the work featured throughout this study was not only created with the help and support of Teacher Church members but also through student teachers like Kyle and Caila. Administrators can impact teacher transformation by supporting teacher education programs and their efforts to stay connected to primary and secondary classrooms. Forging long-lasting relationships between districts and universities can strengthen the connections preservice teachers need in order to do well in the field (Gore et al., 2022; Callahan, 2016; Goldhaber, 2017). As seen above, connecting novice teachers with strong, innovative, experienced educators matters greatly when it comes to thinking about changing the trajectory of teaching practices. Administrators serve as a critical connection between these two elements and play an important role in bringing these elements together. Additionally, administrators who create a climate that supports ongoing learning and professional growth both retrospectively among teachers and bridging the space between university and classroom have the potential to see positive change.

Retrospection and growth among teachers cannot happen, however, when teachers participate in lecture-based professional development experience. As we witnessed the nature of change among professionals within this study, it did not happen as a result of one speaker for one amount of time. Embracing the nature of learning among adults - specifically professional educators - administrators should strive to promote development that is ongoing and the nature of this work takes time. Administrators have the ability to restructure professional development experiences for teachers when they formulate smaller groups - ideally networked groups outside of the district (Hulme & Wood, 2022). Teacher Church demonstrates how teachers can come together with a common goal but, yet, formulate other co-constructed goals together as they are partnered with facilitators that can support change but in no way promote a singular agenda. Administrators can foster a more grassroots approach to professional development when they

empower teachers to co-construct these spaces based on their interests and needs as professionals (Daniel et al., 2019).

As a means to reflect on practice and become risk takers, Teacher Church members often felt safe to acknowledge their feelings behind these changes as they appeared in practice. Teachers experienced fear, hesitation, and vulnerability to name a few. In an effort to support teacher transformation, it becomes vital for administrators to be willing to not only create a safe space for teachers to express these feelings openly without judgment but to also listen to teachers as they continue to voice their feelings. Administrators who can position themselves as both learners and teachers in these shared spaces offer an invitation to rethink the culture of learning among teachers and, indirectly, students.

Further Considerations and Implications for Research

As with most studies, this work provided more questions than answers when examining transformation among teachers. One of the primary considerations for further research connects to the implementation of networked inquiry. Seglem and Garcia (2016) started networked inquiry as a means to connect teachers from various teaching contexts to investigate how to implement inquiry into practice. Just as I implemented networked inquiry among Teacher Church participants, both of these studies started on a small scale. Further research could extrapolate the effectiveness of networked inquiry in larger teacher groups supporting a variety of participants with diverse teaching experiences in both primary and secondary classrooms. Additionally, teachers in this study were from a humanities discipline - Social Studies, English/Language Arts, and Civics. However, networked inquiry leaves room to explore how this lens could impact disciplines outside of humanities.

In addition to exploring how networked inquiry could impact teaching, the importance of understanding teacher education programs and how they can evolve based on the needs of classrooms today becomes vital to the next steps of this study. By examining closely the teaching practices found in teacher education programs, it has the potential to inform the field of the gaps that exist in these spaces. Further, by exploring ways to bridge and strengthen the connections between the university setting and primary and secondary classrooms, it offers an opportunity to promote change in both of these areas. As teachers like Caila and Kyle felt disconnected from their teacher education program to the practices they participated in throughout their student teaching experience, further research can promote a better understanding of this disconnect and offer potential solutions. Why didn't these novice teachers experience overlap between their teacher preparation program and what they experienced in the classroom? Why didn't they have exposure to student-centered practices prior to entering student teaching? (Caughlan et al., 2017; Le Cornu et al., 2008; Le Cornu, 2015). Further research can provide answers and offer solutions to these questions as it has the potential to go beyond the stories of two novice teachers and integrate more teacher voices and experiences.

This study also raised questions related to teacher longevity. When teachers throughout this study embraced changes to their teaching practices, they were empowered to continue to do meaningful and important work with their students. As we give teachers the time, space, and professional autonomy to their work with students, it becomes easy to make connections to teacher longevity in the field. What happens when we provide elements like time and autonomy to teachers? How do these elements impact their work with students? How do these elements impact teacher joy in the field? The root of a lot of this work came from exploring ways in which teachers can empower students to engage in asking questions, making connections, and trying

new things (Wesch, 2016). This created an irreplaceable relationship and memorable experiences between teachers and students. Teachers wanted to do this work with students as they continued to discover what this work did for everyone at the moment. I believe these are many of the elements that invited teachers within this study to want more.

In connection to teacher longevity, while this study did not focus deeply on the reasons why teachers like Caila left the profession, it did speak to a sense of professional bullying she experienced among her colleagues while implementing this work with her students. What do teachers need in order to feel safe implementing this type of work with students? How can school culture impact the implementation of this work? If we want teachers to continue to take risks, become more student-centered, and innovate their teaching practices, further exploration is needed as we seek ways to positively support teachers in these endeavors.

Additionally, this study was built upon implementing an inquiry-based framework rooted in socially just innovation that connected directly to the integration of literature, technology, and student action around societal injustices. This one singular framework served as a catalyst for a variety of findings as well as supported reimagining the role of students as they continue to face adversity, allowed teachers to reflect on their own classroom practices, and developed a community of professionals that still depend on each other to this day. Repeating the study - in both using the same framework or expanding the nature of this work with another inquiry-based framework - can provide more data to the existing pool, which could then be analyzed through other lenses. By examining the existing data as well as adding more data relative to this work, this research would provide a new perspective into both teacher transformation and the factors that impact this transformation among teaching professionals working specifically with the intentional integration of equity and inclusion (Keddie, 2020; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009). As

cited throughout this study, making changes to teacher practices involve many barriers. Furthering this research that analyzes the nature of these barriers could assist teachers by extending the transformation of their professional practices.

Lastly, this study focused specifically around the needs of teachers seeking to change their classroom practices with students. What this study does not include, however, is the impact these changes made on students directly. Examining the student experience in an inquiry-based social justice framework has the potential to shape how educators think about teaching and learning as well as how this framework could potentially be strengthened or redesigned. How do students perceive the framework in comparison to traditional learning practices? And, because this work is rooted in promoting authentic student questions and empowers students to use their voices to speak up about contemporary issues, I wonder how student voices can influence both the evolution of the framework itself and how this framework impacted their learning after leaving the classroom.

Conclusion

Teacher Church - a motley crew of misfit teachers - provided hope to the notion of change among educators. When brought together, they co-constructed an experience that still impacts how each of them view teaching and learning to this day. As this study explored this journey and highlighted the needs, identities, and practices of these teachers, so much can be said about their accomplishments as educators throughout this time. And, as we celebrate the successes of this work, it also reminds us that there is a lot of work that needs to be done as we continue to reimagine teaching and learning.

Although vast amounts of literature supports changes in teacher practices to reflect more student-centered approaches to learning, teachers, schools, and university programs continue to

resist this need for change both directly and indirectly. However, as we continue to observe the ever-changing world our students attempt to navigate, teachers play an integral role in this process. Gaps between school and learning or classrooms and universities will not stop how students process learning and the world around them if we do not actively seek to transform our teaching practices to actively engage students as participants and not bystanders. With these thoughts in mind, teachers can begin to reshape their understanding of teaching and learning by designing meaningful and important learning experiences students will need as they imagine the future they want to be a part of indefinitely.

REFERENCES

- Adams, M. (2007). Pedagogical frameworks for social justice. In M. Adams, L.A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for Diversity*, (2nd ed.), 15-33, Routledge.
- Admiraal, W., Schenke, W., De Jong, L., Emmelot, Y. & Sligte, H. (2021). Schools as professional learning communities: what can schools do to support professional development of their teachers?, *Professional development in education*, 47(4), 684-698, DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2019.1665573
- Aguilar, E. (2012, March 27). *Beyond student engagement: Achieving a state of flow*. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/student-engagement-elena-aguilar>
- Ahmed, S. (2019) *Internment*. Little Brown Company.
- Anderson, T., & Shattuck, J. (2012). Design based research. *Educational Researcher*, 41(1), 16-25.
- Ahmed, S. (2019). *Internment*. Little Brown Books Company.
- Anderson, L. (1999) *Speak*. MacMillan Publishers.
- Bakker, A. (2004). *Design research in statistics education: On symbolizing and computer tools* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Bakker, A. (2019). *Design research in education: A practical guide for early career researchers*. Routledge Publications. 10.4324/9780203701010.
- Ball, A. (2009). Toward a theory of generative change in culturally and linguistically complex classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(1), 45-72.
- Barrett, S. (2016). *Ten tips on how to effectively mentor new teachers*. Retrieved from <https://inservice.ascd.org/ten-tips-on-how-to-effectively-mentor-new-teachers/>.

- Beusaert, S. A., Segers, M. S. R., & Wiltink, D. P. (2013). The influence of teachers' teaching approaches on students' learning approaches: The student perspective. *Educational Research, 55*(1), 1-15.
- Beijaard D., Meijer P. C., & Verloop N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(2), 107-128.
- Bereiter, C. (2002). Design research for sustained innovation. *Cognitive Studies, Bulletin of the Japanese Cognitive Science Society, 9*(3), 321-327.
- Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives, 6*(3), ix-xi.
- Booth, S. E., & Kellogg, S. B. (2015). Value creation in online communities for educators. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 46*, p. 684-698.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12168>
- Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: mapping the terrain *Educational Researcher, 33*(8), 3-15.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), p. 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brenchley, C. (2014). Taking action to improve teacher preparation. Retrieved from *Taking Action to Improve Teacher Preparation - ED.gov Blog*.
- Brewer, D., & Tierney, W. (2012), Barriers to innovation in the US education. In Wildavsky, B., Kelly, A. and Carey, K. (Eds), *Reinventing higher education: The promise of innovation*. Harvard Education Press.
- Buchanan, S., Harlan, M.A., Bruce, C.S., & Edwards, S.L. (2016). Inquiry based learning models, information literacy, and student engagement: A literature review. *School Libraries Worldwide*.

- Butler, D.L., Novak Lauscher, H., Jarvis-Selinger, S., & Beckingham, B. (2004). Collaboration and self-regulation in teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 435-455.
- Cain, C. (1991). "Personal stories: Identity acquisition and self-understanding in alcoholics anonymous." *Ethos*. 19: 210-253.
- Callahan J. (2016). Encouraging retention of new teachers through mentoring strategies. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 83(1), 6–11. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1822382396/>
- Caughlan, S., Hallman, H., Pasternak, D. & Renzi, L. (2017). How English language arts teachers are prepared for twenty-first-century classrooms: Results of a national study. *English Education*, 49(3), 265-297.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage Publications.
- Chavez Rojas, J., Faure Ninoles, J., & Barril Madrid, J. P. (2021). The construction of teachers' professional identity: An analysis of subjective learning experiences. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1-18.
- Chen, J. L., & Moore-Mensah, F. (2022). Toward socially just science teaching through professional development: The science teacher identity development and agency of two elementary Teachers of Color. *Science Education*, 106(2), 385-411.
- Cleveland B. (2018). Innovative learning environments as complex adaptive systems: Enabling middle years' education. In Benade L., Jackson M. (Eds.), *Transforming education: Design & governance in global contexts*, 55–78, Springer Publishers.

- Cochran-Smith, M., Piazza, P. & Power, C. (2013). The politics of accountability: Assessing teacher education in the United States. *The Educational Forum*, 77:1, 6-27, doi: 10.1080/00131725.2013.739015
- Confrey, J., & Maloney, A. (2015). A design research study of a curriculum and diagnostic assessment system for a learning trajectory on equipartitioning. *ZDM Mathematics Education*, 47(3), 919–932. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-015-0699-y>
- Cooper, K., & Olson, M. R. (2020). The multiple ‘I’s’ of teacher identity. In *Changing research and practice* (p. 78-89). Routledge.
- Dahl, K. K. B. (2015). “Narrative learning through life: Kenyan teachers’ life-stories and narrative learning, and what this means for their relation to the teaching profession”. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 40(145–155). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.10.006>
- Daniel, J., Quartz, K. H., & Oakes, J. (2019). Teaching in community schools: Creating conditions for deeper learning. *Review of Research in Education*, 43(1), 453-480.
- Darsh, J. C. (2003). *Teachers mentoring teachers: A practical approach to helping new and experienced staff*. Corwin Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P. & Shulman, L. (2005). The design of teacher education programs in L. Darling-Hammond, J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, 390-341, John Wiley and Sons.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). From “separate but equal” to “No Child Left Behind”: The collision of new standards and old inequalities. In *Thinking About Schools*, 419-437, Routledge.

- Darling-Hammond, L. & Snyder, J. (2015). Meaningful learning in a new paradigm for educational accountability: An introduction. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 23(7).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.1982>
- Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Smees, R. and Mujtaba, T. (2006) *Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness*. DfES Research Report RR 743, University of Nottingham.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experiential learning*. Prentice Hall.
- Doğan, S., & Adams, A. (2018). Effect of professional learning communities on teachers and students: Reporting updated results and raising questions about research design. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 29(4), 634–659.
- Dole, S. , Bloom, L. , & Kowalske, K. (2016). Transforming pedagogy: Changing perspectives from teacher-centered to learner-centered. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 10(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7771/1541-5015.1538>
- Durksen, T.L., Klassen, R.M., Daniels, L.M. (2017). Motivation and collaboration: The keys to a development framework for teachers' professional learning. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 67, 53-66.
- Elfers, A., Plecki, M., Kim, Y. & Bei, N. (2022). How retention and mobility rates differ for teachers of color. *Teachers and Teaching*, 28:6, 724-741.
- Farrell, E. (2020). Researching lived experience in education: Misunderstood or missed opportunity?. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1609406920942066.
- Fickel, L. H. (2006). Paradox of practice. In S. G. Grant (Ed.), *Measuring History*, 75-103. Information Age Publishing.

- Francom, G. M., Lee, S. J. & Pinkney, H. (2021). Technologies, challenges and needs of K-12 teachers in the transition to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. *TechTrends*, 65(4), 589-601.
- Franke, M. L., & Kazemi, E. (2001). Learning to teach mathematics: Focus on student thinking. *Theory into practice*, 40(2), 102-109.
- Freire, P. (2002). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum. (Original work published 1970).
- Freire, P. (2005). *Education for critical consciousness*. Continuum. (Original work published 1978).
- French, R., Imms, W., & Mahat, M. (2020). Case studies on the transition from traditional classrooms to innovative learning environments: Emerging strategies for success. *Improving Schools*, 23(2), p. 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480219894408>
- Gagen L. & Bowie S. (2005). Effective mentoring: A case for training mentors for novice teachers. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 76(7), 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2005.10609312>
- Gallchóir, C., O’Flaherty, J. & Hinchion, C. (2018) Identity development: what I notice about myself as a teacher, *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(2), 138-156, doi: 10.1080/02619768.2017.1416087
- Garner, J. K., & Kaplan, A. (2019). A complex dynamic systems perspective on teacher learning and identity formation: An instrumental case. *Teachers and Teaching*, 25(1), 7-33.
- Goddard, Y. L., Goddard, R. D., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2007). Theoretical and empirical investigation of teacher collaboration for school improvement and student achievement in public elementary schools. *Teachers College Record*, 109(4), 877–896.

- Goldhaber D., Krieg J. M., Theobald R. (2017). Does the match matter? Exploring whether student teaching experiences affect teacher effectiveness. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(2), 325–359. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217690516>
- Goldrick L., Osta D., Barlin D. & Burn J. (2012). *Review of state policies on teacher induction*. New Teacher Center. <https://newteachercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/brf-ntc-policy-state-teacher-induction.pdf>
- Goodson, I.F. (1992). *Studying teachers' lives*. Falmer Press.
- Gore, J., Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Bowe, J., Ellis, H., & Lubans, D. (2017). Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomized controlled trial of quality teaching rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68, 99–113.
- Gore, J., Rickards, B., & Fray, L. (2022). From performative to professional accountability: re-imagining ‘the field of judgment’ through teacher professional development. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1-22.
- Grier, J. M., & Johnston, C. C. (2009). An inquiry into the development of teacher identities in STEM career changers. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 20, 57–75.
- Grudnoff, L. (2011). Rethinking the practicum: Limitations and possibilities. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(3), 223-234, 10.1080/1359866x.2011.588308.
- Grossman, P., Dean, C. G. P., Kavanagh, S. S., & Herrmann, Z. (2019). Preparing teachers for project-based teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100(7), 43-48.
- Hall, G.E. & Hord, S.M. (2001). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles and potholes*. Allyn & Bacon.

- Hanewicz, C., Platt, A., and Arendt, A. (2017). Creating a learner-centered teaching environment using student choice in assignments. *Distance Education*, 38, 273–287. doi: 10.1080/01587919.2017.1369349.
- Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the knowledge society*. Teachers College Press and Open University Press.
- Harris, A., Jones, M. & Huffman, J. B. (2018). *Teachers leading educational reform: The power of professional learning communities*. Routledge.
- Harvey, S., & Daniels, H. (2009). *Comprehension & collaboration: Inquiry circles in action*. Heinemann.
- Hatt, B. (2012). Smartness as a cultural practice in schools. *American educational research Journal*, 49(3), 438–460. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831211415661>.
- Hesse-Biber, S.N. & Leavy, P. (2004). *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Hinton, S.E. (1967). *The outsiders*. New York: Random House.
- Hoffman, A., & Holzhter, J. (2012), “The evolution of higher education: innovation as natural selection”, in Hoffman, A. and Spangehl, S. (Eds), *Innovation in Higher Education: Igniting the Spark for Success*, American Council on Education, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 3-15.
- Holland D., Lachicotte W. Jr., Skinner D., & Cain C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Harvard University Press.
- Holland, D. & Lave, J. (2001). *History in person*, Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

- Horn, I. & Little, J.W. (2010). Attending to problems of practice: routines and resources for professional learning in teachers' workplace interactions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(1), 181-217.
- Houri, A. K., Thayer, A. J., & Cook, C. R. (2019). Targeting parent trust to enhance engagement in a school-home communication system: A double-blind experiment of a parental wise feedback intervention. *School Psychology*, 34(4), 421.
- Hulme, M. & Wood, J. (2022). The importance of starting well: the influence of early career support on job satisfaction and career intentions in teaching. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(4), 504-521.
- Illinois Report Card*. (2019). Retrieved from <http://www.illinoisreportcard.com/>
- Illinois Report Card*. (2021). Retrieved from <http://www.illinoisreportcard.com/>
- Iqbal, M., Siddiqie, S., & Mazid, M. (2021). Rethinking theories of lesson plan for effective teaching and learning. *Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100172>.
- Jacobs, H. (2010). *Curriculum 21: Essential education for a changing world*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Jenset, I., Klette, K. & Hammerness, K. (2018). Grounding teacher education in practice around the world: An examination of teacher education coursework in teacher education programs in Finland, Norway and the United States. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(2), 184-197, 10.1177/0022487117728248

- Juliani, A.J. (2022, October 25). How to use design sprints, PBL, and genius hour to get kids making. Retrieved from <https://www.ajjuliani.com/blog/how-to-use-design-sprints-pbl-and-genius-hour-to-get-kids-making>
- Kahl, D. H. & Venette, S. (2010). To lecture or let go: a comparative analysis of student speech outlines from teacher-centered and learner-centered classrooms. *Communication Teacher*, 24, 178–186. doi: 10.1080/17404622.2010.490232.
- Kajamaa, A., & Kumpulainen, K. (2019). Agency in the making: Analyzing students' transformative agency in a school-based makerspace. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 26(3), 266-281.
- Keddie, A. (2020). Schooling and social justice through the lenses of Nancy Fraser. Nancy Fraser, *Social Justice and Education*, 40-56.
- Kennedy, M. M. (2019). "How we learn about teacher learning." *Review of research in Education*, 43(1), 138–62.
- Klaeijnsen, A., Vermeulen, M., & Martens, R. (2018) Teachers' innovative behavior: The importance of basic psychological need satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and occupational self-efficacy. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 62(5), 769-782, doi: 10.1080/00313831.2017.1306803.
- König, J., Ligtoet, R., Klemenz, S. & Rothland, M. (2017). Effects of opportunities to learn in teacher preparation on future teachers' general pedagogical knowledge: Analyzing program characteristics and outcomes. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 10.1016/j.stueduc.2017.03.001.

- Kretchmar, K. and Zeichner, K. (2016). Teacher prep 3.0: a vision for teacher education to impact social transformation. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 42(4), 417-433, DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2016.1215550
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. *Report from the Association of American Colleges and Universities*.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). Three decades of culturally relevant, responsive, & sustaining pedagogy: What lies ahead?. *The Educational Forum*, 85(4), 351-354, DOI: 10.1080/00131725.2021.1957632.
- Lammert, C. (2020). Becoming inquirers: A review of research on inquiry methods in literacy preservice teacher preparation. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 59(3), 191-217.
- Lareau, A. (2019). Parent involvement in schooling: A dissenting view. In *School, Family and Community Interaction* (p. 61-73). Routledge.
- Le Cornu, R. and Ewing, R. (2008). Reconceptualizing professional experiences in pre-service teacher education...reconstructing the past to embrace the future. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24 (7), 1799-1812, 10.1016/j.tate.2008.02.008
- Le Cornu, R. (2015). *Key components of effective professional experience in initial teacher education in Australia*. A paper prepared for the Australian Institute for teaching and school leadership (AITSL).
- Lee, H. (1960). *To kill a mockingbird*. Grand Central Publishing.
- Lee, E. & Hannafin, M.J. (2016) A design framework for enhancing engagement in student-centered learning: own it, learn it, and share it. *Education Technology Research*.

- Lee, A. Y., & Lee, A. J. (2020). Experience with diversity is not enough: A pedagogical framework for teacher candidates that centers critical race consciousness. *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, 2(2), 40-59.
- Lee, H. (1960). *To kill a mockingbird*. Grand Central Publishing.
- Levasseur, A. (2012), “Does our current education system support innovation?”, MindShift, July 17, available at:
ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2012/07/17/does-our-current-education-system-support-innovation/
- Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (2008). *Teachers in professional communities: Improving teaching and learning*. Teachers College Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1065-1122), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lindblom-Ylännea, S., Trigwellb, K., Nevgia, A., & Ashwinc, P., (2006). How approaches to teaching are affected by discipline and teaching context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(3), 285–298
- Lowry, L. (1993). *The giver*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Loprest, P., Spaulding, S., & Nightingale, D. S. (2019). Disconnected young adults: Increasing engagement and opportunity. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 5(5), 221-243.
- Lutrick, E., & Szabo, S. (2012). Instructional leaders’ beliefs about effective professional development. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 78(3), 6–12.

- Mai, L. T., & Hutnyk, J. (2020). An intuition of innovative new institutions. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(11), 1120-1125.
- Mann, S. & Kelley, L. (1997). Standing at the crossroads of modernist thought: Collins, Smith and new feminist epistemologies. *Gender and Society*, 11(4): 391-408.
- Markus H. R., Kitayama S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253.
- McCann T. M., Johannessen L. R. & Ricca B. P. (2005). *Supporting beginning English teachers: Research and implications for teacher induction*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- McDonald, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (2009). Social justice teacher education. In *Handbook of social justice in education* (p. 613-628). Routledge.
- McKenney, S., & Reeves, T. (2019). *Conducting educational design research*. Routledge.
- Mclaren, P. (2020). The future of critical pedagogy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(12), 1243-1248.
- McLaughlin, M.W. & Talbert, J.E. (2006). *Building school based teacher learning communities: Professional strategies to improve student achievement*. Teachers College Press.
- Meyer, J. & Land, R. (2005). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (2): epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 49(3), 373–388. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-004-6779-5>
- Mezirow, J. & Taylor, E. W. (2009). *Transformative learning in practice. Insights from community, workplace and higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Mezirow J. (2000). "Learning to think like an adult." In J. Mezirow & Associates (Ed.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. Jossey Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. SAGE.
- Mintrop, R. (2016). *Design-based school improvement: A practical guide for education leaders*. Harvard Education Press.
- Mirra, N., Filipiak, D., & Garcia, A. (2015). Revolutionizing inquiry in urban English classrooms: Pursuing voice and justice through youth participatory action research. *English Journal*, 105(2), 49-57.
- Mosley, K., Playfair, E., Weppner, C., Balat, A. & Mccarthy, K. (2022) 'The bread and butter of a difficult profession': mentoring as a resource for teacher stress. *Teachers and Teaching*, 0:0, 1-17.
- Mulholland, M. & O'Connor, U. (2016). Collaborative classroom practice for inclusion: Perspectives of classroom teachers and learning support/resource teachers. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 1-14. 10.1080/13603116.2016.1145266.
- National Council of Social Studies (2022), *College, career, and civic life (C3) framework by the National Council of Social Studies*, available at: <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf>
- Newcomer, S & Cowin, K. (2022). The power and possibility of stories: Learning to become culturally sustaining and socially just educators. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 44(4), 354-382.
- New learning for a rapidly changing world - Linda Darling-Hammond*. (2015, November 03). Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/f14g0OG4mz0>

- Neumann, R., Parry, S. & Becher, T. (2002). Teaching and learning in their disciplinary contexts: A conceptual analysis. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27(4), 405-417.
- Odell S. J. (1990). *Mentor teacher programs*. National Education Association.
- Palmer, A. N., & Connolly, J. P. (2022). Beyond “Disconnected Youth”: Characterizing developmental heterogeneity in school or work connections during emerging adulthood. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 1-15.
- Pappas, C. (2014). Instructional design models and theories: Inquiry-based learning model. *eLearning Industry*. Retrieved from <https://elearningindustry.com/inquiry-based-learning-model>.
- Paris, D. (2021). Culturally sustaining pedagogies and our futures. *The Educational Forum*, 85(4), 364-376, doi: 10.1080/00131725.2021.1957634.
- Pasternak, D. L., Caughlan, S., Hallman, H. L., Renzi, L., & Rush, L. S. (2018). *Secondary English teacher education in the United States*. Bloomsbury.
- Phillips, D.C. (2006). Assessing the quality of design research proposals: Some philosophical perspectives. In J. Van den Akker, K. Gravemeijer, S. McKenney & N. Nieveen (Eds.), *Educational Design Research*, Routledge, 93-99.
- Piaget, J. (1936). *Origins of intelligence in the child*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Piaget, J. (1950). *The psychology of intelligence*. Routledge.
- Picower, B. (2012). Teacher activism: Enacting a vision for social justice. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45:4, 561-574, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2012.717848
- Plomp, T. (2010). Educational design research: An introduction. In T. Plomp, & N. Nieveen (Eds.), *An introduction to educational design research* (p. 9-35). Enschede, SLO.

- Plutzer, E., Branch, G., & Reid, A. (2020). Teaching evolution in US public schools: a continuing challenge. *Evolution: Education and Outreach*, 13(1), 1-15.
- Prenger, R., Poortman, C.L. & Handelzalts, A. (2021). Professional learning networks: From teacher learning to school improvement? *Journal of Educational Change*, 13–52.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-020-09383-2>
- Provini, C. (2013). *Why don't professional learning communities work?*. Retrieved from https://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/professional-learning-community-pitfalls-best-practices.shtml
- Reay, D. (2022). Lessons from abroad: how can we achieve a socially just educational system?. *Irish Educational Studies*, 41(3), 425-440.
- Reinking, D. & Bradley, B. A. (2008). *Formative and design experiments: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ross, E. W. (2016). *Broadening the circle of critical pedagogy. Working for social justice inside and outside the classroom: A community of students, teachers, researchers, and activists*, 209-218.
- Ross, E. W. (2018). *Humanizing critical pedagogy: What kind of teachers? What kind of citizenship? What kind of future?*. *Review of education, pedagogy, and cultural studies*, 40(5), 371-389.
- Saks, K., Hunt, P., Leijen, A. & Lepp, L. (2022). To stay or not to stay: An empirical model for predicting teacher persistence. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 70:6, 693-717.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage.

- Schachter, E. P. & Rich, Y. (2011). Identity education: A conceptual framework for educational researchers and practitioners. *Educational Psychologist*, 46(4), 222–238.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2011.614509>
- Schultz, K. & Ravitch, S. M. (2013). Narratives of learning to teach: Taking on professional identities. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(1), 35-46.
- Seglem, R. and Bonner, S. (2016) Disrupting complacency: Helping students find their voices through inquiry, literature, and technology. *Middle School Journal*, 47(5), 21-29, doi: 10.1080/00940771.2016.1226642
- Seglem, R. & Bonner, S. (2022) *Igniting social action in the ELA classroom: Inquiry as disruption*. Teachers College Press.
- Seglem, R. & Garcia, A. (2015). “So We Have to Teach Them or What?”: Introducing Preservice Teachers to the Figured Worlds of Urban Youth through Digital Conversation. *Teachers College Record*, 117(3), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811511700301>
- Seglem, R. and Garcia, A. (2016). “Trying to improve our pedagogy”: *Teacher collaboration & knowledge building through networked inquiry* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from the Literacy Research Association Annual Convention
- Serdyukov, P. (2017). "Innovation in education: what works, what doesn't, and what to do about it?", *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*, 10(1), 4-33.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-10-2016-0007>
- Sfard, A. & Prusak, A. (2005). “Telling identities: In search of an analytic tool for investigating learning as a culturally shaped activity.” *Educational Researcher*, 34(4), 14–22.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X034004014>

- Skaalvik, E. & Skaalvik, S. (2020). Teacher burnout: relations between dimensions of burnout, perceived school context, job satisfaction and motivation for teaching. A longitudinal study. *Teachers and Teaching*, 26(7-8), 602-616.
- Skerrett, A. (2010). “There’s going to be community. There’s going to be knowledge”: Designs for learning in a standardized age. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 648–655.
- Smagorinsky, P. & Whiting, M. E. (1995). *How English teachers get taught: Methods of teaching the methods class* (Urbana, IL, NCTE).
- Solari, M., & Martín Ortega, E. (2022). Teachers’ professional identity construction: A sociocultural approach to its definition and research. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 35(2), 626-655.
- Spelman, M. & Rohlwing, R. (2013). The relationship between professional development and teacher learning: Three illustrative case studies of urban teachers. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching*, 6(1), 149-164. National University Publications.
- Stacki, S. L., Bay, Z., FlynnDavis, A. & Hermann, J. (2021). Twenty-first century middle schooling in New York: Teachers share experiences and perspectives on remote teaching and learning early in the global pandemic. *Excelsior: Leadership in Teaching and Learning*, 13(2), 143-159.
- Stoetzel, L. & Shedrow, S. (2021). Keeping it collaborative: Differentiating coaching practices for beginning teachers. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 57(2), 80-85.
- Stone, N. (2018). *Dear martin*. New York: Random House.
- This American Life*. (2022, October 28). Retrieved from <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>
- Thomas, A. (2017). *The hate u give*. Balzer and Bray.

- Thomas, A. J., Barrie, R., Brunner, J., Clawson, A., Hewitt, A., Jeremie-Brink, G. & Rowe-Johnson, M. (2014). Assessing critical consciousness in youth and young adults. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 24(3), 485-496. doi:10.1111/jora.12132
- Torres, A. (2020). Emotions, identity, and commitment among early leavers in the United States of America. *Teachers and Teaching*, 26(7-8), 508-521.
- Tuominen, T., & Toivonen, M. (2011). Studying innovation and change activities in KIBS through the lens of innovative behavior. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 15, 393–422. doi: 10.1142/S1363919611003209.
- United Nations of Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2021). Global education monitoring report. <https://www.unesco.org/en>
- U.S Department of Education. (2009). Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/>.
- Van Eycken, V., Amitai, A. & Van Houtte, M. (2022). Be true to your school? Teachers' turnover intentions: the role of socioeconomic composition, teachability perceptions, emotional exhaustion and teacher efficacy. *Research Papers in Education*, 0(0), 1-26.
- Verhoeven, M., Poorthuis, A. M., & Volman, M. (2019). The role of school in adolescents' identity development. A literature review. *Educational Psychology Review*, 31, 35-63.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Watts, R., Diemer, M., & Voight, A. (2011). Critical consciousness: Current status and future directions. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*. 2011. 43-57. 10.1002/cd.310.

- Weissenrieder, J., Roesken-Winter, B., Schueler, S., Binner, E. & Blömeke, S. (2015). Scaling CPD through professional learning communities: development of teachers' self-efficacy in relation to collaboration. *ZDM*, 47, 27-38. 10.1007/s11858-015-0673-8.
- Wenger, E. (2011). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932>
- What Baby George Taught Me About Learning* | Dr. Michael Wesch | TEDxMHK. (2016, April 15). Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/SP7db10rJS0>
- Wiggins, G.P., & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by design*. Association for supervision and curriculum development.
- Wilson, B. G., and Parrish, P. E. (2011). "Learning experience as transaction: A framework for instructional design." *Educational Technology*, 51(2), 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44429912>
- Witterholt, M., Goedhart, M., Suhre, C., & van Streun, A. (2012). The interconnected model of professional growth as a means to assess the development of a mathematics teacher *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28, p. 661-674
- Yunus, M. M. (2018). Innovation in education and language learning in 21st century. *Journal of Sustainable Development Education and Research*, 2, 33-34. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jsder.v2i1.12355>.
- Zhu, G., Rice, M., Rivera, H., Mena, J. & Van Der Want, A. (2020). 'I did not feel any passion for my teaching': a narrative inquiry of beginning teacher attrition in China. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 50(6), 771-791.

APPENDIX A: INQUIRY-BASED SOCIAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

Timeline	Framework Implementation
Week 1	<p>Building Schema</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Before We Start” activities (articles, documentaries, TED Talks, journaling, etc.) ● Introduction to Anchor Activities and collaborative anchor groups (anchor scheduling) ● Review resources to support anchor activities (class website, etc.)
Week 2	<p>Reading and Anchors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin Anchor Activities *as assigned on an anchor schedule ● Begin reading Internment (the first set of assigned pages - I require that students divide the text up into three sections - this week’s reading would center around the ideas in the first section of reading) ● In-class activities (vocabulary, characterization, etc.) to help support the reading process
Week 3	<p>Reading and Anchors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue Anchor Activities - a NEW anchor is assigned this week (3 groups rotate among 3 anchor activities) ● Continue reading Internment (second section of reading) ● In-class activities (vocabulary, characterization, etc.) to help support the reading process
Week 4	<p>Reading and Anchors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to the FINAL Anchor Activity ● Finish reading Internment (the third section of reading) ● In-class activities (vocabulary, characterization, etc.) to help support the reading process ● Think about/formulate questions for an upcoming student-led Socratic seminar
Week 5	<p>Transition Week - from reading the book to preparing for the inquiry process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formulate questions and answers for the student-led Socratic seminar ● Host the Socratic seminar ● Allow time for students to brainstorm questions about and around topics connected to the text ● Categorize these questions into tangible research topics (think about a research outline with Roman numerals)
Week 6	<p>Research Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative groups spend time gathering and synthesizing research based on their topics generated from their questions. ● Other activities may range depending on student need in connection to research and nonfiction synthesis
Week 7	<p>Awareness Campaign Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative groups synthesize research to determine the awareness ● Activities in empathy, understanding target audiences, rhetoric (ethos, pathos, logos) and viewing AdCouncil work ● Ideation and prototypes ● Gathering feedback on prototypes
Week 8	<p>Awareness Campaign Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative groups continue to gather feedback on their prototyping ● Moving prototypes into final products ● Developing awareness campaign presentations (how will this campaign ‘launch’ as a cohesive unit?)
Week 9	<p>Finalizing Products and Campaign Launch Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Groups finalize their campaign products ● Campaign presentations ● Share campaign work with a greater audience (school community, etc.) ● Feedback, reflections, metacognition about experience.

APPENDIX B: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - PRE-FRAMEWORK EXPERIENCE

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Let's start with introductions - Can you tell me who you are and describe your past teaching experiences prior to the position you currently hold?
 - a. Probes: student teaching experience, various content positions, different grade levels/demographics of students/school contexts
2. Briefly describe your role in your current position as it relates to student learning.
 - a. Probes: educator pedagogy and personal philosophy, insight to classroom climate, additional roles that go beyond the classroom to impact student learning
3. What motivates you to implement an inquiry-based social justice framework with your students?
 - a. Probes: reasons for agreeing to implement the framework in your own classroom, student demographics
4. How might your teaching context influence or impact your decision making when implementing an inquiry-based social justice framework?
 - a. Probes: resources, administration, parents, community stakeholders, colleagues
5. What do you hope to gain as a result of this experience?
 - a. Probes: as an educator, a teacher leader, a learner

APPENDIX C: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - POST FRAMEWORK EXPERIENCE

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your overall experience with the inquiry-based social justice framework over the last 10 weeks.
 - a. Probes: Phases 1-3
2. What event or events stood out to you the most over the duration of the 9 week unit?
 - a. Probe: Why did this event or events stand out to you throughout the entirety of the framework?
3. What were you thinking when this event or these events occurred and how did it make you feel?
4. What do these events teach you about learning? About teaching?
 - a. Probes: student responses to framework experiences, challenging/supporting current teaching practices and pedagogies
5. What, if any, changes might you make to your approach as a result of these events?
 - a. Probes: implementing the framework to other groups of students, exploring various resources/technology
6. Why would you make these changes or why do you feel no changes are needed?
7. How might participating in the implementation of this framework influence or impact future classroom practices?
 - a. Probes: teacher decision making, curriculum design, exploring resources and technology, civic engagement, activism