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A Dichotomy Examined: Beginning Teach for America Educators Navigate Culturally Relevant Teaching and a Scripted Literacy Program in their Urban Classrooms

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This dissertation, A DICHOTOMY EXAMINED: BEGINNING TEACH FOR AMERICA EDUCATORS NAVIGATE CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING AND A SCRIPTED LITERACY PROGRAM IN THEIR URBAN CLASSROOMS, by KARA MAURA KAVANAGH, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

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ABSTRACT

A DICHOTOMY EXAMINED: NOVICE TEACH FOR AMERICA EDUCATORS NEGOTIATE THEIR CULTURALLY RELEVANT BELIEFS AND A SCRIPTED LITERACY PROGRAM IN URBAN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

by

Kara Maura Kavanagh

In contrast to the increasing diversity of students, the implementation and consequences of federal and state policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Comprehensive School Reform Act, have created a push for standardization in pedagogy and curriculum that serve culturally and linguistically diverse students. Effects of NCLB policies include narrowing of curriculum and pedagogy, proliferation of prescriptive literacy programs, increased high-stakes testing, and negative effects on teachers' identity, autonomy, and desire to teach (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglman, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen, & Palma, 2004; Smagorinsky, Lakly & Johnson, 2002). Simultaneously, teaching prospective teachers how to construct culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy that meets the needs of our diverse students is emphasized as a vital part of teacher preparation (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2000; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson- Billings, 1999). However, research shows that even when teachers leave teacher preparation programs with preparation for culturally relevant teaching, initial jobs and local contexts shape and constrain teachers' ideologies, agency, goals, and practice connected to teaching diverse students (Athanasos & DeOliveira, 2008; Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000). In response to this research,

this study was designed to investigate how novice Teach For America teachers with an espoused culturally relevant pedagogy ideology implement a scripted literacy program in their urban classrooms.

A multiple case study design guided the data collection and analysis. Data collection took place over three months and included interviews, observations, observation debriefs, visual representations, documents, and teaching artifacts. The data were analyzed using a constant comparative approach (Merriam, 1998) and Grounded Theory techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) using within-case analysis followed by cross-case analysis.

These alternatively certified, beginning teachers were constrained by several institutional and contextual factors, yet were able to actively negotiate their culturally relevant beliefs with the requirements of their mandated scripted literacy program to enact tenets of culturally relevant teaching. These findings suggest teacher preparation programs need to have a conceptual framework embedded in coursework and field experiences that empowers beginning teachers to negotiate the sociopolitical constraints of their school context in order to meet the needs of their students.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRP	Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
CRT	Culturally Relevant Teaching
CSR	Comprehensive School Reform
CU	Carter University
ELL	English Language Learner
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
SFA	Success for All
TFA	Teach For America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Why is it, in spite of the fact that teaching by pouring in, learning by a passive absorption, are universally condemned, that they are still so entrenched in practice? (Dewey, 1916, p.38)

The goal of this qualitative investigation is to examine how two, novice, Teach For America teachers with an espoused culturally relevant teaching ideology implement the scripted literacy program, Success for All, in their urban elementary classrooms. A holistic multiple-case study design guides me in examining these participants' educational beliefs, attitudes, identities, and instructional practices regarding the implementation of the two competing ideologies of culturally relevant pedagogy from their alternative certification program and the mandated scripted curriculum of their initial teaching placement.

This chapter provides the conceptual and theoretical framework that undergirds every aspect of this study. While extensive, this framework is necessary for understanding the researcher, purpose, and design of the current study. The first section highlights the current educational and sociocultural climate that demonstrates the relevance, necessity, and timeliness of this study. The subsequent sections demonstrate the motivation underlying this investigation, the significance and relevance of the study to the current literature, and the subjectivities of the researcher. The second chapter synthesizes the necessary literature relevant to this study, so that readers can understand the multifaceted sociopolitical and sociocultural variables that intersect and play an

enormous role in how and why I researched this study. In addition, each aspect of this study requires a brief sociohistorical context because of the complex role each variable plays on the other factors studied. The third chapter provides details of how the investigation unfolded, including method, data sources, data collection, and analysis. A detailed methodological plan outlines the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of this study. Chapter four provides participant vignettes, cross-case similarities and cross-case differences. Chapter five discusses the findings, implications, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

Statement of the Problem

Disparate Educational Access

Educational inequities and their societal and educational effects must be a major concern and focus for contemporary teachers, teacher education programs, policymakers, administrators, and educational researchers (Cochran-Smith, 2004). While many educators, researchers, and politicians point to the *achievement gap* between students of color and White students as measured by standardized test scores, others suggest this is an incomplete and problematic discourse because it doesn't take into account that (a) testing is culturally biased (b) there is a "quality-of-service-gap" (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003) and an "education debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006) that is lacking within that educational rhetoric. For instance, some suggest the gap is more of an opportunity gap because these students often attend schools with fewer resources (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). For example, students of color and lower-income students in urban areas likely encounter severe shortages of qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2004, 2005; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002).

Furthermore, the Education Trust found that: (a) most school districts across the country have the most experienced and highly paid teachers in the most affluent schools; (b) the least qualified and least paid teachers are in schools with the highest population of students of color and in poverty; and (c) districts tend to assign a larger sum of unrestricted funds to their lower poverty schools (Roza, 2006). Therefore, Ladson-Billings refers to the “education debt” (p.3), which constitutes a host of historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions, policies, and practices that have accumulated over time for marginalized groups. These include, (a) disparate funding for schools with high populations of students of color and lower socioeconomic students, (b) the exclusion of many communities of color in legislation, voting, and decision making, (c) segregation and desegregation policies, and other aspects of history and present day that effect the educational opportunities of historically marginalized students and their communities. The participants in this study are African American, novice, Teach For America teachers working in a high poverty, Title I school serving 100% African American students. which is why this study is relevant, necessary, and timely.

Increasing Diversity of Nation's Students

To illustrate the growing diversity and changing faces of our society, the U.S Census Bureau projects that by the year 2042, Whites will no longer be the majority of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Today, 44 percent of children are members of racial or ethnic minorities, with a projection that by 2050 62% of our nation's children will be considered “minority”, with 39% of these students being Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2008), for the 2007-2008 school year, the racial and ethnic composition of students enrolled in

public schools was 58 percent non-Hispanic White, 20 percent Hispanic (regardless of race), 16 percent non-Hispanic Black, 4 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent American Indian/Alaska Native. In contrast to the increasing diversity of the student populations, there is a push for standardization in the pedagogy and curriculum in the schools that serve these culturally and linguistically diverse students (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). These trends toward uniformity and one size fits all education (Kohn, 2001) ignores the changes in our schools' demographics as well as the students' experiences, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds (Schultz, Jones-Walker, and Chikkatur, 2008). Examining teachers implementing a decontextualized scripted literacy program in a 100% African American, lower socioeconomic school is necessary, timely, and relevant.

Teacher Education Programs

One avenue to drastically improve the educational opportunities and outcomes for students of color, low-income students, and English language learners (ELLs), is for teacher education programs (TEPs) to dramatically rethink and envision their role in preparing novice teachers for today's multifaceted educational milieu (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith et. al, 2003; Zeichner, 2005; Zeichner & Conklin, 2008). To continue preparing teachers for monocultural and monolingual classrooms ignores the "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992), cultures, languages, and experiences of students, while potentially perpetuating the stratification and status quo resulting from traditional teacher preparation (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith et. al. 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999; Sleeter, 2005). The alternative certification program that these participants are attending is one such university program that has heeded this call for dramatically and innovatively rethinking what teachers should know

and be able to do to meet the needs of today's diverse students. This aspect of the study's context is especially important as these participants are espousing to translate the culturally relevant theory of their preparation program into their classroom practice.

Multicultural Teacher Education

Policy, theory, and practice intersect to influence and shape multicultural teacher education (Cochran-Smith, et. al., 2003). Teacher preparation programs across the nation have tried in various ways to meet standards and requirements set out by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) regarding multicultural guidelines by revising or adding diversity courses, curriculum, field experiences, and policies that address multicultural education and diversity (Gollnick, 1995; Irvine, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). Despite these guidelines and reforms, some researchers critique these efforts as disconnected and usually voluntary rather than authentic and conceptually sound multicultural curriculum (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Sleeter, 2005; Zeichner & Conklin, 2008; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). Cochran-Smith, Davis, and Fries (2003) explain that the demographic imperative for teacher education is "the recognition that bridging the chasm between the school and life experiences of those with and without social, cultural, racial, and economic advantages requires fundamental changes in the ways teachers are educated" (p. 935).

Ladson-Billings' (1999) review of preparing teachers for diversity argues that multicultural teacher preparation continues to view diverse students from a deficit perspective, so the addition of singular classes is a far cry from the necessary paradigm shift that need to take place to radically reframe the theory and practice of teacher preparation. Contrary to the addition of a single diversity class or deficit perspective

model that dominates teacher preparation programs, the urban, alternative certification program at Carter University (pseudonym) that prepares these TFA participants is actively working to meet the needs of teacher education students by using a culturally relevant conceptual framework for teaching and learning that specifically highlights the educational inequities for urban youth. Considering the context, ideology, and methods the participants are educated with juxtapose to the context of their initial placements is essential to investigating how their beliefs, attitudes, identity, and context intersect, influence, and shape classroom practice.

While not the silver bullet for addressing inequities in our society and schools, quality teacher education that prepares teachers to work in diverse schools is a key area for research and reform (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Richert, Zeichner, LePage, Darling-Hammond, Duffy & McDonald, 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Irvine, 2003, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1999; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2005). Startling attrition rates show that roughly 46% of all new teachers leave within five years, while teachers in urban, high poverty districts leave at a rate of 50% greater than teachers in low poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2003). There is limited research about how to prepare teachers for teaching and staying in urban, public schools (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). Schultz, Jones-Walker, & Chikkatur (2008) explain that the “task of urban-focused teacher preparation programs is to prepare prospective teachers to learn and enact practices that enable them to teach successfully in urban contexts” (p.156).

Preparing Teachers of Color

In response to the demographic gap between White teachers and students of color, many certification programs have adopted minority recruitment policies to expand the

pool of preservice teachers. This includes Teach For America, which actively attempts to diversify their teaching force, which for 2009 was 68% White, 11% Black, 7% Latino/Hispanic, 6% Asian, 5% multi-ethnic, and .5% Native American. They state, they want leaders “who share the racial and/or socioeconomic backgrounds of the students we teach, 90 percent of whom are African-American or Hispanic children living in low-income communities.” (www.TeachForAmerica.org, 2010). Furthermore, they suggest that students from underrepresented racial and socioeconomic groups can have a greater potential impact on their students, since they can serve as role models for their students. This assertion aligns with educational scholars who suggest teachers of color: (a) can serve as professional and academic role models (Stewart, Meier, & England, 1989); (b) tend to have higher expectations for students of color than White teachers (Irvine, 1990); and they know more about the life challenges and barriers that students of color will face (Irvine & Armento, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This is particularly germane to this study because both participants are Black, Teach For America educators.

Alternative Teacher Certification Programs

“Alternative teacher certification program” is commonly used in reference to a variety of programs designed to train and credential individuals holding a bachelor’s degree in an expedited approach. These programs vary considerably in their recruitment, coursework, length, mentoring, internship, and practices (Humphrey, Weschler, & Hough, 2008). The rising demand for “highly qualified” teachers under the No Child Left Behind Act has catapulted alternative routes to teacher certification as a considerable source of “highly qualified” teachers for urban schools especially. Discourse surrounding alternative certification often frames this phenomenon as a school reform agenda like

advocates of Teach For America, one of the most controversial and popular streamlined routes, that couches their two-year program in educational reform- for- equity rhetoric. Opponents of alternative certification are critical of these programs, by highlighting the propensity for alternative certification to place unqualified and unprepared teachers in the classrooms of the neediest students (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Alternatively prepared teachers, especially teachers of color, are initially more likely to teach in urban schools (Natriello & Zumwalt, 1993; Zumwalt & Craig, 2008). Humphrey and Wechsler (2005), found that “teacher development in alternative certification appears to be a function of the interaction between the program as implemented, the school context in which the on-the-job training occurs, and the career trajectory of the individual participant” (p.5). With the participants in this study enrolled in the Teach For America alternative certification program at a university, it is necessary to critically examine the unique roles the university’s coursework and mission coupled with TFA’s mission, play in their identity development, practice, beliefs, and attitudes.

Comprehensive School Reform

The context for these participants, who are alternatively prepared Teach For America teachers, is heavily influenced by Comprehensive School Reform models that guide the participants’ instruction and curriculum. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law by George W. Bush in January, 2002, with the bipartisan mission of eliminating the “achievement gap” that exists when Black, Hispanic, and students living in poverty are compared to White and more affluent students in reading and math (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The standardization and accountability underpinnings of this landmark, comprehensive federal policy are changing the content and manner in

which millions of students across the country are educated in our public schools (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Title I schools are encouraged to adopt a “scientifically-proven” reform program to improve reading instruction and outcomes (Slavin, Madden, Cheung, Chamberlain, Chambers, & Borman, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). There are over 100 different Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) designs in schools all over the country, due to the Comprehensive School Reform Program legislation that provides Title I funds to support school-wide programs (Datnow, Borman, Stringfield, Overman & Castellano, 2003). Currently there is a paucity of independent, empirical research that investigates the effects of CSRs on student achievement and instruction. Because these reforms are mostly found in schools with highly diverse populations, it is important to examine this neglected line of research. Hundreds of teachers in urban schools are implementing these Comprehensive School Reforms, so it is important and timely to examine how they influence teachers’ autonomy, beliefs, attitudes, identity, and instruction.

Literacy and the Purpose of Schooling

While few educational researchers or teachers would argue the importance of literacy in schools and society, the views regarding the purpose for developing literacy ranges from developing a productive citizenry and a literate workforce to seeing literacy as a tool for transforming the world and affirming diverse perspectives, experiences, and histories (Freire, 1972). The former purpose of learning literacy is most aligned with the industrial model of schooling that is meant to develop a uniform, efficient, and competitive workforce. This model of schooling assumes that the content and knowledge of what an educated person should learn is assumed to be universal and basic (Leland &

Kasten, 2002). In addition, the basic skills, knowledge, and perspectives taught are not to be questioned or challenged. An inquiry model of education proposes schools should represent one's real life (Dewey, 1916), and contradicts the notion of a standardized curriculum or knowledge to be learned. This type of schooling affirms and recognizes diversity and multiple ways of thinking and knowing (Flint, 2008). A third model of schooling is the critical model, which critiques and questions the role of power, gender, and social structures. In this type of schooling, dialog is centered on understanding the various ways literacy and cultural practices or perspectives silence, privilege, or marginalizes people (Flint, 2008). These competing models of schooling are undergirded by two distinct and antithetical views of learning known as sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978, 1981) and behaviorism (Skinner, 1938; Watson, 1928). Behaviorism, which is the foundational perspective on child development for industrial model views and scripted curriculum, see children as passive, blank slates or empty vessels that will be filled and shaped mostly by stimuli in their environment. Vygotsky (1978, 1981) suggests social context and culture influence attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts including how and what we think. It is within these underlying assumptions and theories about knowledge, schooling, and learning that I locate current trends in policy, prescriptive curriculum, and teacher preparation that all influence teachers' beliefs, attitudes, identities, practices, and knowledge.

Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes, and Identity.

Teachers' pedagogical beliefs are essential to investigate because they are a major determinant of teachers' decisions (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). While not always done in educational research, it is

important and necessary to tease out the constructs of “beliefs”, “attitudes”, and “identity” before attempting to discuss, measure, or parse their role in instruction. For this thesis, *attitudes* will be discussed in terms of “manners of acting, feeling, or thinking that show one’s disposition or opinion” (Philipp, 2007, p. 259). They are more cognitive than emotions, yet not as cognitive as beliefs. *Beliefs* are understood as “psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are thought to be true” (Philipp, 2007, p. 259) and can vary in terms of conviction and consensus (Richardson, 1996). These beliefs can be likened to lenses that affect an individual’s view of the world or as dispositions toward action. *Identity* is viewed as the “embodiment of an individual’s knowledge, beliefs, values, commitments, intentions, and affect as they relate to one’s participation within a particular community of practice; the ways one has learned to think, act, and interact” (Philipp, 2007, p. 259). These three constructs are inextricably linked as new teachers balance their identity, beliefs, and attitudes related to being culturally relevant pedagogues with socialization and curricular mandates that may challenge and influence their existing beliefs, attitudes, identities, and ultimately their practice.

New Teachers and Socialization

There is often a dichotomy between pedagogical beliefs often learned from teacher preparation, and what is expected for teachers to do in their classroom based on a school’s administration, curricular approaches, and testing or policy pressure (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speigman, 2004). Researchers have found that socialization is a reality; new teachers espouse beliefs and enact practices that reflect their district’s approaches to literacy instruction (Achinstein et.al., 2004; Grossman &

Thompson, 2002). A dichotomy between teachers' educational beliefs and their mandated practice has multiple implications for the novice teacher and their teaching identity as well as a variety of stakeholders. Research has shown that even when teachers leave teacher preparation programs with preparation to teach in culturally responsive ways, initial jobs and local contexts shape and constrain teachers' ideologies, agency, goals, and practice connected to teaching diverse students (Athanases & DeOliveira, 2008; Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Shultz, et. al., 2008). When prospective teachers are not explicitly prepared to connect content taught in the academy and the practices mandated by educational policies, neophytes are conflicted and unprepared for the realities of teaching in today's standardized milieu (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

The lack of explicit theory-practice connection and critical engagement with scripted curricula may lead many culturally relevant pedagogues to feel a pressure to conform to prescribed programs and completely abandon their culturally relevant practices. Other teachers may find ways to supplement various aspects of culturally relevant teaching while still adhering to the scripted teaching that is required of them. Understanding how new teachers negotiate a balance between these two learning paradigms benefits teachers, students, and teacher educators as first or second year curricular decisions and teacher preparation are addressed. The preceding paragraphs illuminate the multifaceted sociopolitical and educational context and variables that influence and shape teacher preparation and novice teachers' beliefs, attitudes, identity, and practice and highlight how this study is important.

Significance

This study adds to the current literature in several ways. First, the participants are a part of Teach For America, a controversial, yet popular alternative certification program that focuses specifically on culturally relevant teaching and practice. As part of TFA, they are enrolled in a particular university program which has course and program goals that are aligned with the perspectives of Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant characteristics, so participants are fully immersed in a culturally relevant teaching paradigm. This study provides a unique look at how new teachers are translating this paradigm into their elementary literacy practice. Second, while several studies focus on veteran teachers and culturally relevant practices, this study focuses on the experiences and practice of novice teachers implementing culturally relevant instruction. Researchers lament the limited research examining whether neophyte teachers engage in acts and practice related to culturally relevant teaching, empowering school cultures for marginalized students (Banks, 1995), or developing the commitment and skills to act as change agents (Oakes, Franke, Quarts, and Rogers, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Third, this study specifically looks at culturally relevant practices during literacy instruction within the context of the highly scripted program, Success for All, which is unique to the extant literature. A fourth aspect that adds to the distinctiveness of this study is specifically examining the influence of high-stakes testing and other contextual factors stemming from No Child Left Behind on implementing culturally relevant teaching during scripted literacy instruction.

These unique aspects and the findings specifically address the needs of several stakeholders. For example, teacher educators can see where the specific struggles are between linking teacher preparation and practice for new teachers. Teacher preparation

programs and reformers can be informed about culturally relevant program designs like the one in this study, and how they affect new teachers' beliefs, identity, and practices. New teachers, who are interested in culturally relevant teaching, yet feeling restrained by mandated programs, can see how other teachers negotiate a balance between the two paradigms. For example, Athanases and DeOliveira (2008) found that the novice teachers in their study were able to grapple with ethical and political issues by advocating for their diverse learners because of preparation in a program that emphasizes equity for marginalized students. Scripted program designers, administrators, and faculty can see how to negotiate a balance that acknowledges the need for central tenets of both programs, while compromising on other aspects that are not congruent with culturally relevant teaching and learning. The growing sub-field of culturally relevant teaching needs findings from this study to fill a current gap within the extant literature base. The timeliness of this study is emphasized with (a) the NCLB legislation being revisited, (b) the recent commentary by the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan calling for reforms of teacher preparation programs, and (c) the increasing diversity of the United States. With over 15 percent of new teachers entering through nontraditional paths (Darling-Hammond, 2007), it is important to examine how new, Teach For America teachers, prepared in an alternative preparation program that focuses on culturally relevant teaching for urban classrooms, navigate this pedagogy and practice within the realities of urban school contexts typically constrained by testing pressure and scripted programs. The findings and implications for multiple stakeholders, including teacher preparation programs, new teachers, policy makers, administrators, and reformers, cannot be ignored.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this inquiry are as follows:

1. How do novice teachers prepared with a culturally relevant teaching framework implement a scripted literacy program?
2. What culturally relevant strategies, resources, activities, and assignments do novice teachers implement during scripted literacy instruction?
3. What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding culturally relevant teaching during literacy instruction?
4. What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding the use of scripted programs during literacy instruction?
5. How does a scripted curriculum influence the identity of a novice teacher?
6. How does high stakes testing influence culturally relevant literacy instruction?

As this qualitative investigation evolved, it became clear that the last question should actually be broader than just high stakes testing. The larger sociopolitical context of federal policies like No Child Left Behind that influenced the adoption of Comprehensive School Reform models, Teach For America, alternative teacher preparation programs, and definitions and measures of knowledge and success, were a separate yet intersecting and comprehensive context that influenced culturally relevant literacy instruction. I adjusted this question to respond to this realization and instead asked,

- 6b. What larger contextual factors in the educational milieu influence culturally relevant literacy instruction?

Theoretical Framework

This section reveals my researcher positionality, subjectivities, and views of education and research. It illustrates my worldviews, motivations, and theoretical framework that locate me in a very specific and contested place in educational research. In addition, this theoretical framework guides this study's literature review, research design, methods, and discussion.

Social Constructionism

Inevitably, no matter their research paradigm, researchers bring assumptions and a theoretical lens with which they view the world, knowledge, and the purpose of research (Crotty, 1998). Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge, its potential, and capacity (Maynard, 1994). The epistemological stance that undergirds this research study is most closely aligned with constructionism. Crotty (1998) explains constructionism as the perspective that “all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p.42). Furthermore, social constructionism emphasizes the powerful influence our culture and society has on how individuals make meaning. In essence, human beings construct meaning by engaging and interacting with objects whose meanings are derived from our own cultural systems of knowing and viewing the world that have been collectively created by previous members and institutions within our culture (Crotty, 1998). By aligning more with a social constructionist versus a constructivist view of knowledge and meaning creation, I am explicitly suggesting that individuals construct meaning based on passive reception of previous meanings assigned

by multiple sociocultural forces that influence what and how we know and construct meaning. For example, a novice teacher constructs meaning about her students and curriculum based on external meanings developed by systems such as her teacher preparation program, educational policies, and curriculum developers.

Critical Inquiry

Because culturally bestowed meaning informs individuals' present day meaning often without question, I align with critical theorists who question and critique this social constructionist process, which reproduces and perpetuates "meanings that support particular power structures, resists moves towards greater equity, and harbors oppression, manipulation, and other modes of justice and unfreedom" (Crotty, 1998, p.60). Crotty (1998) suggests the world of the critical theorist is a "battleground of hegemonic interests. In this world there are striking disparities in the distribution of power: some people have dominant power; others have far less power; most have no power at all." (p. 63). My research and academic interests are situated within a critical inquiry theoretical perspective that "challenges...that reads the situation in terms of conflict and oppression...and seeks to bring about change" (Crotty, 1998, p. 113). In the case of this study, the critical theorist in me asks, why are scripted programs such as Success for All in predominately urban, high poverty schools with large numbers of students of color?

Freire's (1972) concept of *praxis* in which "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 28) speaks to the role that I as an educational researcher and educator have in mind for my research and pedagogy. Mere critical reflection or investigation does not lead to the goals of critical inquiry and praxis. It must involve action and activism as well as reflection to truly be liberating and emancipatory (Freire,

1972). Freire emphasizes this dual process, "...reflection without action as sheer verbalism, 'armchair revolution', whereas action without reflection is 'pure activism', that is action for action's sake" (1972, p. 41). This necessary dual process is iterative, simultaneous, and continuous (Freire, 1972). By reflecting on the question above, I am led to more questions about the role of teacher education and educational research. What responsibilities do teacher education programs have in preparing teachers to negotiate the pedagogies they teach and espouse with the realities of pedagogies and programs that transpire in today's standardized milieu?

My research pursuit is purposeful and seeks to capture the necessary reflection and action link between theory and practice and the voice of the neophyte teacher who is negotiating this balance. The findings, implications, and discussions can be disseminated in forums that contribute to all stakeholders' knowledge, including PreK-12 teachers, administrators, policymakers, teacher educators, parents, and community activists. The very groups I target constitute an overall type of checks and balance system that could and should use praxis to inform, analyze and critique their decision-making, actions, and pedagogy. This leads me to Freire's movement towards critical consciousness in which "human beings are meant to be Subjects and not merely objects of their history...the world is to be seen as not some kind of static reality but as a reality in process. They are called to transform it- and thereby transform themselves" (Freire, 1972, p. 56). This critical consciousness concept asks us to see ourselves as change agents that can challenge the status quo, engage in dialogue/debate, and acknowledge our role and possibilities in the world.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical Pedagogy is a micro theory that draws heavily from Freire, Giroux, McLaren, Shor, Apple, Kinchloe, and other critical theorists. It informs and challenges my research, interests, activism, and thinking. While no one definition of Critical Pedagogy exists currently, Giroux (2006) is worth quoting at length:

Critical pedagogy makes clear that schools and other educational spheres cannot be viewed merely as instructional sites but must be seen as places where culture, power, and knowledge come together to produce particular identities, narratives, and social practices. Critical Pedagogy points to redefining the role of the school as a democratic public sphere, educating teachers to be publicly engaged intellectuals who address the most pressing problems of their society as part of a wider politics and pedagogy of solidarity and democratic struggle, and rewriting the curriculum in order to address the lived experiences that different students bring to the school while not being limited to such knowledge. It illuminates the primacy of the ethical in defining the language that teachers and others use to produce particular cultural practices. (p. 5)

By associating the current role of schooling as a tool for perpetuating further stratification of our society, I am revealing my subjectivities that certain schools and students are provided opportunities to engage in critical thinking to prepare them for middle class status and careers, while others, constrained by scripted programs, are limited to lower thinking skills that will prepare them for the lower echelons of society.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995) are micro theories that overlap, extend, compliment, and frame this research study on “How do novice teachers prepared with a culturally relevant paradigm implement a scripted literacy program?” because it problematizes the use of prescribed materials that dictate what is taught, when it is taught, and how it is taught. Scripted programs do not take into consideration the local context, teachers’ knowledge, or students. Critical

pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching are often viewed as antithesis to scripted curricula, which are being implemented in schools all over the country. Ladson-Billings describes culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as following these philosophies: (a) Teaching is an art and the teacher is the artist; (b) The teacher is part of the community and gives something back to the community; (c) The teacher believes all students can be successful; (d) The teacher facilitates students making connections between community, national, and global identities; (e) The teacher sees knowledge as coming from the students; (f) The teacher-student relationships are equitable and fluid; (g) The teacher demonstrates a connectedness with all students, not just a few; (h) The teacher builds and facilitates a community of learners where learning is collaborative; (i) Knowledge is continuously critiqued, shared, recycled, and recreated; (j) The teacher is passionate about content; (k) The teacher helps students develop necessary skills; and (l) Excellence is a multifaceted standard which takes diversity and individual differences into account. This study views culturally relevant teaching as a lens and approach to teaching and learning. With a scripted curriculum seemingly the antithesis to culturally relevant teaching, we should examine how new teachers negotiate among the school mandates of their initial teaching context and the educational theories, ideologies, attitudes, and beliefs that guide their teacher education programs.

The framework of Social Constructionism, Critical Inquiry, Critical Pedagogy, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy requires me as a researcher and educator to reflect, analyze, question, problematize, and act in terms of moving towards critical consciousness and transforming schools, society, and myself. My research must question, critique, and interrupt commonly accepted practices and discourse surrounding policy,

education, and teacher preparation (Cochran-Smith, 2004). This framework allows me to challenge, reflect, and act in regards to standards, testing, teacher education, school segregation, tracking, textbooks, policies like NCLB, school funding, and other oppressive institutional structures that are currently in place. It allows me to explore and question the role of power, race, class, gender, language, ability, religion, and sexual orientation in the classroom, texts, research, teacher preparation, policies and practices. It determines my research interests in terms of the “so what” aspect of researching. What change could and should come out of my research? Why is it important to study this particular question? How does it add to the dialogue of what constitutes education? For this study, I am interested in examining how novice teachers negotiate their culturally relevant pedagogy beliefs with the mandated practices of their initial placements. Specifically, how are new teachers’ literacy instruction, pedagogical beliefs, attitudes and identities affected by current policies and practices including scripted curriculum and high-stakes testing? It is important to study this question, so teacher preparation programs can meet the needs of prospective teachers who then can meet the needs of their students. The teachers’ voices are heard through observations, observation debriefs, and interviews. This framework and the research conducted within it is concerned with educational disparities based on hierarchical categories that mimic and reproduce society’s inequities. It is my job as an educational researcher to question and publicize this replication, so that teachers, students, and communities can question, challenge, critique, and act on these disparities to transform themselves, their schools, and ultimately—society. The next chapter will highlight the relevant extant literature on the constructs and context investigated.

Defining of Terms

Alternative teacher certification program: refers to programs designed to train and credential individuals holding a bachelor's degree in an expedited approach. They vary considerably in their recruitment, coursework, length, mentoring, internship, and practices (Humphrey, Weschler, & Hough, 2008).

Attitudes: manners of acting, feeling, or thinking that show one's disposition or opinion" (Philipp, 2007, p. 259).

Beliefs: "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are thought to be true" (Philipp, 2007, p. 259)

Comprehensive School Reform Act – federal legislation that aims to "raise student achievement by assisting public schools across the country to implement effective, comprehensive school reforms that are based upon scientifically based research and effective practices" (<http://www.centerforcsri.org/>)

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students: descriptive of students whose culture and/or language are assets for learning, but are nonetheless different from that of the dominant culture and/or language

Culturally relevant pedagogy: a comprehensive and multidimensional lens of teaching and learning that includes the curriculum, learning context, student-teacher relationships, instructional strategies, and performance assessments that address the whole child. It involves developing students academically and affirming their cultural competencies, while developing their critical, sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1994)

Identity: “embodiment of an individual’s knowledge, beliefs, values, commitments, intentions, and affect as they relate to one’s participation within a particular community of practice; the ways one has learned to think, act, and interact” (Philipp, 2007, p. 259).

Success for All: is a highly scripted comprehensive whole school reform program that is found predominately in Title I schools. For this study, the SFA literacy component was observed

Teach For America: is the “national corps of outstanding recent college graduates of all academic majors and career interests who commit two years to teaching in urban and rural public schools” while attending an alternative certification program (<http://www.teachforamerica.org/>)

Urban: all territory, population, and housing units located within an urbanized area or an urban cluster, which consists of core census block groups or blocks that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile (U.S. Census, 2000).

Urban school districts: are characterized by a large highly diverse population, centralized decision making, underfunding, and standardized measures of teaching, learning, and intelligence “urban teachers must be able to accommodate the greatest diversity of student needs under conditions that continually subvert their efforts to personalize and individualize education” (Weiner, 2000, p. 371).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a synthesis of scholarship necessary to understand the complexities of this investigation, including a brief historical overview of multicultural education, culturally relevant teaching, teacher education, Teach For America, teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and identity, novice teachers and socialization, Comprehensive School Reform, and Success for All (SFA). Each of these topics and constructs has a vast body of literature that is beyond the scope of this section to review. However, I include the necessary literature that directly relates to intersections of the particular constructs that are relevant to this investigation. While impossible to include the decades of all related research, it is equally impossible to ignore the multifaceted layers and context of these constructs in understanding the sociopolitical context and variables that play a vital role in shaping how, why, and what culturally relevant teachers teach during their beginning years of teaching.

While not inclusive of all conceptual or empirical literature surrounding this topic, for this review I highlight the work of well-respected scholars in the various fields (i.e. Banks, Cochran-Smith, Darling-Hammond, Feiman-Nemser, Hilliard, Irvine, King, Ladson-Billings, Nieto, Sleeter, Zeichner). These educational researchers have written watershed books, articles, and chapters that have been peer reviewed, critiqued, and cited by countless authors, researchers, and academics. In addition, the majority of those I reference have been awarded by or President of the American Educational Research

Association for their excellence in scholarship and research. Smaller relevant studies are included to show the dearth of related rigorous research, illuminating the relevance, necessity, and importance of this study.

Multicultural Education

Educational researchers, theorists, curriculum developers, and educators vary considerably in their ways of defining, conceptualizing, researching, and discussing multicultural education over the past fifty years of this emerging field (Banks, 1992, 1995, 1999; Grant and Sleeter, 1985, 1989; Gay, 2000, 2002; Nieto, 1992; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Sonia Nieto's work as a critical multiculturalist is most closely aligned with my conceptualizations and practice of multicultural education and critical pedagogy. Nieto (Nieto, 1992; Nieto & Bode, 2008) places multicultural education in a sociopolitical context and extends previous definitions by proclaiming:

Multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts, and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Multicultural education permeates schools' curriculum and instructional strategies as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and families and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice. (p. 44)

Nieto summarizes her definition by underscoring seven central characteristics of multicultural education as being: (a) antiracist education, (b) basic education, (c) important for all students, (d) pervasive, (e) for social justice, (d) a process, and (e) critical pedagogy (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Her definition illuminates the sociopolitical context in which education functions as well as the possibilities of multicultural

education as a necessary and comprehensive model of school reform and societal change in the United States. Interestingly, it does not explicitly include all groups, and we can see how individuals of varying sexual orientation and disability have been lumped into the category of “among others” (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 44). Her definition, like others, points to the lack of a common definition and consensus that is inclusive of all. The discourse surrounding the need for multicultural education in K-12 classrooms and teacher preparation is complicated by this lack of a consensus. It also highlights the significance of this study as I investigated how novice teachers implemented the theories and purpose of multicultural education into their scripted literacy instruction.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995b) outlines pedagogical and philosophical underpinnings that she identifies as the central characteristics to effectively teach students of color in order to address the aspects of the achievement gap and demographic divide that K-12 teachers and teacher educators can impact (Banks, 1995; Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2003; Gay & Howard, 2001; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996; Sleeter, 2005). This pedagogical and content related perspective is often used as a conceptual framework for teacher preparation programs, research studies, and discussions of K-12 multicultural education. Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) builds upon the previous goals, theories, scholars, and philosophies developed in the field over the past fifty years. It advocates for developing students academically while affirming and nurturing their cultural competencies, cultural identities and developing a sociopolitical and critical consciousness that challenges the status quo (Ladson-Billings, 1994). In this study, I use this theory of culturally relevant pedagogy as part of the theoretical framework and

analysis. Because the participants in this study are prepared with this culturally relevant teaching framework, it is important to identify what helps or hinders their use of culturally relevant teaching during their first two years of teaching. This understanding can inform teacher preparation programs looking to implement this conceptual framework as well as new teachers whose preparation and knowledge gained from preparation are challenged and constrained by curriculum and policy.

As mentioned, the “operationalizing” of culturally relevant teaching and multicultural education in the K-12 classroom is problematic and can be challenging to find relevant empirical literature. However, Morrison, Robbins, and Rose (2008) conducted a synthesis of classroom-based research (n=45) using the tenets of Ladson-Billings’ culturally relevant pedagogy framework of high academic expectations, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. They found dozens of ways that classroom teachers were defining and enacting culturally relevant resources, instruction, and activities including but not limited to, (a) altering and reshaping the traditional curricula (Arce, 2004; Hicklin-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003); (b) building on students’ funds of knowledge and language (Hollie, 2001; Howard, 2001); and (c) developing relationships between schools and communities (Hicklin-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Hyland, 2005). This study adds to this small but important base of literature that demonstrates how teachers are implementing culturally relevant teaching within their classrooms despite the mandated institutional policies and curricula that constrain this type of teaching and learning.

Teacher Preparation for a Multicultural Society

Almost 30 years ago, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education issued the Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, which required teacher education programs to incorporate multicultural education curriculum (Gollnick, 1995). In the 1970s and 1980s, multicultural education initially focused on race, ethnicity, and culture specifically. It has since evolved and expanded over the years to include research and theory on social class, gender, abilities, and sexual orientation with a more recent focus on the multiple intersections of several of these identities (Banks, 1995; Grant & Sleeter, 1985; Grant, Elsbree, & Fondrie, 2004; Sleeter, 2005) on education. During this time, most of the multicultural programs and curriculum guides focused on celebrating cultural differences and human or intergroup relations (Grant & Sleeter, 1985), which ignored exposing the inequities of power, money, and curriculum that was the initial purpose of multicultural education. The integration of critical pedagogy, which sees education as a political movement that can liberate people from oppression by challenging societal, economic, and political structures that maintain status quo (Giroux, 1988; Nieto, 1992; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Sleeter & Bernal-Delgado, 2004) with multicultural education helped to refocus multicultural education on its purpose and goals of challenging inequities. The next trend in multicultural education appeared in the late 1990s when individuals like Howard (1999) and Sleeter (2008) noticed how White teachers often subconsciously used their racial privileges, assumptions, and bias to interfere with learning to teach with a multicultural philosophy. The more recent trend of multicultural education and the use of culturally relevant teaching, which is most relevant to this study, was discussed in a previous section.

Typical teacher preparation approaches that addressed the multicultural education NCATE requirement have usually focused on changing teachers' beliefs and attitudes, providing teachers with content and curricular knowledge on the histories and experiences of different cultural groups, and supporting them to learn specific practices for working with diverse students (Banks, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2000, 2002; Gollnick, 1995; Grant, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Often these efforts have not occurred as part of a programmatic commitment to address the preparation of teachers for diversity (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith et. al, 2003; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996), but were instead an add-on or isolated diversity class. Despite this trend, multicultural education scholars continued to highlight the importance of the need for teacher education programs to explicitly address issues of diversity and multicultural education by infusing it throughout all of their courses, coursework, and placements (Cochran-Smith et al., 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1999; Sleeter, 2005; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teaching prospective teachers to construct culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy is emphasized in the literature as a vital part of teacher preparation (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2000; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson Billings, 1994, 1995a, 1999). Schultz, Jones-Walker, and Chikkatur (2008) stated, "The task of urban-focused teacher education programs is to prepare prospective teachers to learn and enact practices that enable them to teach successfully in under-resourced districts that offer both opportunities and constraints" (p. 155). With this understanding in mind, the Carter University urban alternative preparation program included the appropriate courses, assignments, and readings to prepare these participants to work and succeed in urban schools.

While recent studies of teacher preparation programs taking up this challenge have recently emerged (Cochran-Smith et al., 2003; Zeichner & Conklin, 2008) they represent a small sample of institutions heeding almost thirty years of researchers' calls to rethink teacher preparation to meet the changing context of our schools and the students they educate. The participants in this study have been a part of one such alternative teacher preparation program that has heeded this call to action as each course, assignment, and reading is faithful to the tenets of culturally relevant teaching in urban classrooms. In addition, many assignments were directly related to the students these teachers currently have in their initial teaching placement, since they are enrolled in Teach For America and have their own classrooms.

Teach For America (TFA) is an alternative certification program that has enjoyed significant bipartisan support from past presidents, secretaries of education, and corporate sponsors. Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama with Secretaries Paige, Spellings, and Duncan have all endorsed and supported the mission of TFA via inclusion in federal legislation, speeches, and federal funding. With over 28,000 former and current TFA teachers, it is necessary to consider the influence this movement has on urban schools, communities, and students. According to their website, for 2010 there are currently 8,200 TFA teachers working in 39 different rural and urban communities nationwide. These teachers, known as corps members, go through a rigorous application and interviewing process, followed by a 5-week intensive summer training institute that includes the following components: teaching, observations and feedback, rehearsal sessions, lesson planning clinics, curriculum, and reflection sessions. In the fall, these corps members

become the teachers of record for tens of thousands of students in urban and rural schools.

Empirical research on the effectiveness of Teach For America teachers remains mixed and inconclusive due to both methodological concerns and lack of independent research. For instance, two studies found evidence showing TFA corps members' students achieved comparable or better gains in learning when compared to similarly experienced teachers in similar schools (Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001; Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004). However, the comparison group of teachers in both studies were also disproportionately untrained and uncertified. In addition, neither investigation explicitly looked at TFA teachers compared with teachers who had traditional preparation and certification, or controlling for student, teacher, and school variables. When Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, and Heilig (2005) used the same six year data set from Raymond et. al's Houston's study and controlled for these variables and prior achievement, they found mixed results depending on the year, certification level of TFA teachers, and measure of achievement. Another example of methodological concerns involved a study in Arizona that investigated the relative effectiveness of Teach For America teachers compared to other novice teachers with differing levels of qualifications. This study found that students of uncertified teachers, including TFA teachers, performed significantly lower on math, reading, and language arts tests than those of comparably experienced certified teachers (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). However, this study did not control for student variables such as prior achievement. This current study however, did not investigate the effectiveness or efficacy of TFA teachers. Instead, this current study focused on the experiences of TFA teachers as they navigated

their sociopolitical contexts. Specific to this study, Veltri's (2008) analysis of over 300 TFA corps members' university reflections and interviews found that:

urban systemic realities (large class size, inadequate supplies and funding, frequent administrative and teacher turnover, inconsistent support, external mandates that dictated a scripted curriculum and minimized a rich experience base) coupled with a maze of community issues composed the teacher professional landscape of TFA teachers (p. 517).

She also found that the TFA teachers were pressured to “focus on achievement and organizational expectations” despite their limited preparation and “exposure to students in the community” (p.522), which lead many of the novice TFA corps members to blame their students, communities, other teachers, and school based factors. These experiences and institutional constraints are a major influence on teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practice.

Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practice

It is essential to understand the powerful role that attitudes, beliefs, and identity can have on classroom practice. Beliefs comprise a major part of teachers' general knowledge through which they perceive, process, and act upon information in their classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Munby, 1982). Regardless of the many forms they take, teachers' beliefs can affect teaching and learning. According to Clark and Peterson (1986) the process of teaching involves two major areas: (a) teachers' thought processes (teacher cognition), and (b) teachers' actions and their observable effects. Teachers are required to make sound judgments and decisions within a multifaceted and changing community, school, and classroom environment with teachers' thoughts, judgments and decisions guiding their classroom performance (Stern & Shavelson, 1983). Teachers' beliefs embody the vast amount of broad knowledge about objects, people, and events that consequently affect their planning, thoughts, decisions, and classroom behavior

(Fang, 1996; Richardson, 1996; Philipp, 2008). Clark & Peterson conjectured that understanding teachers' thoughts and actions should give us a better understanding of how they interact to enhance or hinder students' academic performance. Likewise, Brophy and Good (1974) agreed that a better understanding of teachers' belief systems will significantly contribute to improving students' academic effectiveness. Ashton (1990) suggested that educational researchers now realize that all teachers hold implicit beliefs about their students, the subjects they teach, and their teaching roles and responsibilities. In addition, these beliefs heavily shape teachers' reactions to and perceptions of teacher education and their practice.

However, while many researchers and educators suggest teachers' beliefs guide their practice, the complexities and realities of daily classroom life can limit teachers' abilities to attend to their beliefs and provide instruction and pedagogy, which aligns with their theoretical beliefs about education and learning (Duffy, 1982; Duffy and Anderson, 1984; Roehler & Duffy, 1991). For instance, Flores (2007) found the new teachers in her study "renegotiated their teaching identities and practice as they positioned themselves in alignment with or opposition to other practitioners, practices, or policies in their public schools" (p.383). This line of research suggests that contextual and external factors can greatly influence teachers' beliefs and therefore, shape their classroom instruction. These external forces and contextual influences can include district evaluations or policies, school climate, resources, beliefs, high-stakes testing, and curriculum mandates. It is important to understand the multiple forces at play that can influence the pedagogical and curricular decisions that teachers make that may conflict with their educational beliefs about learning, teaching, and diversity. This is especially critical and powerful during the

induction phase as novice teachers are experiencing “practice shock” (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004, p. 717) which is described as novices’ transition from idealism to the realities and complexities of teaching. Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann, (1983, p. 63) similarly described this concept as a result of the “two worlds pitfall that arises from the fact that teacher education goes on in two distinct settings with the fallacious assumption that making connections between these two worlds is straightforward and can be left to the novice.” For this study, examining the influence that scripted programs have on teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, identities, and practice during their initial teacher teaching placements can inform teacher preparation, professional development, and mentoring.

Novice Teachers

Researchers and teachers agree that the first year of teaching is a challenging, problematic, intense, and crucial time (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008). Feiman-Nemser (2001) outlines fundamental tasks that neophyte teachers must attend to during this formative time, which includes assuming responsibilities and tasks comparable to those of veteran teachers while juggling content and pedagogical preparation, school community and cultural adjustment, as well as, working with parents, diverse students, and colleagues. In addition to these central organizational tasks, beginning teachers often report adversity in the form of: student discipline, student motivation, dealing with individual differences, assessing students’ work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching resources, and dealing with individual, student problems (Veenman, 1984). According to Feiman-Nemser, (2001) these challenges coupled with weak induction encourages neophytes to stick to whatever strategies and practices help them survive rather than

those that are aligned with best practices. Understanding how their students, curriculum, administrative policies, testing requirements, professional norms, and the larger community intersect to influence how and what they teach can be an overwhelming discovery. The numerous challenges of the first years of teaching can discourage novice teachers from trying “ambitious pedagogies” (Feminen-Nemser, 2001, p. 1029). Seeing if and how novice teachers negotiate and implement the ambitious pedagogy of culturally relevant teaching within the context and constraints of policy and scripted curriculum was the central focus of this study.

Concurrently, beginning teachers develop a professional identity that combines parts of their experiences in school and teacher preparation with pieces of their current schooling context and images of the type of teacher they desire to be and classroom they want to develop (Featherstone, 1993). Multiple variables and external forces simultaneously interact to shape and influence a new teacher’s identity especially as emotional and cognitive dissonances occur based on how they viewed themselves in teacher preparation versus the compromises to their ideals resulting from the realities of teaching in urban schools (Flores, 2007). Likewise, Carter and Doyle (1996) suggested that becoming a teacher involves (a) transforming their identity, (b) adjusting personal understandings and idealism to fit within institutional realities, and (c) choosing how to express themselves in the classroom. It is necessary to understand and keep in mind the multidimensional and challenging context that my participants are immersed in as they seek to implement culturally relevant curriculum within a scripted literacy program.

Teachers’ professional and personal experiences and beliefs intersecting with cultural, racial, and class backgrounds shape their socialization by (a) determining their

worldview (Weick, 1995), (b) influencing which schools and students they choose to work with and how they interact with these students (Lankford, et.al., 2002), (c) relying on their own learning experiences and observations of their previous teachers (Lortie, 1975), and (d) how and what they choose to learn in teacher preparation. Zeichner and Gore (1990) reviewed decades of literature supporting the multiple forces that influence and socialize teachers including, the students, ecology of the classroom, colleagues, and the institutional characteristics of schools. In addition, Zeichner and Gore (1990) suggest that teacher socialization is an interactive process in which teachers are influencing and shaping their context while simultaneously being shaped by a multitude of forces and systems such as teacher background, local context, and policy mandates.

In addition, the local context including district mandates and professional development opportunities can influence the socialization of new teachers. For example, districts facing pressure based on high-stakes testing were more likely to adopt a state-mandated program which emphasizes direct instruction and scripted lessons in an effort to increase student achievement on state tests (Hoffman, Assaf & Paris, 2001; McNeil, 2000). In addition to the individual and local influences, state and federal policies regarding standards, curricula, and pedagogy influenced teachers' socialization (Achinstein, et. al., 2004; Coburn, 2001; Ogawa, Sandholtz, Martinez-Flores & Scribner, 2003). Achinstein et. al. (2004) demonstrated that teacher socialization within the current accountability and reform milieu created two tracks of teachers that were distinctive in three ways (a) social class, race, and ethnicity; (b) levels of inputs, including professional development, instructional control, organizational resources, and curriculum and pedagogy; and (c) outcomes in terms of teachers' feelings of competence and efficacy,

and their teaching beliefs and practices. This study is in response to recent research highlighting the need for educational researchers to examine the teaching practices of new teachers and the relationship between what is learned and practiced in urban classrooms, so that teacher educators can support new teachers enacting culturally relevant teaching in their local contexts (Quartz, Olsen & Duncan-Andrade, 2008; Schultz, et.al., 2008).

Literacy

The Literacy Pendulum

The past 50 years have seen extensive paradigm shifts that reflect ideologies, assumptions, and beliefs about learning, teaching, and reading. In turn, policies, mandates, goals, and concerns change with the swing of the education pendulum. For example, Sputnik, *A Nation at Risk*, The War on Poverty, Head Start, and public and business concerns all pushed educators to focus on basic literacy skills including phonics, decoding, grammar, conventions, and mechanics that were learned through drills and direct instruction. In the decades between the late 1970s and mid- 1990s, progressive ideology influenced the teaching of reading and writing as teachers demanded more autonomy in choosing authentic literature to make meaning, which is known commonly as the whole-language approach. In the mid 1990s through the early years of the 21st century, a balanced literacy approach including phonics and whole language was the educational trend. In recent years, there has been a massive propagation of commercially produced literacy programs and resources that reflects both the public's concern for a perceived failure of literacy development and economically influential government mandates like *Reading First* and NCLB (Flint, 2008). These mandates require schools

that want and need funding (usually high poverty and urban schools) to adopt a scientifically based, replicable, and reliable reading program. As a result, many educational publishers responded with a proliferation of prescriptive programs and materials that reflect the basic skills assumptions and purpose of schooling previously discussed with a focus on phonics, decoding, and recall. Understanding this sociohistorical context of literacy policies is necessary as the participants in this study are required to teach reading and writing using Success for All, a scripted literacy program that was chosen by both schools as they were forced to adopt one of the 11 comprehensive school reform (CSR) models dictated by the Freedom School District (pseudonym).

Culturally Relevant Literacy Development

In contrast to the uniformity and standardization of knowledge and curriculum, many early childhood education scholars have argued that in order for literacy learning to take place, the content must have meaning for the child (Dewey, 1916). This leaves many educators concerned that the current trend to focus on systematic and explicit phonics instruction limits opportunities for students to participate in meaningful literacy engagement. Multicultural education proponents have long recognized the significance of providing educational resources and literature that respectfully and accurately represent students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Banks, 1995; Gay, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; King, 2004). In addition, Luke (2000) describes critical literacy as inviting students to critically examine, question, and challenge power relations and perspectives within texts, and as readers and writers. Several recent studies have examined teachers enacting culturally relevant literacy and critical literacy in various ways, including choosing texts

with critical perspectives (Feger, 2006); Hickling-Hudson & Alquist, 2003), discussing controversial and sensitive topics (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003), and creating opportunities for students to use a critical and/or political lens to analyze literature and texts (Hedegaard, 2003). Culturally relevant stories, instruction, and activities allow student to connect academic lessons to their own life experiences, making the content and purpose more meaningful.

When teachers infuse culturally relevant literature or resources in their literacy instruction, they can accomplish two important goals of reading pedagogy. First, they are engaging the students in concepts being taught on a more significant and personal level and second, they are creating an inclusive classroom for all students to learn (Flint, 2008). Recent studies have shown teachers infusing multiple perspectives, authors of color, diverse content and environmental print in order to teach literacy in a more relevant way (Arce, 2004; Feger, 2006; Flores, 2007; Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003). Multicultural literature can act as a mirror, reflecting and affirming students' cultural and linguistic identities. These stories are windows and mirrors illuminating a new sphere of experiences for children from diverse backgrounds. Culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy are at the heart of literacy theories and instruction that are taught in the participants' literacy courses.

School Reforms and Policies

No Child Left Behind

Few educators discount the enormous, far reaching, and comprehensive effects of the landmark 2001 No Child Left Behind Act on schooling, teaching, and learning. This federal education reform legislation has intended and unintended consequences that have

profoundly influenced and shaped curriculum, assessment, practice, certification, induction, licensure, recruitment, preparation, ELLs, and views of teaching and learning (Au, 2007; Achinstein et. al. 2004; Achinstein, 2006; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Flores, 2007; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Zumwalt & Craig, 2008). Many educational researchers have illustrated the effects of policies and mandates on narrowing of curriculum and pedagogy, proliferation of prescriptive literacy programs, increased assessments, and negative effects on teachers' identity, autonomy, and desire to teach (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speigman, 2004; Agee, 2004; Au, 2007, Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Flores, 2007; MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen, & Palma, 2004; McNeil, 2000; Schultz, et.al, 2008; Smagorinsky, Lakly & Johnson, 2002). Au's (2007) qualitative metasynthesis analyzed 49 studies to investigate how high-stakes testing affects curriculum, including content, knowledge form, and pedagogy. His analysis showed that the primary effect of testing is that "curricular content is narrowed to tested subjects, subject area knowledge is fragmented into test-related pieces, and teachers increase the use of teacher-centered pedagogies" (p.258). Specific to this study is how the effects of NCLB specifically, high stakes testing, comprehensive school reform, alternative teacher preparation, and scripted literacy program, influenced novice teachers' practice, identity, beliefs, and attitudes towards teaching and learning.

Comprehensive School Reform (CSR)

While Comprehensive School Reforms were not created by NCLB itself, the policies, accountability, and underlying assumptions of teaching, learning, and assessment associated with NCLB has lead many schools and districts around the country to look for ways to increase student achievement as measured by high-stakes tests.

According to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (2005), Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) is a total approach to school improvement and increasing student achievement that addresses almost every facet of a school including curriculum, scheduling, management, and parental involvement. These school-level implementations of externally produced, research-based, comprehensive school reform programs have been adopted in over 8,000 schools across the country, most of which are high poverty and low performing (Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2005). Importantly, according to the Longitudinal Assessment of Comprehensive School Reform Program Implementation and Outcomes, nearly half of the schools that adopted CSR had a poverty rate of at least 75% and were located in urban areas (Tushnet, Flaherty, & Smith, 2004). In addition, 47% of the CSR schools had high populations (75%) of culturally and linguistically diverse students. According to these numbers, half of CSR schools in 2003 served low income, culturally and linguistically diverse students in urban school districts. Similarly, schools within Freedom School District where this study took place, adopted one of the eleven approved CSR models. It is 89% culturally and linguistically diverse with over 76% of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRDP) created by Congress in 1998, asked schools to develop school-wide plans with measurable goals, staff support and development, research-based methodology, external support, parent and community involvement during the reform process, staff and resources reorganization, assessment, and an overarching emphasis on comprehensive support (The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2005). These whole school reform programs aim to improve the achievement of students by producing novel and more

effective examples of instruction than those currently in practice in today's educational milieu (Berends, Bodilly & Kirby, 2002; Correnti & Rowan, 2007). The extant research surrounding CSR suggests that the overall average effects of these programs on student achievement is small; however, the variability in effectiveness among the CSR programs is significant (Correnti & Rowan, 2007). These programs also vary in their model of organizational control to create the necessary instructional changes in schools that adopt their specific program (Correnti & Rowan, 2007; Rowan, Camburn, & Barnes, 2004).

One of the current comprehensive school reform (CSR) models that Title I schools can adopt, is the Success for All model developed in 1987 by Robert Slavin and his wife Nancy Madden at Johns Hopkins University. Success for All goes beyond curriculum change to address and influence the organization and management of the entire school. The focus of the program is to raise students' reading level to grade-level standard by third grade (Slavin et al., 2005). Most Success for All schools are high-poverty, Title I schools (Slavin & Madden, 2006). The developers and supporters of SFA point to a U.S. Department of Education-funded evaluation (Borman et al., 2005; Slavin, Madden, Cheung, Borman, Chamberlain, & Chambers, 2006) involving 41 Title I schools throughout the country. Schools were randomly assigned to use SFA or continue with their current reading programs in grades K-2. At the end of the three-year study, students in the SFA schools were achieving at higher levels than control students on three measures (i.e. Gray Oral Reading Test, Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty, Woodcock Reading Mastery Test). In addition, across fifty matched studies, Slavin and Madden (2006) report that Success for All students scored higher on reading measures and state tests than those students in control schools (Borman, Slavin, Cheung, Chamberlain,

Madden, and Chambers, 2007; Borman, Slavin, Cheung, Chamberlain, Madden, Chambers, 2006; Borman, Slavin, Cheung, Chamberlain, Madden and Chambers, 2005; Slavin, 2006; Slavin and Cheung, 2003). However, some researchers (Venesky, 1994; Walberg & Greenberg, 1999) have found methodological and reporting flaws in several major studies by Slavin and his team of researchers that tout the success of the program. Slavin and Madden (2002) have disputed these claims. For instance, Venesky reported that the SFA schools he studied failed to meet the primary objective of ensuring students were reading on grade level by 5th grade. He also pointed out serious biases in selection of alleged matched comparison groups (e.g. special needs students withdrawn from SFA group but stayed in comparison group). This current study does not claim to look at the effects of SFA in terms of student achievement measured by standardized tests or reading evaluations. It instead looks at the influences of SFA on the pedagogy, content, beliefs, identity, and attitudes of novice teachers who are mandated to use this curricula while holding contradictory beliefs about teaching and learning.

SFA is a scripted lesson program that consists of several components: 90-minute daily reading and writing period, homogenous reading groups across grade levels, one week and eight-week assessments, cooperative learning, one-to-one tutoring, and family support teams. The SFA model purports to provide all materials to students, require an 80% teacher approval rating before implementation, and provide in-service training for staff members (Slavin et al., 2005). However, Shanton and Valenzuela (2005) found that the 80% teacher approval rate was not always realized, especially within new schools or those with a high teacher turn over. While the developers of SFA outline many positive aspects to the reform model including (a) one on one reading tutors, (b) restricting the use

of special education and grade retention, (c) relying on cooperative learning, and (d) family support teams (Borman et al., 2007; Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Slavin, Madden, Chambers, & Haxby, 2009), the actual implementation of these components are rarely implemented with fidelity due to institutional constraints, such as funding, time, and professional development (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). In addition, critics of scripted programs like SFA suggest the use of detailed scripts, lessons, and prescribed stories renders the students' and teachers' interests, cultures, communities, and knowledge irrelevant and invisible (Durden, 2008; Schultz, et. al., 2008; Shanton & Valenzuela, 2005). In a best-evidence synthesis conducted by Slavin, Lake, Chambers, Cheung, and Davis (2009) they suggest that Success for All is in fact a proven model that should and could be used in any school, but most importantly, they highlight its success in high-poverty schools. Other research has demonstrated the constraining and negative effects of scripted programs on teachers' professional identities, autonomy, and creativity (Au, 2007; Agee, 2004; Achinstein, et.al., 2004; Datnow & Castellano, 2000; MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen & Palma, 2004; Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnson, 2002.)

Success for All (SFA) uses a system of procedural controls to produce instructional change in these schools by providing a highly structured program and scripted lessons that focus on reading and forming centralized management leaders to monitor the fidelity of implementation (Correnti & Rowan, 2007; Slavin et.al., 2009). However, despite these restrictions and monitoring, Datnow and Castellano (2000) found that almost all the teachers in their study (n=39) made adaptations to their SFA implementation based on adapting the program to meet their students' needs and making it more enjoyable for them to teach. They also found that these adaptations were due to

these externally developed lessons and materials not aligning with the teachers' beliefs, professional judgments, or what they considered best for their students. While many of the participants in their study thought it was beneficial for their students, they complained that the scripted program and lessons constrained their autonomy and creativity. This study investigated how the scripted program intersected with the participants' desire to enact culturally relevant teaching in their classrooms.

Competing Theories of Learning

Sociocultural theory and behaviorism are vastly different approaches and views of learning, development, teaching, and education as are their respective practices as represented in culturally relevant teaching and Success for All.

Sociocultural Theory of Learning

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning and development underpins the pedagogy and beliefs related to culturally relevant teaching and learning. Vygotsky (1978) understood cognitive construction as socially mediated; it is influenced by both present and past social interactions. Vygotsky (1978, 1981) saw social context as influencing attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts including how and what we think. For Vygotsky, the social context includes both indirect and direct factors that influence the individual's environment. Bodrova and Leong (1996) break these social context influences into three levels: (a) the interactive level, or with whom the child interacts; (b) the structural level, which includes, family, school, and church; and (c) the cultural or social level, which involves societal structures such as language and technology. Everything in these social contexts heavily influences an individual's thinking, cognition, and development. Vygotsky's notion of culture influencing cognition in terms of both

content and process posits that the child's entire social world shapes *what* she knows and *how* she knows. This is extremely relevant to my participants who espouse a culturally relevant teaching philosophy that places students' culture as central to curriculum, pedagogy, and learning.

Behaviorism

Behaviorists' views of learning, behavior, and development are the foundational philosophy underpinning scripted programs such as Success for All. Behaviorists have a perspective on child development that views children as passive, "blank slates" or "empty vessels" that will be filled and shaped mostly by stimuli in their environment. In addition, a central tenet of behaviorism is the belief that all learning is just observable and measureable behavior in response to an external event. Behavioral changes and individual differences are seen as learning and not development. White (1970) outlines five characteristics of behaviorism:

1. The environment is characterized in terms of stimuli.
2. Behavior is characterized in terms of responses.
3. Stimuli known as reinforcers, when applied contingently and immediately following a response, increase or decrease the response in measurable ways.
4. Learning can be understood in terms of the relationships among stimuli, responses, and reinforcers.
5. All behavior is learned, manipulated by the environment, extinguishable, and trainable. (pp. 665-666)

According to Watson, through environmental conditioning, a child can be shaped, behavior by behavior, to develop into almost any kind of person (Watson, 1928). In operant conditioning, developed by Skinner, adults, such as teachers and parents, reward children's desirable behaviors systematically. When their behaviors are rewarded like this, they are more likely to perform these desirable behaviors. Positive reinforcers (added) such as verbal praise and tangible rewards (i.e. treats, toys, stickers, points, and

privileges) are given after the desirable behavior. Behaviors that operate on the environment and are modified by it are termed operants (Skinner, 1938). Because the operant is both dynamic and interactive, the child and the situation have characteristics, and both are significant to the interaction and altered by it. Aspects of stimulus-response applications is evident in today's classrooms through the use of curriculum, teaching strategies, contracts, consequences, reinforcements, extinction, and behavior modification techniques. For example, in SFA, points, privileges, and other rewards were handed out in various instances that will be discussed in the findings section of this study. Also central to this investigation is how these novice teachers' with sociocultural beliefs and attitudes navigated the pedagogy and practice of the behaviorist influenced scripted program, SFA.

Summary

In this chapter, I synthesized the literature in order to provide the necessary information surrounding the major constructs and their intersectionality as relevant to this qualitative study. Educational researchers agree that multiple contextual variables influence a teacher's practice, which is a challenge for both qualitative and quantitative researchers to identify one particular variable as specifically influencing students achievement or teacher's practice. Figure 1 demonstrates how I visualize these constructs and contexts influencing my participants' practice.

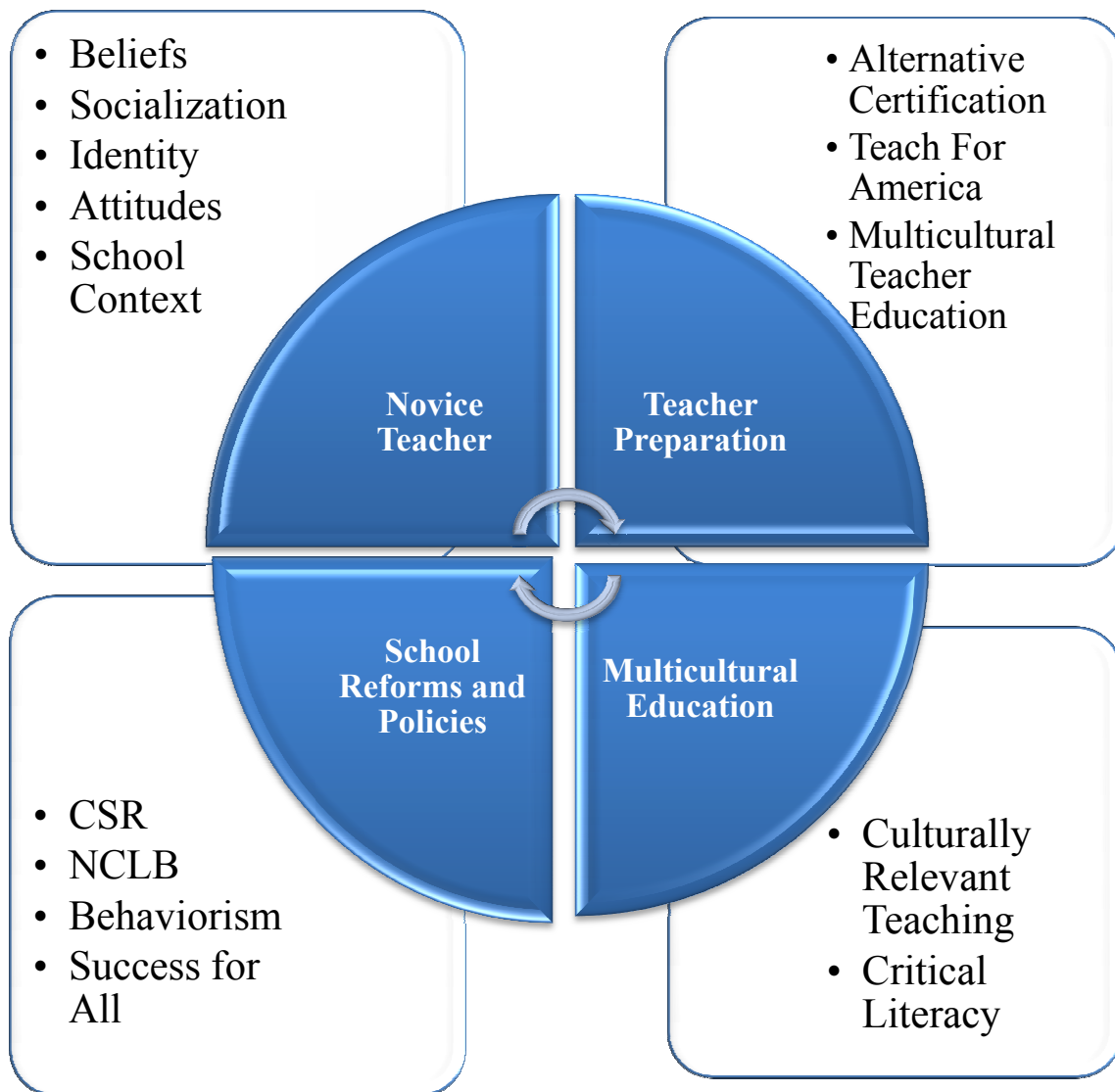


Figure 1. Literature Review Constructs and Relationships.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this investigation was to examine how two, novice, African American, Teach For America teachers with an espoused culturally/personally relevant teaching ideology implement the scripted literacy program, Success for All. A multiple-case study design guided me in examining the participants' educational beliefs, attitudes, identities, and instructional practices regarding the implementation of the two competing ideologies of culturally/personally relevant pedagogy from their alternative certification program and the mandated scripted curriculum of their initial teaching placements. Yin (2003) defined a case study as "investigating a phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 13)." Merriam (2001) suggested that by concentrating on a sole phenomenon, the researcher seeks to "uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon (p. 29)." For instance, in this study, the multiple intersections of many variables including NCLB policies, scripted curriculum, high-stakes testing, new teacher socialization, TFA alternative certification, and teacher beliefs were part of the context, complex social unit, and the questions under investigation. Furthermore, Merriam (2001) offered case studies as a means of "investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon (p. 41)." Multiple-case studies have distinctive advantages and disadvantages when compared to single-case designs (Yin, 2003). Firestone and Herriott (1983) suggested the evidence

from multiple cases is usually considered more compelling, and the overall study is perceived as being more robust because there are more cases to analyze and compare instead of one. Yin (2003) described the essential logic underscoring the use of multiple-case studies is knowing the cases selected either “(a) predict similar results or (b) predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons” (p. 47). Therefore, these cases were selected to illuminate both commonalities and distinct differences based on their context. For example, both participants were young, African American women who taught 4th grade in predominately African American, lower socioeconomic schools, used the same scripted literacy program, and attended the same alternative teacher preparation program through Teach For America. Two distinct differences of these cases were the school context and years of teaching, since one participant was a first year teacher and the other was a second year teacher and they taught in different schools. Importantly, for this holistic multiple-case study, each participant was considered its own case and was analyzed separately to glean within- case findings. During the final phase of analysis, I conducted cross- case analysis.

The essence of qualitative research is that it is iterative and dynamic; meaning that the data, participants, and the researcher informed next steps, questions, foci of observations, and adjustments to the research process (Merriam, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Because of this iterative and dynamic nature, I have carefully detailed all the steps to how the research process unfolded in this multiple case study. This chapter describes the: (a) characteristics of case study and how it relates to this design (see Table 1), (b) multifaceted context, (c) setting, (d) participants, (e) methods, (f) data sources, (g) analysis, and (h) trustworthiness for this study. It is important to note that as aligned with

Table 1

Case Study Design and Current Study

<i>Case Study Characteristics</i>	<i>Current Study</i>
A case study is a bounded system	Investigated two individual cases bounded by context (TFA, SFA, school district) and time (end of 2009-2010 school year)
Multiple data collection methods	Used interviews, observations, observation debriefs, visual representations, and documents
Provides understanding and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena and is useful for describing phenomena	Observed participants during literacy instruction to understand and describe how they experienced the intersection of culturally relevant teaching and their scripted program
Can conduct cross-case comparisons and analysis	Analyzed each case separately to glean within case findings and then analyzed together for a cross-case analysis
Can describe in rich detail, phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local context	Described each aspect of the context in rich detail generated from multiple data sources
Researcher can study dynamic processes rather than just outcomes	Explored how and why participants made decisions during their literacy instruction
Can determine how participants interpret various constructs	Used multiple data sources and the participants' voices and descriptions to understand how they defined and interpreted various constructs including culturally relevant teaching and scripted programs
Data collected in naturalistic settings	Observed participants in the act of teaching literacy in their classrooms
Relevant to local situations, conditions, and stakeholders' needs	Included a specific district's school reform and recent collaboration between CU and TFA.
Researchers can be relevant to changes that occur during study and can shift focus of study	Switched populations for sampling and wrote an IRB amendment to add a participant and documents based on initial analysis
Data in the words and categories of participants lend themselves to exploring how and why phenomena occur	Used participants' own words and voice during coding, analysis, findings, and writing of case study

(Adopted from Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.20; Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2003)

the tenets of case study, I have attempted to use the voices and specific quotes of the participants as often as possible to explain and describe themselves, their context, practice, beliefs, attitudes, and identity. The following questions guided this research study:

1. How do novice teachers prepared with a culturally relevant teaching framework implement a scripted literacy program?
2. What culturally relevant strategies, resources, activities, and assignments do novice teachers implement during scripted literacy instruction?
3. What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding culturally relevant teaching during literacy instruction?
4. What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding the use of scripted programs during literacy instruction?
5. How does a scripted curriculum influence the identity of a novice teacher?
6. How does high stakes testing influence culturally relevant literacy instruction? revised to What larger contextual factors in the educational milieu influence culturally relevant literacy instruction?

As the study progressed, I realized that the last question should be much broader than just the construct of high stakes testing. The larger context of federal policies like No Child Left Behind that influenced Comprehensive School Reform, Title I, Teach For America, alternative teacher preparation programs, and definitions and measures of knowledge and success were the separate yet connected and comprehensive context that influenced culturally relevant literacy instruction. I changed this question to respond to this realization and instead asked, What larger contextual factors in the educational milieu influence culturally relevant literacy instruction?

Context

At the time of this study, Carter University, a large university in the southeastern United States, had recently collaborated with Teacher for America (TFA) to offer corps

members of TFA a teaching certification and master's degree program as they engage in their two- year teaching commitment in a high needs, urban school. This degree program is part of Carter University's Urban Accelerated Certification and Master's Program (UACM). Carter University's teacher education mission is to prepare educators who are "(a) informed by research, knowledge and reflective practice, (b) empowered to serve as change agents (c) committed to and respectful of all learners, and (d) engaged with learners, their families, schools, and local and global communities" (Carter University Website). This mission in verbiage complements Teach For America's espoused mission to "enlist our nation's most promising future leaders in the movement to eliminate educational inequity" in urban and rural schools (WEBSITE). However, as Grace (pseudonym) the instructor and coordinator of the CU/TFA program explains, these two seemingly similar missions, as constructed by TFA and Carter University, contrast in important ways:

So our missions of truly educational equity in urban environments are very compatible and what we want to see happen. Now, how we plan to make it happen, or how we hope it will come into being are quite different and our definition of teaching and our definition of learning and our definition of success, they are all different. And it think that actually, potentially our definition of equity is very different... I feel like what happens very often is that we are on the same page with wanting kids that are historically and currently provided inequitable opportunities to have opportunities for exceptional education. I think that our understanding of how to go about bringing that into being um, even of what exceptional education is, and is for, and what it looks like, I think those are different. (I1G)

This complex context of these two seemingly unlikely collaborators plays a role in understanding how the participants construct ideas of teaching, learning, and equity that are relevant to the multiple case study under investigation.

In the first phase of the UACM at Carter University, TFA corps members complete all coursework requirements necessary for a full, renewable certification in the

state the study took place. After completing the certification in one or two years, TFA corps members can choose to continue their graduate studies and earn a master's degree from Carter University. Classes in the initial program include six hours of Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, Critical Issues in Urban Education, and a Culture, Communities, and Schools. Grace, the Carter University/TFA instructor who designed the program, courses, and assignments explains the certification program further:

We have a huge emphasis in our entire program on looking and coming to understand a kid in all their resplendent and coming to really understand them more holistically through building a really unique and rich relationship with them through understanding more about their family and their history and their interests and their experiences and their learning needs...there is an emphasis on virtual backpacks and unpacking and trying to come to understand certainly ourselves and there's a whole lot of self reflexive practice where we are trying to come to understand that we all have biases and issues that we are working on. I have my own, you have your own, we are all working on it and trying to understand how that intersects with the kids that we serve and the curriculum that we offer and the community that we create and the culture that we support and build in our classroom. I think...really trying to contextualize ourselves in the school and the communities and the resources and what the kids do on the weekends and what's out there for them to engage in. I mean to really build an understanding of each child as a unique entity and to bring that space into the classroom, so the kids can be themselves and share themselves and teach others in a curricular way and in a cultural way. I think that is a big part of our work. (IIG)

This framework that locates the students, families, and communities at the center of teaching and learning, is foundational to how the participants define, negotiate, and enact culturally relevant teaching in their initial teaching contexts.

Participants

Sampling procedures

The number of participants for a multiple-case study depends on the research questions asked, the data to be gathered, the analysis in progress, the resources to support

the study (Merriam, 2001), and the number of cases to be found (Yin, 2003). Based on the nature of my research questions and desire to understand how novice teachers prepared with a culturally relevant framework implement a scripted literacy program, it was necessary to use purposeful sampling often known as snowball, chain, or network sampling (Merriam, 2001). This purposeful sampling approach began in the spring of 2009 through conversations I had with the coordinator and lead instructor of the Teach For America (TFA) program at Carter University. This individual, Grace, (pseudonym) had insider knowledge about possible participants stemming from their extensive coursework that included class discussions, reflections, and assignments centered around culturally relevant teaching. At this point, it is important to note that participants were originally to be sampled from another UACM program at Carter University because the TFA certification program had just started when this study was designed. When the original sampling fell through, it was suggested by my committee members to sample from the Teach For America population instead, since they had similar classes, frameworks, and missions. However, due to the original population sampling plan, only six schools were listed on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) proposal that was approved. Grace identified six possible participants who fit the following criteria for this study and worked at those IRB approved schools.

The sampling criteria Grace and I used for these Teach For America teachers included (a) having a culturally relevant teaching philosophy, (b) teaching with a scripted literacy curriculum such as Direct Instruction or Success for All, (c) having novice teacher status with one to three years of experience, and d) teaching first through fifth grade. I first emailed all possible participants with the details of my study. Due to the

timing of IRB approval and data collection, the six possible participants were busy with testing, TFA coursework, and Spring Break, so five did not respond to my initial contact. The sixth responded with a note of regret that she was getting married and moving out of state, so she would not be able to participate. I then went back to Grace, and asked if I could have a few minutes to meet with the possible participants to explain my study prior to their next class. She agreed and helped facilitate an initial meeting prior to her class beginning. I met with the possible participants in two small groups (n=3, n=2) and I (a) described the project, (b) explained why they were chosen, (c) discussed why they might participate, (d) read the consent form and (e) provided assurances and additional information that a few of them requested regarding time commitment (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Each one of the five possible participants readily agreed, signed the IRB approved consent form, and provided contact information.

Upon receiving their approval, I contacted all the principals of the possible participants via email, U.S. mail, and telephone calls to schedule a meeting. After several weeks, all of the principals agreed for the research to take place in their schools after testing. While I originally planned to observe before and after testing to see what influence testing had on literacy instruction, I was unable to do so due to the timing of IRB approval and the principals' desire to wait until after testing. This meant that I had to narrow down the possible participants to just two cases due to the institutional time constraints of CRCT testing, Spring Break, and the end of the school year. At this point, I met with Grace again to discuss narrowing the five participants down to two. After several discussions in person and on the phone, it was narrowed down to Dee and Fiona, so there were distinct differences and similarities in their cases. This allowed me to see

how two different school contexts intersect and influence the use of culturally relevant teaching and a scripted literacy program.

Description of Participants

Dee

Dee is a self-identified, African American woman, single, and in her early 20s. She grew up in a single parent home with her mom and sister in the Boston area. She identifies with her students as an African American and because she was “on reduced and free lunch during different periods growing up”. She explains her influential early education experiences with this telling personal account:

In 5th or 6th grade my mom got me into a program called Metco, which allowed me to actually be bussed out to another community, so that I could have access to better resources because where you lived definitely connected to what kind of education you received. Even though the school I went to was a public school, it was a public school in a more, a majority white neighborhood, and they just had more opportunities as far as the school facilities, like teachers who had better education...so I definitely identify with my students. And that's kind of where I realized that I wanted to go and teach because I recognized there was this achievement gap...and I wanted to do something about that. And while Metco was a great program, it shouldn't have to exist. I should have been able to take the bus down the block, ya know, down the street in my own community and get the same education I was receiving out in Brookline. (I2D)

She attended a “prestigious”, historically black women’s liberal arts college and received a Bachelor’s degree in Spanish with a minor in Child Development. The 2009-2010 school year was her first year of teaching. She taught 4th grade at a high poverty, predominately African American elementary school in a large urban city in the southeastern United States. She heard about Teach For America from a friend of hers who was currently in the program. With her dreams of opening a community center or her own school one day coupled with her minor in Child Development, she went to several informational meetings and was intrigued by what she heard. She remembered how they

talked about “the movement and the achievement gap and these were things that are important to me, so I thought I would be a good addition to the program. I thought it was aligned with what I was looking for and wanting to make a difference in the education field” (I2D). When I asked her to self-identify and describe herself, she said, “I definitely consider myself a leader. I was a leader in high school a leader in college, and Teach For America definitely looks for leaders and people who are able to be committed and who endure a lot of different situations, so I definitely consider myself a leader” (I2D). Having finished her initial certification, she is continuing with the Master’s program at Carter University in Math Education. When I asked her where she saw herself in five years, she replied,

I’m still going to be in education in some sort of fashion... I definitely see myself in the classroom for a little while and then maybe if something more administrative like being a principal or being on the board, but I definitely think like teachers have the most direct impact in the classroom, and I definitely think you should be in the classroom before you try to be in leadership positions, but actually, I just really like being in the classroom and um, teaching. (I2D)

Grace, the TFA/Carter University instructor and coordinator, described Dee and why she recommended her for the study:

(She is) very clear about her commitment to justice and this vocation and to her kids and educational equity...she has emerged as a real leader in these conversations...I’ve seen really exciting things from her work, from her engagement and talking about kids, from her discussions at her table, her interjections and her questioning especially about things that we talk about in class. Dee is very, very vocal in her questioning...and puzzling and expressing her tensions ...And really just throughout all of her work there has been a thread of real critical exploration, of a real need to make learning matter for her kids and to think differently about structures. I mean she talks about in a lot of her writing about significant change and how she is working to bring that into being. She was a pretty quick choice when I looked at the names because practically everything she writes has a critical lens. (I1G)

Dee's identity, beliefs, attitudes, and practice will be explored and described in much more detail in chapters four, five, and six.

Fiona

Fiona is a twenty-three year old, middle-class, single, self-identified, African American woman. She attended a private school in the suburbs from pre-K through 11th grade that she describes as 50% Black and 50% White and was then forced to go to a public school because her school closed down before her senior year. She describes her influential early schooling experiences in this way:

It was like culture shock, and that's part of the reason why I joined Teach For America. I think that if I had stayed in a private school setting, then I wouldn't have been as um, privy to the differences that you'll see at the private and public school education most of the time. So I was very like shocked at the time when I got to public school because I was like Whoa, people skip school, people, like in my classes I had some teachers that didn't teach, it was just amazing to me. And I was like able to see the disparity between, I went to a school that was probably between 50% Black and 50% White and the difference between like my public school was all Black for the most part. We had like 1 or 2 um Caucasian students but to see the difference between the Black kids at the private school whose parents could afford to send them there and the kids at the public school whose parents chose not to send them to private school or couldn't afford it, I thought that it wasn't fair. So that was part of that stuff like this should not be happening in public education. Like just because it is public, it doesn't make it any less important or people shouldn't work harder at private schools or anything like that, so I kind of wanted to bring my experience in public education. That's why I chose TFA.

She attended a well-known, private university that ranks among the top 20 universities in the country where she earned a degree in Psychology. The 2009-2010 was Fiona's second year of teaching at a high poverty, all African American elementary school in a large urban city in the southeastern United States. She taught third grade her first year, and I observed her teaching in her fourth grade class. She found herself graduated from college and wanting "to do something meaningful...so I researched Teach For America and

thought that would be a great way for me to impact some lives” (I1F). She always worked with children through tutoring, summer camps, and volunteering, so her move into teaching through Teach For America seemed like a “great fit”.

Fiona is going into her third year of teaching and is pursuing the Master’s in Math Education at Carter University. She has finished her two year commitment for TFA, but is currently teaching Math because her school is now departmentalized. She is unsure of what her role in education will be in the future. In describing Fiona, Grace says when reading her work:

I would see a real glimmer of commitment um, and she voiced that commitment with clarity. She’s thinking critically about aspects of the community she is serving, the students that she is getting to know better... they had a choice book that they read that related to equity and diversity and educational systems, and I remember I was very impressed with what she brought to the table and how she was grappling with a range of critical issues. I feel like I see in Fiona a deep sense of inner strength and questioning... I’ve seen a real grappling with the systems and structures and her curriculum and how they play out in her classroom. I’ve seen glimpses of struggling with culturally relevant experiences because that really is what the whole first class is about. (I1G)

Chapters 4 provides a more in-depth look at Fiona’s identities, beliefs, attitudes, and practice.

Grace

During data collection and analysis, I realized that more context was needed for the participants’ alternative certification program at Carter University. After discussing this with members of my committee, I wrote an amendment to the IRB to interview the Teach For America/Carter University main instructor of record and course developer. Grace, a White woman in her early 30s, had recently graduated from Carter University and was hired by the Early Childhood Education department to design, coordinate, and teach the majority of the courses for the Teach For America/Carter University alternative

certification program. As this quote from Grace demonstrates, understanding how she and the other program developers crafted the program is essential to understanding how their theoretical frameworks thread through the program, coursework, readings, and discussions and ultimately influence these participants' thinking and practice.

Basically we started trying to consider what we really know is transformative, what really helps people who say they are committed to structural change, what sustains their commitment, what supports teacher retention and feelings of success and really trying to think through framing a program based on the program of study that was adopted, but what we know and believe about teacher development and structural change and how those two things can intersect (IIG).

Grace's role and theoretical framework was essential in this study as she helped identify possible participants and provided the much needed context surrounding the certification program Dee and Fiona were attending. She was also able to provide access to the online assignments of the participants once the amendment to the original IRB was approved and consented to by the participants.

Researcher

I am a 33 year-old White, female born and raised in the northern Virginia suburbs by my mother and father in an upper- middle class home. I grew up in a mostly White neighborhood with an average sprinkling of diversity in the form of culture, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status. My mother taught at a culturally and linguistically diverse school in a nearby neighborhood where she eventually became a certified English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher. After working in the corporate world for several years, I entered an alternative teacher preparation program (GATAPP) and was hired at a 100% African American, high poverty school in southern Georgia. Similar to Teach For America, this certification program had only one summer of classes prior to being the teacher of record in an urban elementary school. It was here that I was exposed

to the huge disparities in education, opportunities, and expectations for students and teachers in the lower socioeconomic, culturally and linguistically diverse schools juxtapose to the schools that middle class, White students attended nearby. Currently, I am a doctoral student in the Early Childhood Department at Carter University where I teach a course titled, Cultural Foundations of Education to preservice teachers.

My role as the researcher in this study included conducting all participant observations, interviews, transcriptions, memos, analysis, research, and writing. I attempted to understand the experiences and context of both participants through open-ended questions and probing to make sure I was hearing from them how they were experiencing their context, so I was not making assumptions about what I observed or heard. I listened intently to their voices for what was said and not said as well as documenting the voice changes and silences that occurred surrounding different topics. I was aware that there were possible perceived and real insider/outsider privileges and positionality in regards to race, education, and roles at Carter University that could influence what and how they shared. With this in mind, I tried to establish connections during interviews, phone calls, and observations regarding our shared experiences and challenges as alternatively certified educators working in urban elementary schools.

Setting

According to school system records, the Freedom School System serves over 48,000 students. The ethnic distribution of these 48,000 students is 83% African American, 10% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, 1% Multiracial, and less than 1% Asian, American Indian, or Alaskan. Over 76% of Freedom's enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced meals. Since 2000, over 700 TFA corps members have taught in Freedom

School Systems' elementary, middle, and high schools. Published data shows there are currently over 200 current and previous corps members working as educators or administrators in more than 95 schools.

Grey Stone Elementary School

Published data on Grey Stone Elementary show there are 40 PreK-5 teachers at this school with an average of nine years of teaching (Georgia Department of Education, 2009). Of these 40 teachers, there are 32 African Americans, 6 Caucasians, and 2 Hispanics; 33 are female. Additionally, 21 teachers hold a Bachelor's degree, and 19 hold a Master's, Specialists or Doctorate. All 550 students these teachers serve are eligible for free or reduced lunch because the median household income is approximately \$20, 000. The school profile indicates that the ethnic distribution of the students is 96% African American, 3% Hispanic, 2% Multiracial, and 1% Caucasian. In addition, 19% of the student population are enrolled in the Early Intervention Program (EIP) and 10 % of the students are in Special Education. In the 2008-2009 school year, 93% of 1st graders, 86% of 2nd graders, 68% of 3rd graders, 88% of 4th graders, and 87% of 5th graders passed the CRCT reading portion of the state test (Georgia Department of Education, 2009).

Upon entering Grey Stone Elementary for Dee's first observation, I was pleasantly surprised at what I found because it was much different than most schools serving lower-income students that I had encountered previously in educational literature, my own experiences, and popular culture movies; the newness of the school, the colorful environment, and helpful staff were different from many high poverty schools around the country. The office was large and had several secretaries involved in various administrative tasks including documenting the long line of children who were arriving

late. The giant circular foyer was bright and colorfully decorated with a bulletin board about the Teacher of the Year and several murals and 3D depictions of diverse students. Each hallway branched off the circular foyer and had artistic signs labeled with academic references like “Scholar Street”. These hallways were covered with bulletin boards highlighting students’ names and pictures of Accelerated Reader achievements and Perfect Attendance. Student work samples and art projects decorated the hallways alongside teaching tools like word walls and notices about drugs and weapons.

Dee’s classroom was on the 4th grade hall just a short walk from the entrance of the school. On the outside of the door was a sign that reveals what SFA book and skill they are working on that week. It was a large classroom and easily fit her class of 19 students. Although testing was just barely over, she had regrouped the students in their cooperative groupings of 3-5 desks with the exception of a few students who sat by themselves. There were six new computers along one wall and a Promethean Board hooked up to Dee’s laptop. The classroom was brightly lit and had student work from Science, Language Arts, and SFA on the walls and bulletin board. During a transition, I went to get a better look at the SFA bulletin board, and a student came up to me to explain that each week or book they read, they do a graphic organizer for the story that shows the main ideas and story elements.

Student jobs, class rules, and word walls were displayed on the other walls. A bookshelf behind the teacher’s desk reveals her university books on teaching reading and classroom management plus teacher-bought, reproducible 4th grade books of worksheets for Language Arts, Vocabulary, Math, and Science. A classroom pet Beta fish sat on the back counter by the sink.

Matthew Graves Elementary School

According to published data on Matthew Graves Elementary, 99% of the 350 plus students are identified as African American and 1% are Hispanic or Multiracial (Georgia Department of Education, 2009). Over 98% of the students are eligible for free or reduced meals, 28% are enrolled in the EIP and 6% in Special Education services. In the 2008-2009 school year, 83% of 1st graders, 90% of 2nd graders, 78% of 3rd graders, 73% of 4th graders, and 85% of 5th graders passed the reading portion of the CRCT state tests (Georgia Department of Education, 2009). Of the 27 teachers, 23 are female, 18 hold graduate degrees, and all are African American with an average of 11 years of experience.

Upon entering Fiona's school for the first time, I was surrounded by parents, students, faculty, and staff during a bustling Friday dismissal. I met with the principal to discuss the study, and I found Principal Stella to be a no-nonsense woman upon first impression, however, during several weeks of observations, I saw several acts of care, love, and high student expectations from her. The secretary always had a kind word, smile, and greeting for me. When I did not see her for a few weeks, she got so excited when I came back, she came around from behind the desk and gave me a hug. The hallway bulletin boards, display cases, and student celebrations were all centered on African American themes, pictures, paintings, literature, and famous people. Students' names were displayed who had helped raise the most money for an end of year, out of state school fieldtrip.

Walking through the library to Fiona's classroom was like walking through a huge culturally relevant literature display for the African American students and teachers at this school. When one of Fiona's observations was canceled at the last minute due to a pep

rally in honor of a famous NBA guest speaker, I strolled throughout the media center taking note of the various literature it offered. Almost every book I saw had characters of color on the cover. An entire section of over 80 biographies were written solely about African Americans who had contributed to various parts of society including arts, sports, science, politics, education, agriculture, economics, and law. One literature display highlighted multiple works by an African American children's author. Another display showed several diverse Cinderella-type fairytales from around the world. It was clear that there was no shortage of resources to open students up to contributions of African Americans that are often left out of textbooks and curricula.

Fiona's classroom was located off a large open square foyer that had several classrooms around its perimeter. The classrooms did not have doors and were subject to the noise and voices of surrounding classrooms, as well as the eyes and ears of passing students, teachers, or administrators. During the first observation, the students' desks were in rows and the environmental print was covered or stripped due to recent testing conditions and the end of the school year. In the subsequent observations, I documented her 14 students in groups of two to five students sitting together and a Math and Science word wall were uncovered. CRCT Math and Language Arts coaches (workbooks) were the only textbooks I saw. There were four computers, a reading area with a bean bag chair, and several small tables and book shelves. Fiona had eleven boys and three girls in her classroom during data collection.

Data Collection

Data collection took a variety of forms in order to (a) support the gathering of rich data, (b) establish trustworthiness, and (c) provide triangulation of each data source throughout my analysis. The data collection instruments included semi-structured

interviews of participants, classroom observations, observation debriefs, researcher memos, and documents. Documents collected included lesson plans, SFA scripts, visual representations, course assignments, and course syllabi. Data were collected from April – July 2010 (See Appendix B for data collection summary). Multiple data sources were collected and analyzed concurrently in order to support the internal validity and trustworthiness of the study and its findings (Merriam, 2001). Multiple data sets required a data management system that was efficient and very easy to remember and use. Therefore, I coded each piece of data according to data source, number, and participant. For example, I1D was Interview 1 with Dee and I1F was Interview 1 with Fiona. Table 2 provides a list of collected data sources and their corresponding codes. In addition, after each piece of data was collected or transcribed, I wrote researcher memos documenting questions, wonderings, and initial analysis. These memos were also written after each piece of data was analyzed. They later became a part of the analysis.

Table 2. *Data Sources and Identification Codes*

<i>Data Source</i>	<i>Data Code</i>	<i>Number Collected</i>
Interviews	I	4
Observations	O	13
Observation Debriefs	Deb	13
DOCUMENTS:		
Visual Representations	VRSFA;VRCRT	4
Course Assignments:		
➤ Retrospective-Self Reflections	ARSR	2
➤ Semiotic Representation & Reflection	ASRR	2
➤ Photo Journalistic Reflection	APJR	2
➤ Square Triangle Circle Article Responses	STC	8
SFA Scripts	SFAS	3
Lesson Plans	LP	6
Course Syllabi:		2

➤ Culture, Community, and Schools	SCCS	
➤ Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners	SLL	
Researcher Memos	RM	2
Participant Narratives	PN	2

Interviews

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted in the middle (May) and at the end of data collection (July) to allow for a rich, descriptive portrait of the participants and their context to develop. Interviews were a necessary data source for this investigation as Patton explains, “We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe....We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions....We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world” (Patton, 1990, p. 196). The interviews were semi-structured versus highly structured/standardized or unstructured/informal interviews (Merriam, 2001) (See Appendix A for semi-structured initial interview protocol). For this reason, some questions were predetermined, but based on the individual respondent’s answers they were asked or explored in other ways. Each case had its own unique data that informed the second protocol’s interview questions, so while some general information gathering questions were used initially, the subsequent answers and data informed the next questions and interview. These interviews were shaped by relevant interviewing (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.30), a model that combines interpretative constructionism, critical theory, and the practical needs and nature of conducting interviews. This model required me to understand my role and my ethical obligations to the relationship I formed with my

interviewee. In addition, it located my goal of interviewing and research as generating a depth of understanding and not breadth of understanding. The third characteristic of this type of interviewing included my understanding that the qualitative research design remained flexible and iterative throughout. This model of interviewing aligned with my theoretical framework, goals of the study, and case study research design.

As the researcher, it was my role and responsibility to “elicit the interviewee’s views of their worlds, their work, and the events they have experienced or observed” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 28). Sample questions for the first interview included these questions: *What does culturally relevant teaching mean to you? Why do you align with the culturally relevant teaching philosophy? What are examples of culturally relevant literacy instruction?* These individual interviews lasted approximately 35 minutes to one hour and occurred at a time and location desired by each participant. For instance, Dee was unable to meet face to face due to her teaching and TFA obligations and class schedule. I therefore agreed to conduct phone interviews for her. Fiona originally scheduled multiple phone interviews, but was unable to fulfill them, so I interviewed her for the first time face to face during post-planning. All participant interviews (n=4) were immediately transcribed verbatim by me, in order to include post-interview researcher memos that documented behaviors, nonverbal, descriptions, and musings or wonderings that informed the next interview or observation.

A goal of responsive interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) includes getting a solid, deep understanding of what is being studied, so there had to be the opportunity to follow up on what had been seen, heard, or interpreted throughout the data collection process. The second interview provided insights and explanations for questions that arose after

rereading the data, researcher memos, coding manual, theme analysis, and initial participant narratives (Merriam, 2001; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). It helped clarify my questions, interpretations, and themes throughout data analysis. For instance, in trying to understand how and why the participants were interpreting and negotiating the requirements of the multiple stakeholders involved in their practice, I asked the following questions: *What do you value in teaching and learning? How would you describe what TFA wanted and valued in your classroom? How would you describe what SFA wanted and valued in your classroom? How would you describe what Carter University wanted and valued? How would you describe what the students wanted and valued in your classroom?* (See Appendix A and F). These questions and answers helped explore several themes and the participants' context in their own words, so I was not assuming anything about their definitions, connections, or interpretations regarding the stakeholders, participants' constructs, or context. Additionally, the second interview was a chance to really get to know my participants' personal backgrounds and experiences with schooling. It also provided participants an opportunity to describe and reflect on their self-chosen documents (i.e. lesson plans and visual representations). These interviews played an important and necessary role in informing my data collection, analysis, and findings.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations (n=6, n=7) were conducted between 8:20-10:40 (Fiona) and 8:20-10:00 (Dee). The actual time reserved for SFA was 8:30-10:00 for both schools, however, the instruction that occurred during this time varied between the participants based on institutional constraints and participant decisions. For instance, upon arriving

early for Fiona's initial observation at 8:15, I found her reading a book aloud called *Blues Journey* by Walter Dean Myers. The kids were deeply engaged in the story, and she was asking critical thinking questions throughout the reading such as, "How is this character feeling? Have you ever heard about or felt the blues?" In only a few minutes, I heard her and the students making connections to previous Social Studies lessons, the Great Migration, Billie Holliday, Martin Luther King, lynchings, and the students' lives. Intrigued, I later asked her if this was "normal" for this time. She said no, she had just started doing it now that testing was over, and the kids really enjoyed it. I decided to come earlier than SFA every day to capture this culturally relevant literacy time that she had carved out for her students instead of the busy work that usually occupies the early morning in many classrooms. Because she often ran over with this literacy activity, she usually ran over in her SFA time. Due to the fact she kept all of her students during SFA this semester, she had the luxury of ignoring the school's SFA transitions and time constraints to allow for her self-chosen, culturally relevant author study and her required SFA obligations. In contrast, Dee had to adhere to the SFA transitions and time constraints because many of her students left her classroom, and she taught students from various classes and grades. Unfortunately, for this study, I was not able to observe in the afternoons due to teaching and supervision obligations. The afternoons were when Dee reported was her time to do guided reading, read alouds, and culturally relevant activities during ELA and other content areas.

These observations helped confirm, support, and question emerging themes. They were used in conjunction with interviews, observation debriefs, researcher memos, and document analysis to expand the findings, provide context specific incidents, behaviors

and other information that were used as reference points for the next interview, observation debrief questions, or subsequent observation cycle (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Merriam, 2001). For example, upon seeing and hearing “Cooperation Points” being awarded to various groups for working together, having the same answer, or using a particular strategy, I was able to explore this observation with Dee further through that lesson’s debrief questions. It also afforded me the opportunity to ask Fiona in her interview, why I did not observe her using this SFA required strategy. In addition, a key use of these observations was to allow for the juxtaposition of what the participants say they do, and what they are actually observed doing, as part of my analysis, debriefs, and interview questioning (Agar, 1996).

As the classroom observer, I located myself on Spradley’s “continuum of participation” (1980, pp. 58-62) as one of moderate participation. In this role, I was identifiable as a researcher, but only occasionally interacted with the people in it. For instance, in Fiona’s classroom, she asked me to conduct a “Two Minute Edit” with the students while she stepped out to get some breakfast that was provided for teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. After several weeks of observing, I knew all of the children’s names, understood the purpose and structure of the assignment having done something similar in my own classroom, and felt comfortable to lead them. In addition, the students became accustomed to seeing me in their classrooms and would wave, smile, and greet me, or say goodbye. In Dee’s classroom, I arrived one day not knowing that she had a substitute and another day not knowing that SFA had been cancelled for the day. When I showed up, several of the kids said, “Oh, we’re not doing SFA today. She tried to text you.” In both classrooms, the teacher participants would occasionally explain

something about what she or the students were doing. In both classrooms, I sat in the back right corner either at a desk or a table, so that I had a vantage point of observing all student-to-student or student-to-teacher interactions.

During observations, I took note of various interactions, behaviors, conversations, and activities of the students and teacher (See Appendix H). In addition, I looked for focused on event sampling (Wright, 1967) of culturally relevant activities, resources, assignments, transitions, or instruction. These specific examples were documented, and noted with the relevant circumstances and descriptions surrounding their use. For example, when I observed Fiona's read aloud described above, I noted the following: (a) this activity was prior to the scheduled SFA time; (b) the students were allowed to sit/lie wherever they wanted; (c) a graphic organizer was used to document the story and start the author study; (d) students were all actively engaged and answering questions; (e) specific questions from the teacher; and (f) observer comments that I wanted to explore during the debrief related to this observed activity (see below for examples). In addition to looking specifically for culturally relevant teaching, I looked for the *absence* of culturally relevant teaching, which usually resulted from strictly following the script verbatim. After the first observation, I realized I should have a copy of the SFA script they were using that day, so I could document when and how the participants followed, skipped, or added to the SFA script. Both Dee and Fiona complied with my request and photocopied the script for me to use during their observations.

During observations, I wrote numerous Observer Comments in the form of questions and comments that related to what I was seeing, wondering, or connecting to other data that was analyzed. For example, in the observation of the read aloud, I noted

the following Observer Comments: “How/Why was this book chosen? Have you always done read alouds? It seems she knows some good reading strategies (text-to-self, text-to-world, predicting); where did she learn these? Would she feel comfortable teaching reading without SFA script?” The initial notes taken during the observations were expanded immediately following each observation by adding more details surrounding the context and Observer Comments. During this process, I wrote a running researcher memo for each participant on a separate document that included questions, ideas, and initial interpretations, which were the initial stages of data analysis for each case (Merriam, 2001, Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002).

It was during the observation, field note expansion, and researcher memos that I developed each participant’s Observation Debrief questions for that day (see below). As the human instrument of data collection for observations, it was important to realize that what was observed, how it was observed, and how it was documented was both a limitation and advantage of observations. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) described the goal of observation as a method is to “develop a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method” (p.92). For this reason, I took copious observation notes and researcher memos to support the trustworthiness of this study.

Observation Debriefs

Observation debriefs (n=6, n=7) allowed for questioning, clarification, explanation, and exploration of what was seen and heard during each observation. These questions were developed in response to a specific incident or a need for explaining what was observed versus what was reported in an interview. While the original hope of the

debriefs was to capture a dialogue between researcher and participant immediately after each observation, it was not possible due to the daily teaching schedules of these new teacher participants. Therefore, each round of debrief questions was sent to the participants to record their answers on a researcher provided recorder. The data in these debriefs helped support and challenge emerging themes found in the observations, interviews, and document data. For example, based on the data collected during the read aloud Fiona did with *Blues Journey* by Walter Dean Myers, I specifically asked, “How comfortable would you be teaching reading without a script? Would you prefer a script as a new teacher? Why or Why not?” These questions arose from observing her use best practice comprehension questioning as well as hearing from both participants that the script was a nice “guideline” for a new teacher.

Documents

“Document” is an umbrella term for the wide range of written, visual, and physical materials that are pertinent to the research questions including: (a) personal documents which “refer to any first-person narrative that describes an individual’s actions, experiences, and beliefs” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 132); (b) physical materials which consist of physical objects found within the study setting; and (c) researcher-generated documents prepared by the researcher or for the researcher by the participants after the study has begun (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 2001; Prior, 2003). “The specific purpose for generating documents is to learn more about the situation, person, or event being investigated” (Merriam, 2001, p. 119). Initially, participants were only asked to provide three culturally relevant lesson plans from any subject that they taught this year and two visual representations that offered insight into

the research questions by connecting what the participants said or believed and what they actually did in practice. These documents provided information that supplemented and complemented the interviews, observations, and debriefs. However, throughout data collection and analysis, it became clear that more information was needed to fully understand the complex context surrounding the participants' preparation, beliefs, and practice.

In addition to these initial documents, several other documents were approved by the Institutional Review Board to collect during the data collection process (See Table 2 for documents and corresponding codes). First, I asked for copies of the SFA scripts after the first observation, so that I could see how the participants used or deviated from the script. In June, I realized that access to the participants' assignments completed during their alternative certification program would provide deeper insight into their beliefs, attitudes, and practice. In addition, these assignments would provide more contextualized information to describe each participant as they attempted to translate their program's culturally relevant coursework and theory into their practice. These assignments were invaluable in triangulating the themes emerging from the other data sources. Other documents added in June included course syllabi for classes that both participants were taking, Culture, Community, and Schools and Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners I and II. These syllabi coupled with the participants' assignments provided the necessary links between how they were constructing and implementing the ideas and theories of their program within their classroom context.

The visual representations ($n = 4$) included in the data collection and analysis involved the participants providing two different illustrations, objects, pictures, photos, or

written artifacts (i.e., poem, haiku, quote) that creatively answered these two questions: *How do you view culturally relevant teaching? How do you view scripted curriculum?*

These visual representations were developed and described by the participants with no input from the researcher, in order to provide important rich, descriptive data that corroborated interviews, observations, debriefs, and assignments. Participants were asked to reflect on their visual representations during the second interview allowing for important themes to be explored or confirmed.

Data Analysis

Because of the qualitative nature of this investigation, data collection and analysis were a simultaneous, recursive, and dynamic process that occurred both in and out of the field (Merriam, 2001). Merriam described data analysis as the process of making sense out of the data by consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what participants have said, what the researcher has observed, and involves the process of making meaning. Strauss and Corbin (1998) similarly illustrated this process by explaining “analysis is the interplay between researchers and data” (p. 13). After the first piece of data was collected, I reviewed the purpose of the study, read and reread data, made notes in the margin to comment on the data, and wrote separate researcher memos to capture reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas, and things to pursue (Merriam, 2001). Based on this recommendation, I have pages of memos for each participant that were written during and after each observation, interview, transcribing, and coding session. These running researcher memos helped identify what I asked, observed, or looked for in the next round of data collection. In addition, these memos were essential to capturing my questions and preliminary analysis for each participant throughout data collection and analysis.

Within-Case Analysis

While the goal of this study was not to develop a grounded theory, I used grounded theory techniques to arrive at findings that emerged from data methodically collected and analyzed throughout the research process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Microanalysis was used in the initial phase of data analysis as detailed line-by-line open coding generated initial classifications and concepts as “data are broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts and are then given a name that represents or stands for these” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.105). Miles and Huberman (1984) offered several suggestions for analyzing data that proved useful for this multiple-case study, including creating a matrix of categories to place the evidence within them. Therefore, using Microsoft Excel, a coding manual was developed for each participant separately in order to capture the within case themes.

The coding manual (See Appendix C) included the major concepts and codes found in the interview transcripts, observations, observation debriefs, and assignments with the supporting data chunks and their location specified. These concepts were then grouped into initial abstract categories on chart paper. Once the category was identified, I defined and expanded it in terms of its particular properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I then created subcategories that further specified a category by detailing information that explained where, why, when, and how this phenomenon occurred. Following open coding, I used the process of axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to “begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding” (p. 124). In other words, I put the data into abstract categories based on their subcategories, properties, and dimensions.

To demonstrate this process, I will explain how the theme of “Surveillance” was developed from the first stages of analyzing Dee’s data. Throughout Interviews 1 and 2, Debriefs 1, 2, and 4, and Observations 1, 3, 4, and 5, Dee would say and do things related to SFA observations, “unwritten rules”, and “stigmas” for certain practices. For instance,

certain times of the year they really have you on observations, and if you're not doing exactly what they say, like they'll look at the script and if you are not exactly what you are supposed to be, they mark you down for um, the observation (I1D).

This chunk of data was coded as “surveillance and monitoring” in the initial open coding phase of analysis. In the second phase, I chunked all of the data that fell into this category into the coding manual with its corresponding data source and line number location. I also wrote additional comments and phrases by many of these data pieces as part of initial analysis. As I went through the coding manual, I then created subcategories of how surveillance played out in Dee’s classroom. This chart included the abstract category, its subcategories, and properties with the notations of which sources had specific data that supported “surveillance” in order to ensure that patterns cut across multiple data sources (Yin, 2003). The chart with the category “Surveillance included the subcategories of “observations”, “classroom requirements”, “cooperation point trackers”, “unwritten rules/stigmas”, and “time constraints”. For each of these subcategories, I broke them down into their circumstances and dimensions. For example, “classroom requirements” included the following dimensions, (a) SFA bulletin board, (b) a posting inside and outside the classroom that showed what book, author, skill, and vocabulary they were working on, (c) a point tracker and role card out for each group, (d) a script in the teacher’s hand, books on each desk, and (e) cooperative grouping of desks. This became the subcategory of “Environment Surveillance”. Other subcategories in this emerging

theme of Surveillance included, “People Surveillance”, “Data Surveillance”, and “Unseen Surveillance” with each having its own properties, dimensions, and data.

Peer Debriefing

During this time, I also engaged in two peer-coding/peer debriefings with a colleague, Ani, and peer debriefings with the chair of my committee (Yin, 2003) to support the trustworthiness of my emerging themes. I chose Ani to do the peer debriefings for each case because she has a certificate in qualitative research from Carter University and has engaged in several qualitative research studies. In addition, she is very familiar with culturally relevant teaching and this study having read my comprehensive exam papers and prospectus. I gave Ani all of the observation debriefs and interviews to read and code using open coding. I did not give her access to the coding manuals or charts, so I could see if my emerging themes and categories were ground in the data. After reading and coding the data for each case separately, we met to discuss and compare codes, categories, and emerging themes. I took memos at both of our sessions, as we went through the data comparing our codes for the observation debriefs and interviews. After we completed the peer coding session discussion, I showed her my charts that had each abstract category broken down with its corresponding properties and dimensions (See Appendix D). We discussed each chart extensively using the coding manual as a reference. For two categories that I had that she did not have in open coding, I showed her the coding manual with the coordinating data chunks from observation transcripts (which she also did not have access to). After discussing these two categories with this data in mind, we reached consensus on these categories and their properties.

At the end of each peer debriefing session, Ani and I read over the research questions again to see which charted themes and categories answered each question. Using different colored sticky notes, we placed a sticky note with the research question written on it atop each chart paper (category/theme) that answered that question. We also noticed at this time, that all of the charted themes and categories related to each other in various ways. We added a smaller sticky note to show which charts and themes related to each other and the research questions, but did not specifically answer the research questions. It was at this time that I started to think about visuals, graphics, and data displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to show relationships in the data and questions. We started sketching diagrams, pictures, data flows, and data displays, which eventually turned into a figure in chapter four.

After the peer-coding and debriefing sessions with Ani, I asked Julie Dangel, the chair of my committee to meet to debrief the categories and themes Ani and I had discussed. Prior to our meeting, I collapsed all of the charts and categories into three main related themes with their corresponding subcategories. I gave a copy of these collapsed themes and the coding manual to Julie and showed her the eleven charts I had used in my data analysis. I explained the process I had gone through solo along with the details of my peer coding and debriefing session with Ani. We discussed each chart, the collapsed findings, and relationships between the context and constructs. She asked questions and required explanations and connections using triangulated data sources. Using several peer-debriefing sessions with qualified colleagues was an essential step in supporting the trustworthiness of this study.

Member Checks

Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is key to establishing credibility. “Credibility is a trustworthiness criterion that is satisfied when source respondents agree to honor the reconstructions “(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 329). After meeting with the two peer debriefers, I wrote up a narrative for each case that included the major themes, categories, and descriptions of the participants and their contexts. I gave each participant a copy and asked for candid feedback regarding how I had interpreted their actions, words, beliefs, identities, and attitudes. I encouraged them to clarify, question, and add to the narratives. I received little feedback from the participants, but they said in phone conversations they “agree” with and are “ok” with what I wrote.

Cross-Case Analysis

After engaging in the extended within case analysis of each participant’s data separately, I started the final stage of analysis. As Merriam (2001, p.195) described, “A qualitative, inductive, multicase study seeks to build abstractions across cases.” Yin (1994, p. 112) explained cross-case analysis as the researcher’s attempt to “build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details.” This process required that I read back over each participant’s charts, coding manual, and narratives. Eisenhardt (1989) suggested looking at the data in divergent ways by selecting categories or dimensions and then looking at their within case similarities and inter-case differences. I also used her second tactic, which was to list similarities and differences between the two cases, so that I could look for subtle differences between the cases. As Eisenhardt said, “The juxtaposition of seemingly similar cases by a researcher looking for differences can break simplistic frames. The

result of these forced comparisons can be new categories and concepts” (p. 541). I then created new charts that showed how the cases compared and contrasted in their processes and context. This resulted in revealing several nuances between the two cases that are detailed in the last section of Chapter four.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985), outline several conditions for supporting the trustworthiness or rigor of a qualitative investigation that align with the traditional quantitative research paradigm criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. They use the concept of credibility as analogous to internal validity, transferability as analogous to external validity, dependability as analogous to reliability, and confirmability as analogous to objectivity. To fulfill the criteria of credibility, this study used (a) data and method triangulation, (b) peer debriefings, and (c) member checking. To realize the criteria of transferability, thick descriptive data and narrative detailing the research context and the participants and their contexts (multisite designs) were a major part of this investigation. While an external audit trail was not plausible due to lack of resources, I maintained a researcher audit trail that documented data collection, data sources, and data analysis coupled with researcher memos. In addition, I have clearly outlined my researcher positionality and subjectivities in Chapter One, which is an added measure that supports the trustworthiness of this qualitative investigation (Merriam, 2001).

Similar to Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria specific to case study designs and more closely tied to the positivist research paradigm, are the criteria that Yin (2003) outlines as necessary for meeting the tests of construct validity, internal validity, external

validity, and reliability for case studies. To support construct validity, I used Yin's (2003) strategies of (a) multiple sources of data, (b) establishing a chain of evidence (i.e. audit trail, researcher memos, and coding manual), and (c) member checking. Internal validity was supported through pattern-matching using various data sources. It is important to remember that the goals of this study were not generalizability, and the findings are limited to these specific contexts, participants, and researcher. Reliability was demonstrated by developing a case study database that housed all documents, memos, recordings, timelines, and adjustments to the research context and process. All of these trustworthiness techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2003) helped contribute to the validity and trustworthiness of this study and its findings. Expanded details and examples are discussed below.

Triangulation

Triangulation was an essential means of establishing the trustworthiness for this qualitative study. Triangulation meant I needed to use multiple data sources (data triangulation) and multiple methods (methodological triangulation) that converged to confirm emerging findings (Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2003). For this study, multiple data sources included interview transcriptions, observation field notes, observation debrief transcriptions, and various documents (i.e. lesson plans, assignments, and visual representations) (Yin, 2003). In addition, I used methodological triangulation through the combination of interviewing, observing classroom pedagogy, and selecting of documents by the participant to increase the trustworthiness of this design and its findings. Yin (2003) stressed that the mere inclusion of various data sources and data collection methods were not sufficient. I had to ensure that the patterns cut across multiple data

sources in order for my findings to be substantiated. Developing the coding manual to show which pieces of data supported each category was helpful in showing these patterns and ensuring that data was triangulated.

Thick Description

Thick, rich description is a staple of case studies, meaning that as a researcher, I provide enough description of the research context, so that readers could determine how similar their personal situation aligns with that of Dee and Fiona. This description and level of detail should help the readers decide if my findings can be transferred (Merriam, 2001). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) suggest that results of a qualitative study may be transferred if the researcher describes in detail how typical the case is compared to others, so that the reader can make comparisons to their own realities. Another aspect of thick description and transferability of findings is using more than one case, so that there were several opportunities to view and describe the phenomenon being studied across more than one context (Merriam, 2001). Both cases are full of details that contribute to understanding the multiple factors at play within the research context. By utilizing this multiple-case study design that thoroughly describes my participants, research contexts, observations, interviews, researcher subjectivities, and research methods, I have contributed to the trustworthiness of this design and its findings.

Persistent Observation

Six observations of Dee resulted in over ten hours of observation. Fiona's observations (n=7) resulted in over 15 hours of observation. Having over 25 hours of time in the field afforded me many opportunities to observe and document how my participants implemented culturally relevant teaching practices within their scripted

literacy instruction. Furthermore, I addressed the reliability, transferability, and subjective nature of observations, by carefully documenting and reporting how the observations were made, recorded, analyzed, and under what circumstances (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2003). These detailed observations, field notes, observation debriefs, and researcher memos contributed significantly to the overall research design, analysis, credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability of my findings.

Peer Debriefings

In several meetings throughout data analysis, I systematically discussed emerging findings, themes, and questions with Julie Dangel, Ph.D., the chair of my committee who is an established qualitative researcher and my peer coder/debriefer, Ani. Dr. Dangel asked questions and reviewed my coding manuals, category charts, and findings. By engaging in peer debriefs, I was forced to rely on the data and not my own researcher bias that could have led me to conclusions that were not found in the data. By explaining and discussing my data, coding categories, and emergent findings, I opened my analysis up to critique and alternative explanations that I might have overlooked. This external examination forced me to provide examples, details, and justifications for suppositions or findings I claimed.

Audit Trail

Throughout data collection and analysis, I maintained an audit trail that described in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the investigation in order to show transferability and the trustworthiness of my qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Merriam, 2001). All methods and changes in plans during the research process were described in detail with their

justifications. All data was collected, transcribed and managed in both a hard copy locked, file box and soft copy database in the researcher's office. A chain of evidence (Yin, 2003) that includes the details and documents of the case study database (documents, interviews, observations) and the specific circumstances of each data source and its collection was noted in detail and updated with each data source collected. Data were documented and collected in conjunction with the data collection timeline, methods, and protocols, to ensure the procedures were followed as outlined as closely as possible. However, adjustments to the timeline and methods were necessary in response to the research context of each participant and are explained in detail in the audit trail and throughout Chapter three.

Considerations and Limitations

As with all research, there are limitations to this study. First, the findings from these two case studies cannot be generalized to how culturally relevant teaching or scripted programs are being defined and/or implemented by novice, Black, Teach For America teachers in our nation's urban classrooms. Second, this study is bounded by time (four months at the end of the 2010 school year), and context (two African American teachers, two schools/classrooms, one TFA alternative certification program, one urban school district, and one White researcher). Third, as a doctoral student and instructor immersed in culturally relevant literature and pedagogy, my experiences and constructions of these concepts are necessary to consider in defining, collecting, analyzing, and writing up the case study report. To help manage these subjectivities, I have engaged in writing reflective memos, member checks, peer coding, and peer debriefs to support the trustworthiness of this study and its findings.

Finally, as a White researcher who was a Carter University instructor and supervisor, I was aware of the potential issues within the research context in terms of perceived power and positionality as I studied the practice of Black teachers who attended Carter University and taught in schools with mostly Black students. Banks (1998, p. 5) highlights that we all have many memberships within a variety of cultural communities where our lived experiences and realities are “mediated by the interaction of a complex set of status variables, such as gender, social class, age, political affiliation, religion, and region.” While Dee and Fiona may have perceived me as an ‘outsider’ in some regards, there were other variables, such as gender, alternative certification status, multicultural educator, and urban school teacher, that also allowed them to see me as an ‘insider’. In terms of power, a recent body of literature demonstrates the inequities present in most aspects of life, including research where “inequities are framed in terms of power-based relationships between the researcher and the researched” (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamed, 2001, p. 412). These inherent “power-based dynamics” are something not only to be astutely aware of during the research process, but also something to be negotiated (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 413). However, Dee and Fiona negotiated this power by dictating interview days, times, and spaces as well as other data collection. Additionally, I gave them their participant narratives and findings to read and provide feedback, so they could challenge or elaborate on how I represented them and their teaching. I also used their voices to tell the story as often as possible throughout the findings. Merriam et.al., (2001) suggest that “what an insider ‘sees’ and ‘understands’ will be different from, but as valid as what an outsider

understands” (p.415). Nonetheless, it is necessary to consider these constructs and their possible influences on this study.

Summary

Chapter 3 explained and described the research design and methodology for this qualitative investigation of how two, novice, Black, Teach For America teachers with an espoused culturally relevant teaching framework implement a scripted literacy program. It holistically described the larger researcher context and the individual school settings of both participants. Specifics on participant sampling, data sources, and methods were outlined including changes to the original research proposal, IRB, and data to be collected. Each instrument and data source was described in detail followed by a detailed explanation of the within case and cross-case analysis. Details explaining the numerous steps taken to support the trustworthiness of this study were an important part of this chapter. Finally, limitations and considerations for this study were outlined with the corresponding steps taken to limit their impact on the findings. The next chapter will discuss the findings resulting from within-case analysis and cross-case analysis.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS: CROSS-CASE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

In this qualitative multiple case study, I investigated the question, *How do novice teachers prepared with a culturally relevant teaching framework implement a scripted literacy program?* This overarching question required supporting questions to guide the research process in order to fully understand and explore the context, participants, and intersections of multiple constructs. The guiding questions for this study were: (a) *What culturally relevant strategies, resources, activities, and assignments do novice teachers implement during scripted literacy instruction;* (b) *What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding culturally relevant teaching during literacy instruction?;* (c) *What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding the use of scripted programs during literacy instruction?;* (d) *How does scripted curriculum influence the identity of a novice teacher?;* and (e) *What larger contextual factors in the educational milieu influence the implementation of culturally relevant literacy instruction?*

Two participants, Dee and Fiona, were chosen purposefully as the two cases to investigate these questions as they showed evidence of and espoused a culturally relevant teaching ideology during their alternative teacher certification program. Dee and Fiona were first and second year Teach For America educators who were teaching fourth grade in two high poverty, urban elementary schools that used the Success for All scripted literacy program. Multiple data sources were collected over a three-month period. Aggregated, salient themes emerged from careful analysis with each theme cutting across

a minimum of three data sources for each participant. The themes, subthemes, categories, and supporting data from participants' within-case analysis were then used to compare and contrast the cases during cross-case analysis. This chapter presents the findings from cross-case and within-case analysis. Throughout this chapter, exemplar quotes from the participants' raw data provide the necessary details and voice to support each theme, subtheme, and category. In addition, vignettes for Dee and Fiona have been written to "provide meaning, cohesion, and color" to the findings (Ely, 1991, p.154). When possible, these vignettes have used the participants' and students' actual words, and the vignettes are gleaned and anchored in data from repeated observations of events in their classrooms (Ely, 1991). These vignettes are grounded in the observation data for both Dee and Fiona and represent findings from their within case analysis which will be outlined in this chapter.

Figure 2 below shows a visual display (Miles & Huberman, 1984) of the major constructs, themes, and relationships found throughout the research context and data analysis.

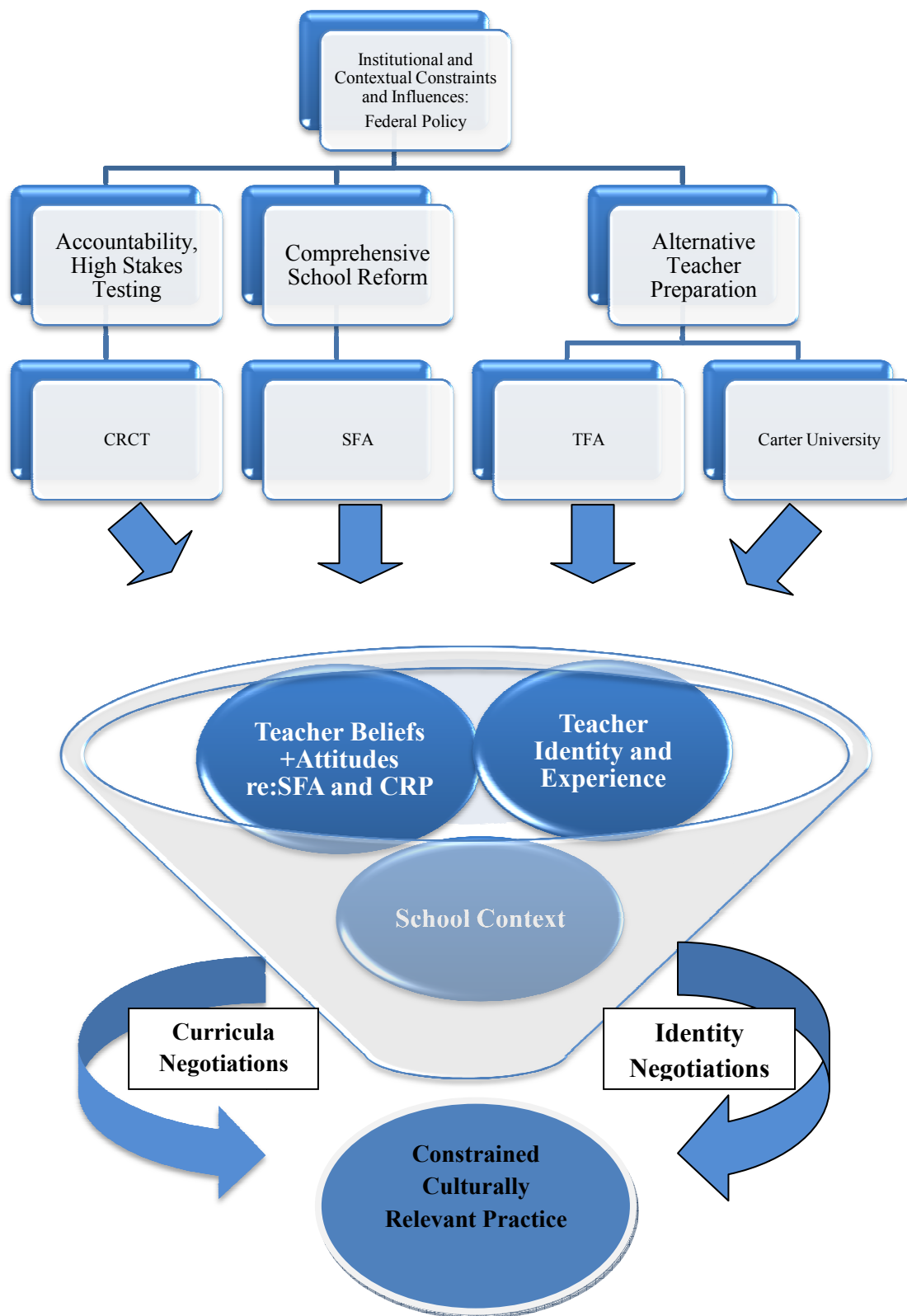


Figure 2. Visual Display and Road Map for Cross-Case Similarities.

Fiona's Vignette

It is a warm spring day in the last few weeks of school. Outside in the hallway, kids and teachers are heard yelling, talking, laughing, and walking around. As the kids enter Fiona's classroom, they individually greet Fiona with a smile and a "Hey, Ms. Fiona" or "Mornin', "Ms. Fiona". She smiles a big, toothy, warm smile and greets them all individually by name. A few of them put their backpacks in the hallway area, and although it is warm, several of the students still wear their jackets inside. As they go to their assigned seats, LeRoi (pseudonym) puts his head down on his desk and Trashawn (pseudonym) makes fun of the student next to him. Ms Fiona walks over to LeRoi and kneels down next to him. She quietly asks him, "What's the matter, LeRoi?" He mumbles, "My eye hurts." All the while, Fiona is rubbing his back gently and talking softly and kindly to him. "May I see your eye, please?" He reluctantly lifts his head up and removes his hand from his eye. She says, "Oh, I see why it hurts. It looks like there is a cut on it. I think you should go to the nurse, what do you think?" He nods and puts his hand back over his eye and leaves for the nurse's office. She then turns to Trashawn and says, "Hi Trashawn, how are you today?" He replies grumpily that he is mad. She goes over to his desk and kneels down with her arms folded on his desk and her chin resting on her arms. "Would you like to tell me what's wrong?" He starts to say something, and then shakes his head no. She says, "Ok, I respect that. I'm here if you would like to talk about it. What do you need to do, so you won't take your anger out on your classmates today?" He scowls and then says, "Can I move my desk today?" She replies, "I think that is a mature and wise decision." She gets up and he moves his desk by himself. At first, he

sits there still scowling, but then he slowly gets out his morning work and begins his assignment.

As the other students filter in and sit down, she holds up a book for the children to see. "I'm really excited about this book! Hurry and finish your morning work, so we can start reading and discussing. You guys are going to like this one." "Hey, that's the same author that wrote the other book we read!" exclaimed Mark. "Yep, it sure is. Good noticing, Mark!" replied Fiona smiling. He smiles and returns to his work. When he finishes, he asks Fiona if he can look through the book, while they are waiting. "Of course!" she says, passing him the book. "OK, everyone, one more minute on morning work." The students put away their assignments. She asks, "Do you want to sit at your desks or gather on the carpet?" "Carpet!" they shout in unison. "Ok, let's move the desks. Ladies, if you have a skirt on, you can sit at a desk." All of the students gather in the front and Devon gets her a chair. She says, "Thank you, Devon. I appreciate you getting my chair for me", and smiles at him. He smiles back and says, "Your welcome." She shows the students the book cover and asks, "Look at this picture, what do see?" "Feet!" many respond. "Ok, tell me more about the feet." "Small", says Ann. "Big", says Vincent. "Brown, white, and black", says David. "Ok, keep going. Look at the title; what do you think this book is going to be about?" asks Fiona. Mark answers, "Marching during the Civil Rights Movement." "Protesting back in the day," replies Tonia. "Ok. Why do you think that? And what does 'back in the day' mean for this story?" "Cuz, the Civil Rights Movement, they had marches and protests and it was in the 1800s." "Well, let's try the 1900s." "1950s?" Ok, yes, in the mid 1950s. Ok, Children of the Civil Rights Movement by Paula Shelton." She reads aloud the book, pausing and asking questions or connecting

the book to their community and lives, “What do you think this picture is about? How were things different in the North and South during this time? Why? Do anyone of you have someone you call Aunt or Uncle even though you aren’t related by blood? Selma and Montgomery are cities in what state? Isn’t your dad from Alabama? Has he been to Selma? Can you find out? She continues reading and then says, “Here the author is talking about Robert Young and Ralph Abernathy. What do you know about these men? Yes, we did read a book by Andrew Young’s daughter. Yes, there are hallways in our school and streets in our cities named after them. These streets, places, and people are very real and a rich part of our history. All the photos in this book are of famous people.” She continues reading and then stops. “Can you imagine that? You’re standing up for yourself and people and injustice...even marching peacefully, and you get put in jail! Now my generation, we are passing the baton, we pass it to YOU! It’s up to you guys to do something!”

“Hey that’s a figure of speech!” announced LeRoi. “Yes, it is a figure of speech!” affirmed Fiona. She continued, “Now, I want you to write a reflection on this book. There aren’t too many boundaries. Write what you are thinking about this story. I do want to know how are you feeling about the baton being passed on to you... what are you are fighting for? What is going on in the world that is something you will stand up for by saying or doing something, protesting, or marching? I want you to think, this is what I believe in, and I will work to make sure it is done in my life time.” Fiona begins to walk around the room and talking with several students about their individual passions.

Dee's Vignette

Ok, this morning I'm going to do one of the SFA activities with some modifications, change the vocab activities, and definitely add some more engaging and relevant questions to the script. I'll switch the title to something more interesting and add their names in when I can. Hopefully no one is coming to observe me today. If they do, I'll just read it word for word and forget everything I planned. Ha. Gotta do what I gotta do for now; especially if they're watching. It'll be better later on today when I get to do guided reading, centers, and my read alouds during language arts. That will be when everything comes together, and I can really teach. That's when I make a difference and fill in the gaps. That's what they need and like. Maybe I can add in that Ain't I a Woman in Social Studies and Language Arts, so they can translate it themselves in English and discuss in Social Studies. Yeah, that's what I'll do.

Elaine interrupts my thinking, "Are we having SFA today?"

"Yes, we have SFA every day," I answer.

I pretend the groans from the class don't bother me, but I hate that half my class leaves for my reading instruction, and I'm still accountable for their reading. I want to groan, too, but I smile instead and say, "We'll do some cool stuff later."

Bell rings. "Ok, put your Obama or Harriet Tubman report away and get to your SFA class quickly. My class, get your SFA stuff out."

Ok, back to business. Let's see, is my lesson up on the Promethian board? Check. Is my SFA bulletin board updated? Check. Is the SFA door sign updated? Check. Do I have the script? Check. Do the kids have their role cards and cooperation point trackers

out? Check. Are their books and graphic organizers out? Check. Ok, here we go. Let's see what day we are on..

“Ok, vocab. Who can give me a sentence for the word ‘glance’?”

Ruth says, “When I pass by the man at the store, he gave me a second glance.”

“Ok, good use of the word ‘glance’. Who has another sentence using a vocab word?” I think they have this, let's move on, I think to myself.

“Alright let's keep movin’. Let's see what we're suppose to do. We just took a story test yesterday. The first day we talked about communicating in the past and today. What is the skill we have been working on? (silence) The skill?”

“Comparing and contrasting”, says Ruth finally

“Good...can you explain what compares means? Can you remind me what contrast means? Good. You can use your graphic organizer if you can't remember. Can you remind me some ways they used to communicate?”

I hear, “ Messages.”

“Text messages?” I ask slyly?

“Naw, like letters.”

“Telegraphs,” said Derek.

Good, they remember.

“Computer.”

“They did? They had computers back then? Can you check that?”

Deidra pulls out her text to prove her answer to me.

“What are some ways today?”

I hear a chorus of, “Blue tooth!” , “Computers”, “Email”, “Cell phone”. Alright, they have this.

“What else did we talk about in the story? Good, mass and personal communication. This is all review about what we learned about this week. What does “reliable” mean? How can we figure out if a source is reliable?”

“Reliable sources are like, newspapers, books, magazines”, explains Joe.

Ok, we have to be very careful about opinions We want ones that are studied and written by experts, not just anybody. How many times do you hear information about rappers and stuff that isn’t true.

“All the time!”

“Today in Adventures in Writing, we are going to write about whether phones should be installed in the classroom. What kind of writing does this remind you of that we’ve worked on this year? Good, persuasive. Ok, someone else read the script, my voice is tired. Thank you, Lisa.”

“Now, let’s look at the scoring guide to make sure we know what we need to include. Someone tell me what you need and how many points you get.”

“Ok, now think with your group..think pair share...think what you feel about the topic...think by yourself why or why not telephones should be allowed in classrooms. Now talk you’re your partner.

“Twenty cooperation points to Elaine’s group.”

“I wrote a T chart for this topic on the Promethian Board. You do it, too. Should/Should Not. Let’s share some of our ideas. While I’m writing them on the board, you can copy.”

Ok, what should we write in the “should” column?

“In case of emergency.” “If someone robs you with a gun.” “For safety reasons.”

“Contact parents.” “Internet.” “To have mom bring clothes for PE or afterschool.”

Ok, Should not reasons? Kids might play on the phone.” “Germs on the phone.”

“Students saying profanity.” “Phone can be distractin’ and like the teacher is on the phone instead of teachin’!”

“Yeah! When it rings..wouldn’t it interrupt our class if Ruth’s mom wants to bring fruit and snacks for her, so she calls me during Science to tell me that, or my mom, remember my mom, from Boston calls because she misses me?” I glance up at the time. Ok, we gotta hurry.

“Ok, what do we need when we are writing a good paragraph. You can just yell it out... good.”

“Ok, go ahead and get started, I’m going to walk around and help you.”

“Overall, this is a great paragraph, John just a few suggestions.”

“I like how you are quietly working, individually, that’s 20 cooperation points for all the groups.”

Summary of Findings

The three major themes found in cross-case analysis were institutional constraints and influences, negotiations, and constrained culturally relevant teaching. The overarching theme found in all data sources was the profound role of institutional and contextual constraints and influences to limit, constrain, and thus shape the participants’ ability to enact culturally relevant teaching. These institutional and contextual constraints and influences stemmed from two federal policies: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

(NCLB) and the Comprehensive School Reform Act of 1997 (CSRA) and are represented in the top half of the figure below. These policies manifested into a context of constraints and influences including, (a) high stakes testing and accountability measures in the form of the CRCT, (b) comprehensive school reform in the model of Success for All (SFA), (c) the definition of highly qualified teachers that included recommending and funding Teach For America, and (d) the proliferation of alternative certification university programs. These policies and the way they have manifested in the educational milieu, influenced and mixed with Dee's and Fiona's students, school context, educational beliefs, attitudes, and identities (See middle of Figure 2) to result in constrained culturally relevant teaching practices. As such, *despite* and *because of* these constraints and influences, the data showed Dee and Fiona actively negotiated their culturally relevant beliefs and identities and made curricular decisions based on these negotiations. These negotiations stemmed from the constraints and influences and the competing roles and responsibilities they require, which forced the participants to negotiate and navigate the seemingly dichotomous requirements and tensions of SFA with the culturally relevant teaching they espoused. Because of these constraints, influences, and negotiations, a third theme of constrained culturally relevant practice emerged that described the context of how culturally relevant teaching was defined, constructed, and manifested in their classrooms. This is shown in the last part of the figure labeled "Constrained Culturally Relevant Practice". Understandably, each theme was directly related, interconnected, and overlapped by the others.

Institutional and Contextual Constraints and Influences

The institutional and contextual constraints and influences that limited the participants' culturally relevant teaching stemmed from federal legislation that created a teaching context rich in accountability, high stakes testing pressure, school reform, and alternatively certified "highly qualified" teachers like the two TFA participants. This section starts by detailing the role of NCLB testing pressure and accountability on the (a) context and climate of their schools and (b) the school-wide or classroom level curriculum decisions. The second part of this section demonstrates how NCLB created the contextual constraints and influences on these participants that stemmed from Teach For America. These included (a) defining these participants as highly qualified, (b) requiring these TFA teachers to teach in urban schools that happened to use a scripted literacy program, and (c) establishing TFA as a stakeholder that valued data as teaching. Lastly, this section details the role of the Comprehensive School Reform Act that manifests itself as the highly prescriptive Success for All in both participants' schools. As such, the participants were constrained by, the script itself, their lack of autonomy and heavy surveillance and monitoring that constrained their teaching. All of these constraints and influences outlined above are detailed below.

Institutional Constraint: NCLB Accountability and Testing

Influences School Climate

Accountability pressures and measures using high stakes testing scores for both schools were extremely high as these schools fought to maintain their presence on the list of schools that met the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures. Freedom School System was also one of many school systems embroiled in a high stakes testing

scandal that created an added layer of stress for all the schools and their faculty. Plagued by high teacher and student turnover, faculty, staff, and students were always under pressure to meet the standards on state tests. This was demonstrated throughout various data sources including, (a) a picture analysis assignment that both participants did during testing time that showed all of the school bulletin boards highlighting the tests, (b) observation data that showed a principal singing songs about the CRCT on the intercom, (c) reported pep rallies and assemblies prior to the test, and (d) several interview and debrief transcripts that showed “that's what they were interested in, or valued at the end of the day... test scores {laughs}”(I2D). Both participants reported the extreme value that was placed on high test scores by the district and administration. However, they felt the administration was not to blame because they knew the pressure their respective principals were under from the district and state. As Dee said:

I think they definitely, they [administration] value the kids (pause) succeeding, but at the end of it, it's also, just like we have to answer to them, they have people they have to answer to as well. So, a lot of the things that were implemented, you know, wasn't just coming from them, it was coming from higher up, so (pause) I definitely saw that. (I2D)

Fiona also acknowledged the role of the top down mandates coming from the district and not her administrators specifically, “I don't know what she goes through or what she hears on the phone or what kind of letters she is getting, so it's easy for me to judge her and what she does. But I know she has a good heart. She loves these kids (I2F).

Regardless of blame, the role of testing in the participants' contexts inevitably led to the role of testing in school wide and classroom specific curricular decisions.

Institutional Constraint: NCLB Accountability and Testing

Influence Curricular Decisions

The climate of accountability and high stakes testing resulted in both school wide and classroom curriculum decisions before, during, and after testing. Fiona aptly put that everything was “very geared towards um, what they're gonna have to do on the CRCT” (Deb6F). This testing pressure led to a feeling of doing “important things that you want to do” after testing because it’s hard to “squeeze it all in”, which they both acknowledged meant culturally relevant teaching took a back seat. Dee said in her second interview that in the month prior to testing, everything was “VERY like drill, drill, drill kind of time” and “everything was on the CRCT, like the whole schedule of the school changed.” She explained that “they were sending me paperwork every week, like your class, they didn't do as well on this standard, so you need to go back on that, so kinda like drill, drill, drill.” Fiona echoed the same for her school saying in the month prior to testing, “We drilled a LOT...there was a lot of test prep” (I2F). This focus on high stakes testing was felt by both participants, but they tried to take a different approach than that of their colleagues and grade level teachers, who were giving only worksheets and practice tests to review. Fiona reported doing test prep with centers, games, re-teaching activities, and practice tests. Dee reviewed, but reported she did so only in fun and engaging ways using games like Password, Charades, Jeopardy, and Matching. She was later commended by the principal in a faculty meeting for this decision, which made her proud of her personal decision to step outside the box and attempt to resist the drilling atmosphere and influence of testing that was a part of many educators’ curricular decisions. By doing so, she was explicitly going against what the rest of her grade level was doing for test preparation, which she acknowledged made her nervous at first.

Fiona explained that she thought SFA was chosen to improve student achievement on test scores, but, both participants believed strongly that SFA did not align with the standards or high stakes tests. Fiona revealed that testing influenced school-wide curricular decisions when she said:

It [SFA] doesn't happen honestly towards testing time because I don't know that the two are aligned. I don't even know that the standards or that SFA is aligned as closely with the standards as teachers would like them to be. Um and because the test is aligned to the standards, therefore SFA is not viewed to be aligned with the test. So when you are asking us to take an hour and a half out of our day to teach SFA before testing, it does not happen in this building. It might or it will if we have a visit, but other than that we're teaching them how to um, like context clues, we're teaching them testing strategies. we're teaching them how to go through the passage and finding the answer. Underlining, eliminating, like all those things are what we're teaching at that time not SFA. (I1F)

Likewise, in Dee's school, she reported that SFA changed from its normal 90 minutes to just 60 minutes, and then it was eliminated for a period of time as a focus on testing took over the school curricula and time schedule. Fiona explained that in her school, SFA was put to the side in the weeks prior to testing and did not necessarily continue after testing because "I think the staff doesn't value SFA". She admitted, "It's kind of like, we'll do it as long as you make us, but if you don't make us, we're not going to do it. And I think it's important to know that it doesn't mean that literacy instruction wasn't happening um, it just means that it wasn't happening with SFA" (Deb1F). This section details the significant role and influence that testing played in the climate of the school and the influence on curricular decisions made at the school and classroom level.

*Institutional Influence: NCLB and the Role of TFA in Context
and Curriculum Decisions*

Another consequence of federal policy that heavily contributed to this multifaceted context and three themes of constraints, influences, negotiations, and nature

of culturally relevant teaching, was the defining and requiring of a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom by No Child Left Behind. As such, these two Teach For America corps members who had only five weeks of teacher training before they get their own classroom of students, were defined and deemed “highly qualified” by No Child Left Behind legislation. As such, they had multiple stakeholders invested in their teaching practices during the first year especially. These stakeholders included their TFA program directors, TFA/Carter University coaches and instructors, and the SFA facilitators who were observing their practice. Dee and Fiona’s very participation in this system and alternative certification program played a significant role in their contextual factors, curricular and identity negotiations, and classroom practice.

In terms of TFA’s role in their context, both participants were placed in high poverty, urban schools that used the scripted program, SFA. As TFA teachers with very limited preparation in pedagogy or content knowledge, the SFA literacy script was initially welcomed by both participants. As Dee admitted, “The first week or two weeks of school, I read that bad boy front to back...but basically the first two weeks of school I had no idea what I was doing, um, so they just told me to go in there and do it, and that’s exactly what I did (Deb5D). Fiona echoed this sentiment, “As a new teacher, I have to say that I really didn’t mind having the script, I probably actually preferred it. Just because I didn’t really feel like I knew what I was doing” (Deb7F). She disclosed that she felt like:

I really didn't have much else to go on. Even with what all I learned at the Institute for TFA, like I didn't know how at the time to couple that with SFA, so I was like ok, SFA is what I have to do with my job, so that's what I'm going to do. So it kind of identified my reading practices as a teacher (11F).

Because of this uncertainty and limited preparation stemming from their role and identity as novice TFA educators, both participants were left to negotiate curricular decisions surrounding what they were learning about culturally relevant teaching at Carter University, with their very real and immediate need of teaching reading for the first time with only a few weeks of preparation. The script proved to be a necessity at first, and then turned into a helpful “guideline” and “map” that “pointed them in the right direction” while they were gaining the confidence, content, and pedagogy they needed to teach literacy as alternatively certified teachers. As both participants moved through their first year of teaching, they reported learning how to negotiate better the SFA requirements of their schools and their desire to teach with the more culturally relevant lens that was encouraged in their Carter University classes. Dee reported being “nervous” about some of her decisions that she made as a first year TFA teacher when they were different than her colleagues because “you don't wanna rock the boat too much, especially as a first year teacher” (I2D). The preceding evidence clearly shows that the participants’ membership role in TFA explicitly and implicitly played a significant role in the context of both participants as well as a salient theme of curricular negotiations.

The third way TFA played a role in the context and curricular decisions of the participants, was through the data requirements valued by TFA that the participants were supposed to measure and track. Therefore, TFA Program Directors acted as another stakeholder that played a role in Dee and Fiona’s curricular decisions because “they wanna see data basically (I2D)” that purported to measure the literacy and math achievement of the participants’ students. Hence, the participants were required to plan, teach, collect data, and report their students’ mastery of the standards using teacher made

tests. Dee explained further, “The goal was 80 percent mastery per student overall, um, you want 80 percent of your students to master, and then individually, you want your students to master 80 percent of the standards” (I2D). Fiona explained that she did not really understand the intense focus on collecting data until the end of her first year:

TFA definitely valued data. And I came to understand that toward the end of my first year. And I was kind of like Why? I don’t understand the importance of tracking and all of this and I was like oh my gosh. Why is my PD so crazy about this and hounding me? But then, our mission, we have to have the data to support what we’re doing. So that’s the first thing. The second thing is that in order to move the students, you have to know where they are and you have to know the checkpoints. And you have to know the progress monitoring. In addition to giving them the data and turning it in. It was to teach us how to become effective teachers. How to plan according to the data. How to plan lessons according to the assessments and just how to be an effective teacher. ..it is easy as a teacher to just sometimes say, “I feel like they are getting it” or “they *look* like they are getting it, but you don’t know unless you have data to back it up. And in most other professions they use data to drive what they do, so why shouldn’t teaching be the same? (I2F)

Meanwhile, TFA/CU instructors were asking them to teach in “culturally relevant ways” and “teach the students holistically” by making connections to their lives. Additionally, they also had the SFA facilitators observing their practice, since they were new TFA teachers implementing the script. These preceding paragraphs demonstrate the role of TFA in the context of the participants and the stakeholders involved that influenced their curricular decisions and practice.

Institutional Constraint: CSRA, NCLB, and SFA

Another institutional and contextual constraint resulted from the Comprehensive School Reform Act of 1997 that provided funds for schools to implement one of hundreds of school reforms. Then, with the passing of NCLB, legislation linked the use of CSRA funds and Title I funding for the purchase and implementation of scientifically based reforms, such as Success for All. As such, both schools where Dee and Fiona taught

chose one of eleven possible comprehensive school reform models (CSRs) allowed by Freedom School System. Requiring CSRs at the federal and district level in exchange for federal funding, led to the institutional and contextual constraints and influences realized in the day-to-day classroom practice and curricula of Dee and Fiona, which was heavily regulated and regimented by Success for All. As Fiona said, “It makes me sad because it's not about the kids. It's about the money, the other stakeholders, it's whoever it's about, but it's not about the kids” (I1F). The three most prevalent constraints due to SFA were the script itself, lack of autonomy for a SFA instructional period, and surveillance

Institutional Constraint: SFA Script

The SFA teacher manual and script was itself, a major constraint on the curricular decisions and classroom practice as it dictated what literacy content was taught, how it was taught, and how the literacy content was assessed. This included the vocabulary words learned, reading skill, questions, reading activities, assignments, and story assessments. Fiona described the script and how it influenced her planning and practice, “I feel restricted and partly, that's partly my fault I guess because I could do a lot more in terms of making it work for my kids, but it's a little bit difficult just to go around what is already set than it is just to create what I would really like to do. So I don't think I'm being as effective as I could be” (I1F). While the script itself was a major constraint, the entire SFA period was structured around the premise that the teacher did not make decisions around literacy during the 90 minutes of SFA or anything regarding SFA.

Institutional Constraint: SFA Structures and the Lack of Autonomy

The data revealed that the participants had little to no voice in the content, sequence, skills, topics, or books chosen for their reading instruction that lasted 90

minutes. When asked how she chose the books and skills for reading instruction, Dee responded in a matter of fact tone, “I don't. They are just given to me and sometimes they're just random, like one time it's questioning and the next week it's inferences and then the next week it might be metaphors and then back to questioning” (I1D). The SFA facilitator chose all of books, skills, and content for her. Fiona had a limited but inconsistent voice in the books and skills she used, as she described her varying autonomy, “Last year we were able to choose all year. This year we started out being able to choose, um, but beginning around the second semester, so right after Christmas, the ILS brought the books to us” (I1F). The last two weeks of school, Fiona was allowed to choose her SFA book. In an observation debrief, Dee described how SFA grading was another constraint within the SFA structures:

Because you're SUPPOSED to be able to give any points, but there is definitely a stigma attached to anyone who gives less than 70 for those points, so you just won't see people giving students less than a 70, generally you see them giving, well actually, no you are only allowed to give it, I say there's just a stigma attached to it, but actually in the sheet where you have to plug in grades, it says you're only allowed to give 80, 90, 100. (Deb2D)

The use of SFA as implemented by these schools placed a major constraint on the participants' autonomy and curricular decisions. As such, the participants learned to actively negotiate these constraint and decisions. This theme will be explored in detail in a subsequent section that describes how both participants negotiated the SFA script and enacted culturally relevant teaching.

Grouping across grade levels according to their quarterly SFA assessments also contributed to the lack of autonomy; this was built into the structure of the SFA program. This lack of autonomy varied by degree across the cases as Fiona's grade level decided not to strictly adhere to these cross-grade level groups. This resulted in Fiona teaching all

of her homeroom students except two, while I observed. This grade level and individual level decision-making created its own unique challenge for Fiona who struggled with situations when individual teachers decided to do or not do SFA instead of that decision being made by the administration for the whole school. She explained:

Um, it's difficult because then you have the situation where you're doing your job and like what your kids are getting is being determined on, I'm sorry, is being determined by um, what another teacher decides or doesn't decide to do. So in this case I was having SFA, Boyd (pseudonym) is not on everybody else's SFA level in the classroom, so it, it wouldn't be even right for me to expect him to stay in the classroom and be ok with doing the work because it was over his head, it was not on his level, so he was frustrated. However, I couldn't send him to his classroom because his SFA teacher was not having SFA. (Deb3F)

However, the majority of Dee's students did leave her classroom during SFA instruction. She described her frustrations with this constraint on her teaching in both her initial interview and an observation debrief:

A lot of my students go to the third grade hall and I have one student that is on 5th grade level, and so it's just..um it was hard for me at the beginning of the year, because it's like ok, I'm responsible for my students ya know their names are on my roll and I'm going to be responsible for them at the end of the year and I don't even have them during reading. (I1D)

I don't necessarily know what the other teachers are doing with my students in the other classes. There are some teachers who just have the students read the whole class, and that would definitely hurt my students. . . . because you don't necessarily know what is going on in the other SFA classrooms. (Deb5D)

SFA's requirement of cross-grade grouping was a major constraint on Dee's practice and was instrumental in her curricular decisions and negotiations that are discussed in detail in a subsequent section.

Institutional Constraint: Enforcing SFA Fidelity through Surveillance

Both participants were influenced explicitly and implicitly by the monitoring and observations of SFA facilitators and observers. These observations were to see “mainly that we’re following the script and executing the script to fidelity” (I2F). However, this level of implementation, fidelity, and monitoring varied in the two contexts and degree of constraint. While Fiona was keenly aware of her responsibility to implement the script verbatim when SFA observers or her administration were present, it was supposed to be the last year of SFA at her school, and she felt significantly less pressure than Dee reported. Interestingly, although the teachers were under the impression it was their last year, Fiona later reported that, “Our principal said we could have looked at a new reform this year, but we have to prove that we are doing it to fidelity before we can ask to have a new reform” (I2F). Fiona knew what she had to do if people were watching, but also knew that many teachers in her school were “not valuing” or implementing SFA scripts during their literacy. She also explained that her first year of teaching she was heavily observed and monitored to see if she was using the script correctly, but it was not an issue as much her second year. Dee reported, “Certain times of the year they really have you on observations and if you're not doing exactly what they say, like they'll look at the script and if you are not exactly where you are suppose to be they mark you down for um, the observation (I1D). The varying degrees of surveillance were contextual factors and constraints on Dee and Fiona that resulted in negotiations, curricular decisions, and nature of culturally relevant teaching during SFA. This will be highlighted in more detail later in this chapter..

The preceding section detailed the institutional and contextual constraints and influences, that played a significant role for both Dee and Fiona. The next section will

detail an outcome of these constraints and influences as both participants actively negotiated these restrictions with their desire to be culturally relevant teachers. These negotiations took two different forms. The first required they explicitly negotiate how they used the SFA script, which by itself, limited their curricular decisions and abilities to implement culturally relevant teaching. The second type of negotiation was that of identity negotiation and was more implicit throughout the data sources. The following section chronicles the second major theme of negotiations.

Negotiations: Beliefs, Curriculum, and Identity

A second theme that emerged across the data sources of both Dee and Fiona was that of negotiating competing and sometimes contradictory beliefs, curriculum, and expectations. The first type of negotiation involved curricular negotiations, which stemmed from the participants' beliefs and attitudes regarding Success for All that conflicted with their beliefs and desire to teach in culturally relevant ways as emphasized in their TFA program. As such, the most prevalent and explicit negotiations were those of their curricular decisions *within* Success for All and *because of* Success for All. These negotiations took the form of supplementing the script and skipping parts of the SFA script, while the latter results usually manifested outside of SFA time. However, all of these negotiations and their curricular outcomes stemmed from their contradictory beliefs and attitudes in relation to SFA and CRT. The second type of negotiation was identity negotiation and was more implicit across the data sources, as the multiple identities of these participants were constructed and challenged by contextual constraints like SFA and TFA, but also by their status and desire to be culturally relevant teachers. These

contextual constraints required them to negotiate and renegotiate the competing demands, roles, responsibilities that came with each role.

Beliefs, Attitudes, Identity, and Curricular Negotiations:

Script (In)fidelity by Supplementing

A significant part of the negotiations stemmed from Dee and Fiona wanting and needing to supplement SFA for two reasons. Firstly and foremost, they believed that SFA was not rigorous enough. Secondly, they believed the SFA script and books were decontextualized and not relevant to their students' lives, as discussed in greater detail below. Dee said in her first interview, "I look at the curriculum and the things that I'm given. I try to find a balance between doing what they tell me to do and then adding things that the kids relate to." However, when I asked her what advice she would give to someone in her position, her answer indicated that any negotiations she believed were needed still played a secondary role to the primacy of the scripted program, which was regulated by observations and surveillance that enforced fidelity. She said:

I would tell them to make sure they get the program down first. Understand what it is that they require of you. Exhibit what they require of you when they come in the beginning of the year for their observations. Master what it is that they tell you that you need to do, and then once you do that, you can start incorporating and adding in your own ideas. So don't try and go in there and say, 'No, I'm not going to use the script, I'm going to do what I want kind of thing.' Do what they tell you you have to do and then once you get that down pat and you can do their requirements, then you'll be able to do ya know, how do I say, like you'll be...you can hmmm let me see..once you get good at doing what they say, you can incorporate and infuse your own ideas but still do what they are asking you to do. So when they come in and observe you, you can still justify that you are doing XYZ then you can do that. But you want to make sure that you get down pat the requirements first. (Deb4D)

Both participants acknowledged that you had to know what to do first before you could add your ideas into the SFA period. Fiona explained that she tried to stick to the script in

the beginning of the year, but then she said she “saw no growth,” so she would “deviate from the script but I would keep it, keep it consistent with what the main idea that I was supposed to be teaching, but just challenging them a little bit more (Deb1F). These negotiations within SFA acknowledged their role and job to use the script. However, the following section shows the need for negotiations *because* of SFA.

Both participants adamantly believed and felt that SFA was not rigorous enough for their students, as Fiona complained, “Especially in fourth grade I feel like they should be reading more. Like when I say two pages, it's not like two novel like chapter book pages, it's like two pages...the print is usually pretty big” and “then they discuss Team Talk questions with their group. They write down answers to two of those, only two of those questions” (I1F). Similarly, Dee stated, “It needs to be supplemented because we have a long block, and I just think there is something really wrong with having an hour and a half reading block where kids only read 4 pages in the entire block (I1D). Fiona passionately agreed with this sentiment during interviews and debriefs:

I feel like students aren't reading enough. I feel like they, I mean I think that they aren't reading enough...It just doesn't seem rigorous enough for my students and where I want them to be. I feel like it's almost remedial in a sense and how, why am I giving this instruction to all my students when I expect them to perform at a higher level...It's that..it's because the expectation is too low. (I1F)

Because of this lack of rigor, evidence drawn from observations, debriefs, and interviews demonstrated that Dee and Fiona negotiated their beliefs and attitudes about the lack of rigor in SFA by supplementing the SFA script itself with many of their own critical thinking and higher order questions, which they felt were missing from the SFA script. Dee described the questioning during SFA in these terms, “I do not think they have enough practice with critical thinking. Um, they try to incorporate, ya know, one

question, but that's not enough. They need more practice every day in thinking beyond the book" (Deb5D). Fiona agreed with this lack of critical thinking and questioning in the script as she described her frustration:

Like, it's hard for them to like make stuff up and think creatively and use detail and color and things like that because I don't, that's not what they practice every day with SFA. Um, and reflection is another thing, um, that they don't practice. They don't practice reflecting on what they thought about the reading. It's just like, what happened in the story. So again you see it's very geared towards um, what they're gonna have to do on the CRCT, or what they're gonna have to do on a test. Like, tell me again what happened. It's just very basic and I feel like it doesn't encourage critical thinking, it doesn't encourage creative thinking outside of the box. (Deb6F)

Similarly, Fiona's SFA visual representation (Figure 3) and her description of it during her second interview, spoke volumes about her attitudes and beliefs about SFA. Her voice became much more serious than her normal laughter punctuated responses as she explained why she chose this dramatic visual representation:

I feel like the higher level thinking is sort of off limits for the kids I teach given the curriculum that we're given to use. So if the teacher does not go above and beyond and getting the kids to think critically and challenge their writing and reading, it won't happen if you just stick with the SFA curriculum. So I think those kinds of things are off limits for the students that I teach. (I2F)

This description of both participants believing and feeling SFA as not rigorous enough was evident in all of their data sources, including Dee's visual representation of SFA during literacy instruction. In regards to Figure 4, she said she believed, "SFA was a well-intentioned program that needed to be supplemented" (I2D).



Figure 3. Visual Representation: Fiona's Beliefs and Attitudes about SFA.



Figure 4. Visual Representation: Dee's Beliefs and Attitudes about SFA

These beliefs and attitudes regarding SFA were one reason they said they had to negotiate and supplement the script.

Beliefs, Attitudes, Identity, and Curricular Negotiations:

Script (In)fidelity by Skipping and Altering

Both participants reported that their use of the script changed over the year as they developed more confidence and knowledge about “how multifaceted literacy really is.”. This shift in confidence came from taking two literacy courses at Carter University as part of their certification. According to Grace, the syllabi, and the assignments, the courses were heavily focused on culturally relevant literacy strategies. As their knowledge and understanding of culturally relevant literacy grew, so did their desire to become culturally relevant teachers. They reported that their beliefs and attitudes about teaching literacy began to grow and change from following the script as teaching, to understanding the need to critically analyze text, question, and discuss literature. As they became more comfortable with the script they grew in their ability to supplement, skip, or alter the script when they were not being observed. Fiona recounted:

I followed the script exactly my first year mostly, most of my first year. Um, and I tend to follow it more exactly during the beginning of the year. It's just difficult when you see your kids not getting what they need. Um, and I think I follow it every year until I see ok, clearly it's not working, so then I go to something else. Like go to adapting it to what they need.
(Deb5F)

During this study, I observed Fiona and Dee supplementing the script with more culturally relevant examples, critical thinking questions, writing activities, and interesting short stories or poems at the end of the SFA time period. They also slightly changed or altered SFA assignments or the script wording to make it more interesting or relevant to the students as Fiona observed, “I think if you were going by the script some of the questions that would be relevant are not asked in the script. So if you're following the script strictly by the script, you might be missing out on really key important pieces for

students to hold onto” (I1F). This quote demonstrates Fiona’s newly developed understandings of connecting the curriculum to the students’ lives, which, according to her interview reflections was not in her original understanding of literacy when she began teaching. Their beliefs and attitudes about teaching literacy using a script originally stemmed from their novice status and lack of pedagogical content knowledge, which was evident in how grateful they were to have a guide, map, and scaffold. As their identity shifted with their new knowledge, so did their curricular decisions which allowed them to supplement, skip, delete, and alter the script.

Another way they implemented the script included deleting or skipping whole sections, questions, or activities. I observed this while following their teaching with the script in front of me, documenting when they made changes in the script. Fiona explained her rationale, “If I know that these vocabulary words they got on the second day, I’m not going to keep, I might not do all of the activities for vocabulary (I1F). A final way the participants altered and supplemented the script, came with “Day 6”. While SFA included a writing task for each day, the participants at both schools did not use the writing portion until Day 6. This school-based decision had teachers following only the reading portion on Days 1-5 and then Day 6 included the writing portion. This day was also seen as a time and space to “look at what we were learning about” and “create activities that were fun”, so “they can have a chance to do representation of or do activities related to their story in creative and different ways.” For instance, in this next quote, you can see how Dee again recognized that fidelity to the script and SFA requirements came first, but she used Day 6 as a time and space to create and choose based on her ideas and observations of her students and not just the decontextualized script.

. . . we basically get to make up activities because that gives me the most space um, it's important to do what you have to do and then you can incorporate what you think your students need and what you want to do. So I think that that is when I have the most time...like writing or doing different things that just cater to kids' learning styles and what might be important to them (Deb4D)

Beliefs, Attitudes, Identity, and Curricular Negotiations:

Supplementing and Integrating Literacy throughout Content Areas

Another way the participants negotiated their beliefs and attitudes about SFA regarding its lack of rigor and relevance to students, was teaching literacy throughout all of their content areas before and after SFA. As their understandings of the multifaceted nature of literacy grew, so did their desire to include literacy wherever they could throughout the day. Both participants reported including read alouds during Math, Social Studies, Language Arts, and Science, since they both said they were not able to integrate these subjects during SFA. In addition, Fiona required written reflections from her students throughout all of her content areas. Fiona also supplemented when she included literature circles during ELA. This need to supplement was compounded for Dee because she did not actually teach over half of her students reading during SFA, yet was accountable for their CRCT reading scores and literacy progress as measured by Teach For America data trackers. Consequently, Dee started to do guided reading groups and centers during her English Language Arts time, so that she could be sure all of her students were getting what she knew they needed. She described how she negotiated this constraint in the following quote:

I'm definitely responsible for them..and at first I was a little concerned like why am I going to be the one responsible, and I'm not even the one monitoring them, so that's why I took the responsibility to do extra during like ELA, or some kids I have them for tutoring, so I would make sure I was fitting those skills in there during that time or other blocks. (IID)

Dee also supplemented by tutoring many of her students several afternoons each week alongside students from her former college. While this was mandatory to do for one day, Dee did it two to three days a week.

The previous section illustrated the theme of negotiating their beliefs, attitudes, and identities with their curricular mandates. This next section details the theme of negotiating competing identities. This data was found implicitly throughout both participants' data and is discussed below. Another added data source that contributed to this section, was the interview conducted with Grace, the TFA instructor who worked with these two participants in several classes.

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Identity Negotiations: Competing Roles and Responsibilities.

The second type of negotiation was more implicit across the data sources, as the multiple professional identities of these novice TFA teachers were constructed, challenged, and negotiated. Their multiple professional identities were shifting as they were constructing competing beliefs and attitudes about SFA and CRP as they gained new knowledge about teaching and learning in their program at Carter University. These shifting identities included their, (a) distinction as TFA elite leaders; (b) status as novice teachers; (c) position as alternatively certified “highly qualified teachers”; (d) job as SFA script reader; and (e) role as culturally relevant pedagogue. These multiple identities required the participants to negotiate the competing demands that came with each role, so they compromised and renegotiated their developing identities over time.

Grace, the TFA instructor, coordinator, and coaching mentor described the tensions and struggles she saw daily in these participants and their TFA cohort members

as they began to teach while they were also learning to teach. Grace explained this identity negotiation and struggle in the following quote:

(They) navigate the social tensions of the micropolitical contexts of their schools and how they work with their own emotional rollercoaster as they go through the cognitive dissonances and emotional dissonances having particularly been people who are extraordinarily successful academically who have been seen and known as the knowers and the doers and the movers and the shakers and they realize that they don't, that they're not prepared to do this work... these students come with an understanding of themselves as a different type of creature. We are the committed. We are the bright. We are the capable. We are the few chosen ones. (IIG)

This identity negotiation was evident in the assignments, reflections, interviews, and debriefs of the participants. For instance, Dee fluctuated between the role of new teacher who “had no idea what I was doing” who “felt like I was a freshman in college all over again”, “overwhelmed”, and “lost in the dark” and her Teach For America leadership identity, which she referred to over four times in the data. She described this identity in an assignment, “I am a part of Teach For America, a special group of talented and determined individuals who will stop at nothing to make sure that their students succeed.” Fiona’s shifting and competing ideas were seen in comments like feeling “completely overwhelmed” yet “completely driven,” and “determined” during her first year and then “all over the spectrum”. Like so many new teachers, Fiona admitted, “I didn’t know how to finesse being a teacher yet, so I was at school as soon as it opened until it closed. Because I didn’t know the ins and outs of how to do things yet, it took me forever to do everything.” She felt relieved to have a fellow TFA corps member at her school to share her struggles and navigate their responsibilities and roles at their school, Carter University, and TFA. With their first and second years under their belts, Dee and Fiona reported feeling more confident in their ability to construct culturally relevant curriculum and negotiate the constraints of the SFA script.

This first type of identity negotiation was also complicated by a second identity negotiation, one between the culturally relevant teacher that was developed and nurtured through Carter University's preparation program and that of "robot" who reads a SFA script to teach their students. The identity of culturally relevant pedagogue challenged the participants to teach to and through the students' strengths and interests. This desire to be culturally relevant pedagogues was congruent with their desire to be part of the "movement" for educational equity and closing the achievement gap that was such a big part of the TFA mission. The role of culturally relevant pedagogue was in direct conflict with using the decontextualized SFA script that Dee described as a "teacher-proof guideline so that no one can mess up," and "it doesn't make you the best teacher." These competing roles, responsibilities, and expectations within these identities, required Dee and Fiona to negotiate, and renegotiate how these identities intersected with their educational beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning.

Identity Negotiations and Stakeholders

Grace described the intersection of these four identity negotiations as "a real crisis of identity for these people who are used to being so successful and are really not, not able to be and not really feeling like they have the autonomy or knowledge and sometimes the compassion to be." Furthermore, these negotiations of identity required Dee and Fiona to develop and display different and sometimes contradictory ideas and practices depending on who was observing their class, reading their assignments, or evaluating their teaching. Different practices and identities were valued by the different stakeholders that were involved in these teachers' lives including: (a) Teach For America program directors who "help them assess student growth numerically"; (b) Carter

University coaches who provided “guidance and support” to “specifically focus on things that I felt like I needed help with”; (c) the SFA facilitators who “look to make sure you are exactly where you are suppose to be” in the script; and (d) the Carter University professors who emphasized culturally relevant teaching practices and teaching “holistically”. This type of identity negotiation required that they understand each role and responsibility and demonstrate it for each stakeholder. Now finishing her second year, Fiona said in her final interview, “I feel like everybody’s just picking certain things to be concerned about, but it’s like if you just teach these kids and you love them, test scores will fall into place, observations won’t be an issue. None of that will be an issue when we do our job.” Both participants were negotiating their beliefs, attitudes, and teaching identities with other stakeholders involved in their practice. As such, they learned to negotiate and then demonstrate what each stakeholder valued.

Manifestations of Culturally Relevant Teaching

The third salient theme revealed in the data analysis, was how the participants defined and implemented culturally relevant teaching practices, resources, or assignments during SFA and outside of SFA. The script constrained the ways in which culturally relevant teaching was manifested during SFA because of how it spelled out the content and pedagogy for each book. However, because both participants believed SFA was not meeting their students’ needs, they carved out small but important spaces within that time frame that reached beyond the decontextualized script and into the lives of their students, while holding them to a higher and more rigorous expectation. These important spaces within and outside of SFA reflected Dee’s and Fiona’s beliefs and attitudes to teach in culturally relevant ways. I locate these specific culturally relevant efforts during and

outside of SFA within Ladson-Billings' framework of culturally relevant teaching tenets for several reasons. First, the alternative certification program at Carter University where Fiona and Dee attended, used this framework throughout their classes and mission. Second, both participants espoused these educational beliefs, and it was important to see if their theories and beliefs aligned with their practice. Third, organizing these findings within this framework allows us to see where theory-to-practice translates in the strongest and also the weakest ways. Fourth, the framework organizes and specifically answers several of the research questions that guided this study. Each tenet of Ladson-Billings' framework will be described briefly, followed by how Grace suggested the program met these tenets, followed by how Dee and Fiona enacted them in their classrooms and curricula.

As described earlier, both participants felt a strong need to supplement the SFA literacy script in culturally relevant ways as well as throughout other aspects of their classroom environment and teaching. Examples of culturally relevant teaching tenets were found throughout field notes, observation debriefs, interview transcripts, lesson plans, syllabi, and course assignments. The following sections will illustrate why, how, when, and what aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy were manifested in Dee's and Fiona's classrooms.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: TFA and Carter University

The third theme of how and when the participants were defining and enacting culturally relevant teaching was clearly influenced by the participants' role as TFA educators who were enrolled in an alternative certification program while also teaching their first class. As such, these participants were in a unique position to construct and

implement culturally relevant teaching because this was the major part of the conceptual framework for their certification program and the focus of their courses and assignments. Furthermore, they were in an ideal position to try out the strategies and ideas they were learning in their courses with their current students. Analysis of the interview and observation debrief transcripts showed that both participants were actively implementing culturally relevant ideas they were learning from their Carter University cohort members and various instructors because they believed in its importance in their classrooms. Observation field notes, interviews, assignments, visual representations, and debrief transcripts showed several specific activities (i.e. rapping the standards), projects (i.e., *Your America, My America*), lesson plans (i.e., *What is Freedom?*), books (i.e., *Mother West Wind "Why" Stories*), and resources (graphic organizers) that the participants implemented as a result of their participation in the TFA/Carter University alternative certification program. Fiona used the visual representation in Figure 5 and description to show how she viewed culturally relevant teaching during literacy.

White light represents how I used to view literacy: one dimensional, a necessary skill, lacking in most students that attend my school. The prism represents the exposure that I have gained through my teaching program and from my experience in the classroom. When paired together, I began to understand how multi-faceted literacy really is. I now appreciate all components: phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. More importantly, I recognize that readers are not actually literate, until students have the comprehension skills necessary to fully understand texts, they are not considered literate. I want my students to fully comprehend texts...This comprehension is essential for students to develop the necessary skills to think critically and analyze literature as they mature. The colors that white light forms when separated by a prism could represent all of the uses of reading. One important use that I had clumped into the white light was the need to critique literature. I never thought of the importance of critiquing literature, and it is something rarely done even by adults. It is important for students to think critically and question the things around them. In this way, they will be able to change the world around them. (VRCRPF)

It is evident in this example how much of a role, Carter University played in developing this TFA teacher's understanding of culturally relevant literacy.

Threads of culturally relevant teaching tenets were evident throughout the TFA/Carter University syllabi, assignments, mission, and conceptual framework providing a significant influence on how, when, and why these participants negotiated



Figure 5. Visual Representation: Fiona's Attitudes and Beliefs about CRP during Literacy Instruction.

their mandated SFA curriculum with culturally relevant teaching beliefs and strategies. For example, in their Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners courses, two of the foci for these classes as outlined in the syllabus were to explore: (a) "culturally relevant teaching strategies and skills that contribute to literacy learning", and (b) "ways that teachers can build on students' culture and prior knowledge to best meet the needs of students in diverse classrooms" (SLL). Furthermore, the courses focused on developing teachers who were reflective, "affirmed children's diverse backgrounds, abilities, interests, personalities, and experiences in order to nurture the holistic development of all children" (SLL). Additionally, Freire's (1970/2000) problem posing pedagogy and dialogical participation were the basis for the courses in order to model how students like Dee and Fiona should establish their class norms. This model

established teachers and students as equitable, knowledgeable, and active critical thinkers.

Another example of how culturally relevant teaching was infused throughout coursework and assignments was in the Culture, Community, and Schools syllabus (SCCS). For example, the first section of the syllabus specifically stated the framework and expectations of the program by saying it was “designed to prepare teachers to be relevant individuals who construct locally situated knowledge in order to make decisions for instruction based on meaningful relationships with students and families, knowledge of culture and communities, and constant self reflection”(SCCS). The program specified that it expects teachers who are “highly motivated to work toward educational equity at both the classroom and structural level” (SCCS). Throughout this course, culturally relevant assignments included, (a) the Prospect School Model for the Descriptive Review of a Child (Himley & Carini, 2000), (b) a photojournalistic essay and movie that recognized the funds of knowledge within the community where their students live, (c) readings from a social justice book and article list, and (d) self-reflections. The courses and program were conceptually and practically designed to build on the already established equity-minded framework of Teach For America’s mission and the desires and experiences of students like Dee and Fiona who were committed to educational equity for all students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Constraints and Negotiations

As described in earlier sections that detailed the themes of constraints and negotiations, it was not an easy task for Dee and Fiona to enact the culturally relevant teaching they learned and now espoused. Both participants experienced institutional and

contextual constraints on their autonomy, curricula, pedagogy, and identities due to the school level implementation of federal legislation mandates and policies. As such, Dee and Fiona actively navigated and negotiated their educational beliefs, attitudes, and identities with the conflicting and competing contextual constraints that dominated their schools and classrooms. The negotiations were developmental, and the participants acknowledged that as their confidence and pedagogical content knowledge grew, so did their ability to negotiate the competing roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the various demands on their teaching. Their abilities to carve out small spaces within SFA and larger spaces outside of SFA for culturally relevant teaching was an outcome of their constraints intersecting with their beliefs and attitudes around SFA and CRP. Since they believed curricula should be relevant to their students' lives, involve critical thinking and multiple perspectives, they tried in various ways to enact those beliefs. Below are examples of culturally relevant teaching found throughout field notes, interviews, and assignments.

Culturally Relevant Teaching: Conception of Self and Others

Teacher as Artist

Consistent with Ladson-Billings's (1994) culturally relevant teaching paradigm, Dee and Fiona identified strongly with the profession of teaching, loved being teachers, and understood that teaching was not just a technical task. However, Grace saw in the beginning, they struggled with this "teaching as art" conceptualization because of the "teaching as science" TFA model that implies, "input this (high expectations, rigor, constant assessment) and you will get that (high achievement, 1.5 years of growth)" (personal communication, Grace). As such, she tried to convey to them throughout class

discussions and assignments that it was not a dichotomous choice, but instead they should construct their identities and practice in both ways. She explained further:

I think that our teachers are coming to see themselves as people who know how to collect, use, analyze data, but also know how to reflect, consider, relate, inquire, engage, and collaborate. I think they are beginning to see teaching as the complex, multifaceted, incredibly challenging, and hard to essentialize vocation that it is (Grace, personal communication).

TFA and Carter University had similar missions but differing processes on how to achieve the missions, which was evident in Fiona's understanding of becoming a teacher. She saw the processes and foci of TFA as "collecting data" and having "superb or superior instruction" in order to "get the students we teach on the same playing field as other students in the state or in the country". Likewise, she said that Carter University "has the same kind of mission, but it was to get us to be more culturally relevant and teach in a holistic manner" (I2F). They both were accepting of and understanding of the need for data and teaching holistically and in culturally relevant ways.

Dee and Fiona understood the importance of teaching in the big picture of life. They dressed professionally and spoke with passion and conviction when discussing their students and their responsibilities as a teacher. They were dedicated to their students, schools, and profession, and were not looking to leave after their two-year Teach For America commitment. Both were obtaining their Master's degree in Mathematics Education and planning to stay in the classroom for at least the next school year and probably more. They enjoyed the creative aspects of teaching and were always seeking new information, learning "how to use resources", "seeking out different ways to do things", "being not afraid to change things up", and "being flexible". They saw themselves as leaders and were committed to the complexities of urban teaching even if it was sometimes "frustrating".

Both participants spoke of the big picture goals they had for their teaching and students. Dee described her larger role as a teacher as developing “long term learning, like actually learning, not just memorizing for the moment, not just memorizing for the CRCT”. She wondered out loud, “What kinda impact, not only am I having on them now, but like long term.” Fiona wanted to “help them to become well rounded people and people that challenge society in a good way” (I2F). Dee laughed when she said the following, but was serious about the sentiment:

I know it's kinda like random cause I'm professional, but there's always that Biggie song, and he always talks about you know, here's a shout out to all the teachers who XYZ, you know, he's a grown man and he shouted them out, so he remembered his teachers from like years later. And so I feel like as a teacher, like you can leave a lasting impression on students. I value like teaching them long-term skills like you know, academically, but also, you know, socially as well. I'm trying to like really instill some things that they can carry with them outside of the fourth grade (I2D).

Evidence drawn from analyzing their observation field notes, debriefs, interviews, and assignments illustrated their commitment as professionals who wished to have a long term “direct impact” on their students. They saw teaching and learning as more than what was measured on tests, as they sought to have a holistic impact on their social and academic learning. They looked at teaching and learning broadly defined and measured.

While the mandated scripted SFA program could lead many educators to follow the script blindly, Fiona and Dee did not want to read the script without any regard to what they or their students were thinking about SFA texts. Her identity as a “creative” teacher conflicted with the role of script follower, so Fiona said she had to “find freedom,” so she learned to “use the script as more of a guideline than a script.” She

admitted she did “add or take out some things in the script” and always wanted to look at the needs of her students and “relate something in the story” to the students’ lives:

I definitely always add things that are not on the script. Um, just because as I'm reading and hearing their responses, I'm thinking, I'm thinking, too ya know. And so I wanna, I may, might have a question that's not on the script and I don't think it's wrong for me to ask that question if it's gonna give me a deeper understanding of how, what their thinking process is (Deb1F).

Dee also used learned to use the script as a “guideline that helps point me in the right direction,” but “I don’t think it makes me the best teacher I can be.” She revealed, “I think if you have a script, it kind of makes you like a robot. It doesn’t make you the best teacher. It’s kind of like a teacher-proof guideline so that no one can mess up.” For these reasons, Dee learned to supplement and skip parts of the script at her “discretion.” She said, “Basically I look at what things are important to me and what things I noticed that they look for in observations, and I kind of do it based off of that” (Deb4D). Both participants acknowledged that they did the “dog and pony show” when they were observed and followed the script verbatim, however, when on their own, they supplemented, skipped, and substituted different sections and assignments within the script based on their observations of students’ interests, knowledge, and needs.

Part of Community

Ladson-Billings (1994) described this aspect of culturally relevant teaching as teachers giving back to the community and empowering students to do the same. The very nature of these participants’ membership in Teach For America, which locates teaching in urban schools as a service to the community and country, was evidence of their desire to “give back” and do something “meaningful” that would “impact some lives”. They recognized the need to “eliminate the achievement gap” for Black and poor

students and thought they could be a part of the solution and “movement”. Fiona’s desire to give back to the community stemmed from the “disparities” she saw between her private school PreK-11th grade experience and her one year at a public school. In addition, Dee had several colleagues from her alma mater come and tutor her students afterschool as an example of how she empowered others to give back by working with students in their community. Grace acknowledged that this is something she feels needs to be emphasized more throughout the program and has made it a professional goal to focus more on “How are THEY engaging in the out –of- school worlds of their students” (personal communication, Grace).

Believes All Students Can Achieve

Grace describes this tenet of culturally relevant teaching as “the mantra of TFA- they believe this.” However, she cautioned that, “They don’t always look at the range of factors that contributes to the success or struggles of students”, which she says is crucial to providing safe and relevant classrooms. Components of this tenet of culturally relevant pedagogy were evident throughout the analysis of field notes and transcripts of interviews and debriefs, that both teachers had high expectations and dreams for all of their students, which was one of the main catalysts for these teachers supplementing the script and integrating reading and culturally relevant pedagogy throughout their curriculum. Fiona repeatedly described her students as “smart” and “brilliant!” Fiona was very interested in helping her students to “become well rounded. And not only teaching them the content, but also the life skills, and how the content relates to their life and how it can help them and get them to go to college and get a career” (IIF). She saw her primary focus as being “concerned with what the students need” and learning to “advocate for the needs of the

students.” She believed if their needs were “not being met, then it's, I think it ultimately falls back on the teacher to um, give the students what they need” (Deb2F). She explained that, “Sometimes, when I've done that, I've gotten flak at times from my administration or from observers”, but “once I explain like this is where I stand and this is why” and “this particular student needed this”, and “I have the data to show that this isn't working, then I found that it hasn't really been a problem” (Deb3F). Fiona was very committed to wanting and providing more “rigor” because her “kids need to be challenged and not babied, and they need to be pushed!” (Deb6F). Throughout interview and observation debrief transcripts, Dee and Fiona repeatedly cited the lack of rigor in the SFA script as a major flaw, which led them to supplementing the script in various ways to ensure all their students were achieving.

Analysis of Dee’s observation debriefs and interviews showed that she, too, believed all her students could achieve. She worked in several ways to ensure this standard by, (a) tutoring after school several days a week (beyond the required one day a week), (b) teaching reading through centers and guided reading groups during her English Language Arts (ELA) period, (c) incorporating reading and writing throughout all the content areas, and (d) having high expectations for all of her students. By providing opportunities for all of her students to get what they needed whether they were sent to a third grade SFA class or not was her way of ensuring all her students were successful.

Teacher Facilitates Connecting Students’ Identities

This tenet says culturally relevant teachers facilitate students making connections between their community, national, and global identities. Grace says different TFA

educators do this in different ways by having “critical conversations about segregation and city planning”, while others may bring in pop culture, or focusing on their roles in the classroom community. As such she acknowledges that this will need to be tweaked and explicitly discussed in the upcoming cohorts. However both Dee and Fiona looked to connect students and their various identities to the SFA scripts, read aloud books, standards curriculum, their communities and country. Fiona explained how she looked for “what things from the community can I pull in to help teach the content that they need to know. And how can I value them as individuals, where they come from, who they are while I’m teaching them” (IIF). Fiona engaged her students’ local and national identities when she included an end of year history project where students examined American symbols and then created symbols and representations of themselves and their community by interviewing grandparents, neighbors, and taking pictures. “It was like my America, but also my world...this is what America means to most people,” so “putting those two things together will help them identify themselves within the greater, like, American culture.” She also had them make a map of their special place in their community. They had to then describe and explain why this place had special meaning to them. Another example of Fiona connecting students with the multiple perspectives and identities that they shared with the Native Americans was recounted during an interview:

I had one little boy that was really upset about the video he was seeing. He was like, ‘This really happened?’ Just to see it in a different way than what was described in the book he really connected with that. And I don’t know where that connected with his life, but somewhere he was able to make that connection with the people that they were talking about in that video and how they felt. So really just displaying a variety of perspectives and letting students draw their own conclusions about what has happened and how it effects them and how they want to take that information and use it to make change to effect change in their life (IIF).

During SFA, Fiona was limited in the culturally relevant and rigorous books she had access to because (a) there was a limited number from which to select and (b) she only was able to choose sometimes. During the last weeks of school, the teachers at Fiona's school were able to choose their SFA books, so she "ran to get a novel" by an African American male author with an African American boy as the main character because "I have a lot of boys in my class, so I really try to expose them to different careers and different things that they can do in their lives". She felt like they could "relate to the characters" and used it as a tool to discuss the character's situation as well as link it to their lives and future by asking, "What choices did they make, what could they have done differently. What are YOU going to do if you are presented with this in your life? So it provides an opportunity to teach life lessons really" and "it makes them think". While integrating multiple perspectives and content to connect the students' identities in major ways was a challenge due to the constraints of SFA, she attempted to do it in subtle ways when possible.

Dee also struggled to connect students' identities to their national identities during SFA time due to the lack of choice she had in her books as well as the lack of opportunity to integrate content areas and outside sources during SFA time. However, she made it an important focus during her other content areas and read alouds. For several social studies history units, she found that African Americans were "underrepresented" or missing from pictures, descriptions, and events in textbooks. She brought in "pamphlets and outside readings", "video clips, and articles" to supplement these missing figures, so that her students had "something to relate to". An example of Dee connecting their African American identities and dialect to the larger historical context, she read "*Ain't I a Woman*

kind of as an opening for the Abolitionist Movement, and they really liked that. I read both versions. How it was originally written in the dialect that Sojourner Truth used and then the edited or revised version” (Deb2D). Feeling constrained by the script and the lack of opportunity to integrate content, multiple perspectives, and resources, Dee and Fiona made subtle attempts during the script to do this, and saved the more important and larger attempts at this culturally relevant tenet when they had the freedom to do so.

Teacher Sees Knowledge as Coming from Students

This tenet looks at knowledge coming from students and not just from the teacher to the passive students. Grace explained that the banking model of education (Freire, 1970) that was used in many classrooms due to the use of scripted programs, was a major barrier for many of her TFA students like Dee and Fiona who were trying to “craft opportunities for kids to be known, seen, valued, and contributory to the learning of others” (Personal communication, Grace). However, understanding that their students all came to school with experiences and knowledge was an important realization that these two teachers embraced. Fiona acknowledged that she learned to “consider more their funds of knowledge and what do my kids already come into the classroom knowing” (IIF) as she learned about culturally relevant teaching in class. She tried to relate the students, their communities, their families, and their interests to whatever they were talking about in SFA or in other content areas. Fiona used read alouds, discussions, and reflections before during, and after SFA to:

allow kids to express themselves and things that they go thru in the neighborhood, at home, um, at school, so it gives me an opportunity to kind of let them tell me what they're going thru and what's going on in their lives and their worlds. And I can build and teach off of that. So in essence I guess it's like um, it provides like teachable moments...and

teach from something that's actually relevant to what they're, what's going on with them at that moment (Deb5F).

During SFA, it was harder for them both to integrate multiple perspectives, assignments, and activities that they or their students wanted to do that would capitalize on their knowledge and interests. For instance, during observation six, I observed the following exchange about an SFA writing assignment and topic between Fiona and her student Ann (pseudonym):

Ann: So we HAVE to do it about THIS topic...joining a newspaper?

Fiona: I know, it's not that exciting of a persuasive piece for you, and it's hard to write about something like this. Yes, for the purpose of SFA we have to do this topic, but later we can do some speeches that are more aligned with what you want maybe for the school or something and we can deliver them to Dr. Stella. But right now, we have to do this one. (Obs6F)

It was clear by her question, tone, and facial expression that Ann did not mind doing the assignment itself but objected to writing a persuasive piece about a topic she was not invested in as a student or person. While Fiona understood this frustration, she struggled to find a balance between her students' knowledge and interests and SFA requirements.

During the debrief, Fiona explained her position:

She wanted to write, but she didn't wanna write about that. [laughs]... normally I would love to give her the option of you know, writing about something else, but in reality, that's throwing off the whole assignment for SFA, and then where are we gonna go from that? Cause the script only tells us how to do it about joining a newspaper. So um, that's an example of a limitation I guess that um, that SFA has.

Similarly, Dee struggled with what she wanted to do to build on the students' funds of knowledge while adhering to the SFA requirements, "I look at the curriculum and the things that I'm given. I try to find a balance between doing what they tell me to do and then adding things that the kids relate to." She was learning at Carter University

how “knowing what my kids’ backgrounds are” and the “importance of children being able to identify with people that look like them or text that relate to them and how much it affects their reading, or their interest in reading of you know in any subject matter.” She felt this tension between following the SFA curriculum and her need and desire to “try and be more cognizant of what types of students are in my class and what I can do to engage them and make them feel a part of the curriculum and definitely connect it to what they’re learning.” While the script did not specifically allow a space to pull out students’ knowledge, interests, examples, and experiences, both Dee and Fiona attempted to create small opportunities during SFA time. In addition, it was a very important part of their teaching and planning lenses.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Social Relations

Teacher-Student Relationships are Equitable and Fluid

This tenet locates the teacher and students in more equitable positions within and outside of the classroom, while acknowledging that students and teachers are suppose to learn from each other’s expertise. Grace suggested that the “significant emphasis on behavioristic [sic] reward systems in the TFA classroom management process” provides a barrier to this type of relationship. Likewise, many critics of SFA view the script as a unidirectional path of knowledge and information coming from the teacher down to the students. However, both participants attempted to create equitable dialogue, participation, and knowledge construction with collective accountability during SFA and throughout the school day. Part of this collective accountability was developed through classroom norms they set up through community building activities and discussions. As Dee described, “We all work together, they are accountable, they work in groups...”

However, part of the collective accountability and opportunities for equitable participation were embedded in the SFA script structure and routines, with students having specific roles in their groups and the use of “Numbered Heads” which allowed her to call on all #4s to answer a question or all #3s to answer another question. SFA rewarded students with points for team cooperation and having the same answer; a theme that will be discussed in chapter five.

In Dee’s classroom, she used the required SFA Team Cooperation Points data tracker to award points to students for working together, answering the questions correctly, and having the same answer. This point system was used for every text and factored in to the students’ grades. It was perceived by Dee as a positive for creating equitable group participation and accountability, but also seen as a negative because there was “a lot of paperwork you have to fill out like the strategy points and the team cooperation points and sometimes that’s just very distracting from really being able to teach the lesson”. Dee said, “They do Team Talk questions daily as a team and as a team they are working together...so it kind of builds accountability, so that everyone is working together, understands, and is actively participating in the groups. While this may allow for a forced and seemingly equitable participation and accountability system, I will detail in chapter five how this was in fact a [mis]conceptualization of the true tenet of equitable relationships in the culturally relevant classroom.

On the contrary, while Fiona did have the students working in groups and used Numbered Heads and roles, she chose not to use the SFA Team Cooperation Points data tracker because she felt like the points did not work for her and her students. In the

following quote, you see her frustration with forced cooperation and consensus on a task she doesn't see as rigorous or engaging:

it's just difficult because I feel like a lot of times they're discussing in their groups but they don't really, the discussion doesn't take as long as the time allotted, so they kind of talk about it for a few minutes and then they're over it and they're doing things that are causing conflicts, so that coupled with the fact that I don't think that they're very engaged...maybe that's what I'm trying to say. So no, I don't do the points.

Observation field notes, debriefs, and interview transcripts showed that Dee and Fiona valued the equitable exchange of ideas and knowledge in their classrooms and allowed for call and response exchanges, opportunities for open dialogue, and for student ideas to take a front role. In the following exchange between Mark and Fiona during the read aloud, *Let My People Go*, you can see how this student felt comfortable challenging an assertion by Fiona that he disagreed with. In return, she affirmed and acknowledged his idea:

Fiona: Can he own the moon? During that time, she only saw people owning other people as property. Nobody can own nature.

Mark: Well actually, someone can own nature... they can buy a tree and plant it and that's theirs.

Fiona: Good, actually you are right. I meant more the planets, stars etc.
Good answer, Mark!

In addition, the following quote explained how one of the read alouds I observed was chosen. "*Blue's Journey* was actually chosen by a student who I was walking with um, in the morning time when they, and they saw it as one of the displays on the library shelf and just decided to get it and wanted to read it, and I said that that was fine" (Deb1F). This happened another time when a student was moved to find four other books by the same author they were reading. He brought them in and he and Fiona showcased them for the class and even connected them to a Social Studies project they were working on.

When Dee felt like she was not being equitable when calling on shyer students who slipped under the radar, she made that a priority to change by enlisting the help of her Carter University coach. She had him collect data on how often she called on her various students to ensure that she was being equitable during class discussions. It was clear across the data sources that both participants valued and implemented this important cornerstone of culturally relevant teaching.

Connectedness with All Students

This tenet of culturally relevant teaching emphasizes that the teacher creates and sustains relationships with all of the students in the class and not just a few. Grace acknowledged that this was a challenging one for many of her TFA teachers, so she asked that they especially choose a child they “struggled to like” for their Descriptive Review of a Child project. As such, they would be able to “see and set patterns for relating with that student in more healthy ways” (Grace, personal communication). It was evident throughout the observations that both participants reached out to their individual students in an attempt to connect with them personally during SFA and outside of SFA. Both participants substituted, where possible, relevant examples or questions about students’ families or interests when they were discussing both SFA books and read alouds. Dee would do small things throughout the script like give examples or ask questions that included the names of her students their mothers or their siblings. She noticed both simple and important changes like when students changed their hairstyle or had a major event at home.

Fiona’s interactions with her students exuded love, care, and firmness when necessary. As she walked around the room, she had small conversations with individual

students or groups of students about their assignments, families, health issues, behavior, and motivation. During several observations, there were students who were not feeling well and one had an eye injury. In these instances, she displayed compassion, care, and comfort in her tone, comments, and body language. It was not uncommon to see her pat a shoulder, rub a back, kneel down for a one on one conversation, smile and laugh, high five, or inquire about a student's current work or behavior. After these quiet, one on one conversations inquiring about a student's negative behavior or refusal to work, the student would make a shift in posture or demeanor for the better, demonstrating her connectedness with all students that was unconditional. She knew it was "not her style" to scream or yell, and opted to be firm, respectful, reasonable, and caring towards her students, even when they exhibited off task or negative behaviors. Throughout observation data, it was clear there was a mutual respect between Fiona and her students as demonstrated by respectful dialogue, smiles, hugs, and affirmations. In return, the students responded with participation, respect, and good behavior.

All students' answers were affirmed and valued even when incorrect and she truly valued a reciprocal, nonjudgmental environment that fostered risk taking and community. Fiona expressed how "I really like to hear what they think, and I think that that has encouraged a community classroom because as a result, my students also value what their peers have to say. Cause I value what everyone has to say they in turn value it as well. Um, so it's very open, um, non judgmental" (Deb4F). Both participants attempted to establish this keystone of culturally relevant teaching during and outside of SFA.

Teacher Establishes and Values a Community of Learners

This tenet of culturally relevant pedagogy emphasizes community of learners versus learning through competition. Observation field notes and transcripts revealed that the participants attempted to create a community of learners to allow for the equitable exchange of ideas, collaboration, and a safe learning environment. However, as mentioned earlier, there were times when competition based structures and activities from SFA conflicted with Dee's attempts to work solely as a community and not through competition. This aspect will be discussed more in chapter five.

Dee and Fiona stressed the importance of students being "accountable" for each other's learning and encouraged teamwork and discussion. Students sat together in groups to share ideas, questions, and information. They established rules at the beginning of the school year with their students to ensure that they were aware of their responsibilities and expectations. Fiona also used books and *Mother West Wind* "Why" Stories by Thornton Burgess to stimulate dialogue around these topics as she conveyed the importance of explicitly creating this community:

regardless of where your students come from, or what they've experienced or haven't experienced, they're still a common um, a common ground where at the beginning of the year you've laid the foundation of this is the type of community and classroom we're gonna have. And I'm not just expecting you to know how to treat one another respectfully or whatever, but I'm gonna teach you how to do it so that the expectation is there, and I've taught you how to do it and now you're responsible to do it.

Fiona allowed her students to sit or lie down during read alouds, so they could "come together as a class or community" and it "encourages them to get closer to the book and to point things out in the story." She found it was a "more relaxing and comfortable environment for the students" and she wanted them to "enjoy this time and feel comfortable so that they open up and begin to share things that they may not normally do um, if they were sitting just in their desk". She doesn't require them to raise their hands

and wait to be called on because “everybody puts in their two cents” and “because there's that freedom, they really respect”. “They kind of just speak and they're quiet, they ask the question and then they're quiet, or somebody else will answer it, and it's kind of like this free flowing environment where it's very much like what adults have (Deb3F).

Fiona strongly believed in creating a classroom where her students felt understood, respected, and safe to express themselves. She tried to choose books outside of SFA that related to feelings and issues that several of her students were feeling. For example, she knew that she had some students with active fathers or male figures, but many did not. She chose a book to read aloud and for them to write a reflection called, *Daddy Daddy be There* and explained to them that the book may have “feelings that you're feeling”. When Ann shared hers, she was:

very open and was very expressive and very transparent about how she felt about her father, and I just think it gave her, not even her, but all of them, a space to get out their feelings. And I think that when the classroom is somewhere where you can come to learn, not only learn, but to express yourselves and be yourselves, then I think that's a valuable classroom. That's a classroom that has community.

Dee reported that she stressed creating a community of learners from the beginning of the year by handing out a survey to her students and parents, so she could get to know all of her students as individuals and their interests. They also constructed their classroom rules as a community. In addition, Dee had to attend to developing community every quarter as her SFA class changed. She really emphasized in debrief and interview transcripts how important it was for her students to be accountable for each other's learning. They both placed a premium on working together, community, equal participation, and team cooperation.

Collaborative Learning

Similar to the key features of Equitable Participation and a Classroom of Learners, Collaborative Learning was a norm in both classrooms because it was part of the SFA structure and the participants' desire to have a culturally relevant classroom that fostered collaboration. During SFA, students were supposed to work in groups of 3-5 to discuss and answer questions related to the SFA text. Role cards created a specific job for each student to accomplish, and points were awarded for team cooperation. Students were seen as "accountable" for each other's learning and dialogue was encouraged. In Fiona's classroom, the groups were flexible and changed often. Students were encouraged to help each other and be responsible for one another and their own actions and work. For instance, both classrooms allowed students to "phone a friend" or choose another student to help give them a clue or explain something. Both participants reported using centers throughout their other content areas that allowed students to work together on activities, games, and assignments.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Conceptions of Knowledge

Knowledge is Dynamic, Recreated, Recycled

This tenet asks teachers and students to see each other's knowledge as "not static". Despite the constraints of the SFA script that emphasizes one right answer, both participants questioned, critiqued, challenged, and affirmed ideas and knowledge through the inclusion of critical thinking questions, multiple perspectives, open dialogue, and classroom norms that fostered community and risk taking during SFA and outside of SFA. They both critiqued current modes of assessing knowledge mainly through high stakes testing. Both participants affirmed their students thinking and questioning. They continually asked for students to agree, disagree and explain their thinking while

discussing. During observation three, Fiona was reading a *Mother West Wind Why Story* to the students about a possum who kept playing dead. This type of exchange was common in both classrooms as students questioned and discussed texts and ideas:

Lou: Ms. Fiona, if the possum keeps playing dead and comin' alive, don't you think people would catch on?

Fiona: Great observation!

Vincent: Maybe they didn't realize because he's doing it on different people!

Fiona: Do you all want to discuss it in your groups?

Students: Yes! (Students all began discussing and presenting ideas and then returned to the story.)

Knowledge is Viewed Critically

This tenet asks teachers and students to reflect, critique, and analyze curriculum and what counts as knowledge. Both Dee and Fiona were passionate about (a) questioning what counted as knowledge, (b) supplementing what was left out of curriculum, (c) asking critical thinking questions, and (d) including multiple perspectives. During SFA, they were limited in their ability to add in multiple perspectives or integrate other content, but they did add critical thinking questions throughout the script. They also capitalized on teachable moments that challenged or questioned assumptions or what counted as fact. For instance, Dee challenged her students to think about the "reliability" of sources during the first observation. She challenged them to really think about what constitutes a reliable source, opinions, and facts. She also felt the textbooks did not provide enough information on African Americans' roles throughout history, and she sought to supplement the textbooks and standards with extra materials.

Outside of SFA, Fiona said,

You can't count on the textbook to give accurate accounts of everything, specifically in Social Studies. Um, it's important for me to pull other resources, and not just to tell my students that this is what to think instead of that, but just to present the... different perspectives that are available and let them critically think and come to their own conclusions about what happened and how that effects them and their world today. (I1F)

She detailed a time when she brought in a video about the Trail of Tears from a Native American perspective, an article, and the textbook:

I pose the question what do you think is going on here. Why is it then when we looked at the video we saw one thing when we looked at an article or something like that we see another thing and when we look at the textbook there is something else? And they draw their own conclusions like, well maybe they didn't want us to know this or maybe they, I don't think they know who THEY is, but they are able to make that, determine that somewhere at some point you are going to have to dig for more information yourself to get a deeper understanding. You can't always go with what a textbook or article or whatever is telling you... we don't really teach in classrooms how to get students to challenge the authors. It's more like, if I read it must be true which is not always the case. (I1F)

Teacher is Passionate about Content

This tenet asks teachers to be excited and passionate about content and not neutral. Analysis of the observations, interviews, and debriefs showed that both participants were passionate about teaching and learning, even when the script was “boring” and they knew the students “hate it”. While they reported feeling “restricted” and like a “robot” during SFA time, they tried in small ways to make it interesting and exciting by adding relevant examples, substituting an SFA activity with their own, deleting boring SFA sections, and adding in critical thinking questions. Outside of SFA, they were always looking for new and interesting ideas from TFA classmates, their classes at Carter University, students, or veteran teachers. Fiona was always thinking about what her students wanted or could relate. “If I walk into the library and I see a book

that they might like, I just pick it up. And a lot of time, they're so amazing (laughs). They just get so excited, which makes me excited”

Both of them referenced several times when they were excited to try something new because they knew their kids would like it, and it would help them learn. In the following account, Fiona excitedly explained how she learned to integrate hip hop as a mode of learning while at Carter University. She shared with her students the video of her and her classmates explaining language arts standards to the beat of a popular rap song. The kids loved seeing their teacher perform and begged to do the assignment. She implemented the idea during the last week of school when the students wrote a rap about all the things they had learned this year. In her own words:

I was excited about the hip hop workshop because it was fun! It was super fun for me, and any time I think that something is like really fun for me, and I go back to like acting like a kid, which you can see from the video...I just imagine my kids like how much fun they would have doing it, and I, when learning is fun, like I have done my job. When my kids are like, you know, we can't wait to go back to class 'cause this is what we're gonna do today and this is what we're gonna learn, like I've done it. You know, 'cause I've instilled in them a love, and like a want, a need to learn, so and continued learning... I think it's something that'll be very beneficial in the classroom because, um, just because it's something, it's part of their culture, and, and I'm using that to help them learn. (Deb7F)

Dee also reported her desire to include more music, art, and culturally relevant resources and activities during her second year of teaching now that her first year was coming to a close. She saw teaching as “exciting” and always wanted to “engage her students” and “relate to her students and their learning styles”.

Teacher Helps Students Develop Necessary Skills

This tenet asserts the teacher must help all students develop the necessary skills through scaffolding, preteaching, or building on prior knowledge. Grace said the TFA focus on data makes sure that teachers like Dee and Fiona are helping all students to learn

and develop all of the necessary skills. She said, “Their data trackers constantly monitor the progress of each kid across each skill across the entire year.” Likewise, observation field notes demonstrated that both participants helped their students develop the necessary skills, even if these skills were supposed to be learned the year before or even several years prior. While at times they reported that it frustrated them, they nonetheless took time to walk around to each student, discuss work, ask questions, fill in gaps, and adjust their teaching to their students’ needs. They would model SFA writing activities as a class and help them meet the writing rubrics outlined by the script. This also included tutoring and teaching literacy during other content areas, so all students could learn.

Teacher Sees Excellence as a Complex Standard

This tenet asks teachers to center on and affirm students as individuals no matter what their accomplishments or dreams. As such, both participants wanted to develop their individual students’ abilities and push them towards excellence and success. For instance, Fiona conveyed high expectations and excellence throughout the day as she pushed her students within and outside of SFA to invest in themselves and their education. She encouraged conversations and dialogue that centered around the individual students’ dreams, while also reminding them of the larger picture of their role in society and their community. During one observation, they explored the students’ goals in life. She wanted to instill in them a realization of their power and need to continue the work and struggles of their Black ancestors. She read several books to her class that detailed Black children’s role in major historical events within the Civil Rights Movement. She saw books, reflections, and discussions as a means to empowering her students as individuals and

providing an understanding of the larger struggles in and for the Black community. Fiona passionately described the big picture of education as liberatory for her students:

It spoke about their ancestors and things they went through, and I really think it's important for them to realize, as Black children, like the importance of education. I mean not that all children don't need to know the importance, but particularly them because it's, I think that's what it's gonna take for a lot of them to change their situation so they really need to understand, um, the importance of education. Especially about the effect it's gonna have, that it can have, on, on their lives if they embrace it.
(Deb6F)

Fiona also saw personal reflections and writing responses to books as contributing to students' future career possibilities. She said, "I really encourage them to write how they're feeling...and I really think that that could turn into an author coming out of my class one day because they write about how they feel or a journalist who likes to write about what they see and what they think" (Deb5F).

Dee really identified with her students and wanted them to be aware of opportunities within and outside of their communities, so they could be successful in their own way. She knew from her own experience that where you live "definitely connected to what type of education you receive". She wanted them to know, "If I can you know, make it outta there and go to a prestigious college... that they can definitely do it too. I kinda try to drill it in their head at an early age that they can do it, too." She also explained that while she was very proud of her mom for graduating from college, there were many things she hadn't done in life that Dee wanted to do, like own a house and travel outside of the country. She explained how she wanted her students to travel their own path, whatever it may be, but to be aware of all of their opportunities and aim high in their aspirations because:

a lot of the time my kids look at their parents and they're like, oh, my mom doesn't do this so, you know, they don't have aspirations to do things like that so basically I try to like expose them to things outside their community. Ok, it's cool that your mom works here, but you don't necessarily have to work here. You can be a lawyer, you can own that place that your mom or dad works at. And you know, if I can do it, then you can do it. And it kinda gives them something to identify with, versus somebody coming in, you know, who doesn't necessarily know what that experience is like (I2D).

Both participants wanted their students to be successful in their own rights and not just as measured by CRCT tests or grades. They saw the big picture goals of education as their students' right and their responsibility to guide them.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Missteps and Missing Pieces

This previous section outlines the numerous ways that culturally relevant pedagogy tenets have manifested in the classrooms of Dee and Fiona. They attempted to establish culturally relevant classrooms and instruction despite the multiple constraints on their pedagogy and content. It was clear in the data that their culturally relevant teaching attempts excelled in some aspects, were weaker in others, and even misguided in others, which the data revealed is due to their novice teaching status and reduced preparation time. For example, they both attempted to be aware of their students' backgrounds, but only attempted in small and sporadic ways to use that as the *basis* of curriculum and instruction. An example of missteps would be how they (especially Dee) often times conflated the culturally relevant teaching tenets of collaboration, community of learners, and equitable participation with some of the SFA competition and consensus based structures that were inherently antithetical. Weaker aspects included discussing and enacting culturally relevant teaching only in terms of social studies and literacy. How they involved parents and guardians was also missing from the data. Despite these omissions, missteps, and missing pieces, the data revealed many encouraging signs of

new teachers negotiating contextual constraints in order to teach in more culturally relevant ways.

Summary of Themes

This chapter has outlined the aggregated, salient themes found through cross-case analysis. It detailed three interrelated themes that stemmed from the overarching role of federal policy in creating institutional constraints that profoundly limited and constrained the participants' ability to enact the culturally relevant teaching tenets. These constraints were outlined in the conceptual figure in the beginning and included high stakes testing (CRCT), comprehensive school reform models (SFA), and alternative teacher preparation programs (TFA and CU). The second theme of negotiations were necessary when the constraints challenged the participants' beliefs, attitudes, identities, and equitable opportunities for their students. As such, the participants actively navigated and negotiated these constraints on their curricular decisions and identity development by compromising, conforming, supplementing, and subverting the constraints. The third theme examined the specific nature of how, when, and why aspects of culturally relevant teaching were defined and constructed by the participants. Each theme was discussed in relation to the others. The next section presents the findings and themes that outline the cross-case differences of the cases.

Cross-Case Differences

Prior to conducting cross-case analysis, I analyzed each case separately and let codes, categories, and themes emerge from each participant's data sources. While Dee and Fiona's cases were very similar as detailed in this chapter, there were a few key nuances. Evident throughout observations, debriefs, and interview transcripts was the powerful role of school context in influencing how, why, when and to what degree, Dee

and Fiona were constrained by institutional and contextual constraints, how and if they negotiated curricular and identity decisions, and how and when they implemented culturally relevant teaching during SFA. Therefore, this chapter presents three themes: (a) School context matters: SFA implementation within the school influences curricular negotiations and culturally relevant instruction within SFA; (b) Identity and experience matter: First and second year teacher differences, and (c) [Mis]conceptualizations of collaboration, cooperation, and group work created a false sense of culturally relevant teaching within an SFA competition and consensus driven structure. These themes and their supporting data are detailed below.

School Context Matters

SFA Implementation Fidelity

While Dee and Fiona's cases were very similar, there were a few nuances that stemmed from the different school contexts; specifically SFA implementation fidelity. For example, during data collection, Fiona did not have to split her class for SFA into the cross grade groupings. Second, Fiona's school context had considerably lesser degrees and modes of surveillance and monitoring. Third, Fiona had sporadic autonomy and choice in her SFA content and books, while Dee had none. Fourth, Dee was required to use SFA structures like Cooperation Points and role cards, while Fiona was not. Consequently, each of these nuances affected the degree to which Dee and Fiona (a) were constrained, (b) had to negotiate, and (c) enacted culturally relevant pedagogy. The following paragraphs outline these contextual differences as well as their relationship to the themes of constraints, negotiations, and culturally relevant pedagogy manifestations.

SFA Implementation and Cross Grade Groupings

Dee's school adhered to the cross grade level groupings required by Success for All, while Fiona's school did so only occasionally based on grade level decisions. This resulted in Dee sending over half her students to other grades and teachers during SFA, while she taught students from other 4th grade classes and grades. On the contrary, Fiona taught all of her students except two during SFA. Because the school used cross grade groupings differently, this influenced the constraints on the participants, their ability and need to negotiate, as well as their enactment of culturally relevant teaching. For example, Dee acknowledged that she felt more pressure on her to adhere strictly to SFA scripts because she was teaching other teachers' students. She did not feel like she had as much room to maneuver because the other teachers expected her to "do SFA". This cross grade grouping structure also required Dee to begin and end teaching exactly within the SFA period. On the contrary, Fiona did not feel the pressure to adhere so closely to the script or stay within the SFA time. As a result, during the seven observations, Fiona did not start SFA until almost half an hour after the SFA bell rang because she was doing culturally relevant read alouds, author studies, and critical literacy activities with her students instead. She also did not adhere strictly to the ending times of SFA and instead finished past it or before it depending on when she started or how quickly the students did what they had to do. Additionally, these cross grade groupings were a bigger constraint and a challenge to negotiate and enact culturally relevant teaching during SFA for Dee because she didn't know the backgrounds of her students from other classes as well as Fiona knew her students. The slight difference in the implementation of SFA (cross-grade grouping, time constraints, observations, paperwork, etc) definitely altered the constraints

they felt, the negotiations they could do, and the enactment of culturally relevant teaching.

SFA Implementation and Surveillance

A second example of the role of school context related to SFA implementation was the degree of surveillance, observations, and monitoring in their respective schools. For example, Dee's school context operated with high levels of surveillance and monitoring that increased the fidelity of SFA implementation in Dee's classroom practice. As such, she felt more constrained in her SFA practice than Fiona, which meant she had a bigger challenge negotiating this constraint as well as her ability to enact culturally relevant teaching. While observations and surveillance were present in both participants' data, it was more predominant throughout Dee's data. The ever present sense of surveillance via people, data, environment, and time pressure was a significant thread throughout Dee's data that demonstrated how SFA as an institutional constraint required her to negotiate curricular decisions and how and when she enacted culturally relevant teaching. For instance, Dee was very aware of the "unwritten rules" and "stigmas" attached to various components of SFA, which played a profound role in what she thought she could and could not do while teaching literacy. These stigmas and surveillance in her school's context were consistent sub themes throughout Dee's interviews and debriefs:

No, you don't have more time, it's just not allowed, and there's definitely a negative stigma if you take extra days and Um, I've never heard of anyone ever moving down honestly I don't think that happens. There is definitely a stigma related to that. (Deb1D)

Observations or "people surveillance" conducted by the SFA coordinator and the SFA officials occurred often and usually without notice. Fear of being observed and

marked down on these observations was a major constraint on Dee's negotiations, curricular decisions, and implementation of culturally relevant teaching. Dee explained:

certain times of the year they really have you on observations and if you're not doing exactly what they say, like they'll look at the script and if you are not exactly where you are suppose to be, they mark you down for um, the observation there's an SFA coordinator and she's not as bad when the corporate or whatever you would call them are not there, but definitely when they're there and they are doing the observations where the people from up top come in, they're strict (I1D).

Even though she said, "sometimes you just have to close your door and just, you know, make the best decisions you can", it was clear throughout her debriefs and first interview that the threat of surveillance greatly affected her practice. While Fiona reported that she "knew what to do" when people came in her room to observe, it did not play as significant a role in her data and practice as it did in Dee's. She explained the level of observations at her school:

So normally our ILS is the person who monitors how SFA is going, it's kind of informal, we don't ever really have anybody come in. She doesn't ever really come in and sit and make sure you're doing, um, SFA to fidelity. But we do have monitors by the Success for All staff personnel, so like they'll come in, I think 3 times a year, um, and they'll monitor what's going on, they'll give us feedback and all of this, and then after the last visit, um, generally people start to slack off because they know that that was the last visit from the SFA staff. (Deb4F)

Environmental surveillance necessitated and enforced the set up of Dee's room as well as what requirements were to be displayed for each SFA lesson. For instance, observation and observation debrief data showed that each classroom in Dee's school was required to have a sign outside the room displaying the SFA book, author, skill, and day in the script the teacher could be found. Inside the classroom, desks were grouped, role cards were on the desks, book information was displayed on the board, and an SFA bulletin board displayed SFA assignments. As Dee said, "You always have to use them.

They should be out, the role cards should be out, the points with the sheets, everything should be out, your teacher guide sheet should be out in case they walk in". Knowing "they" could walk in at any time was a constant reminder to Dee to adhere as closely as possible to the script just in case. Fiona was required to have her desks grouped and follow the script, and use varying roles for group work, but she did not feel the need to have these out at all time like in Dee's case.

Time, including the scope of working through a topic or book, was another method of surveillance and constraint on both Dee and Fiona, but especially Dee. Dee explained, "That's not allowed...if you miss a day for like personal reasons um, it's up to you to finish within the time constraint and um, yeah, I've definitely had to rush books before, but I've never not finished a book (Deb3D). Time constraints were implemented and monitored for both participants because books and scripts were shared with other teachers and there were limited numbers of each. As such, they were required to finish their books within the one week time period unless they were on a two week book. Nonetheless, the pressure to finish within a regimented time frame was a constraint on their ability to negotiate curricular decisions and culturally relevant teaching practice.

Another means of surveillance in Dee's school context was enacted through the SFA student data trackers, assessments, and SFA report cards. Student cooperation points were tracked and handed in, yet teachers had to give above a 70. Conditions surrounding assessments were similar, as Dee described this constraint:

there's really like a stigma, no rule that says that kids can't get less than 70, but there's a stigma if you enter that in. If anyone gets less than a 70, they're like in your classroom like every week trying to figure out this and that. So it's like an unwritten rule that they're not allowed to get 70 or less (Deb3D).

As with the other means of surveillance, this was most prevalent within Dee's data, which again demonstrated the differences in contextual constraints that influenced the degree to which they were constrained, able to negotiate, and enact culturally relevant teaching. Fiona reported that she used to use the cooperation data trackers, but it "just didn't work for me and my students". Her school had also stopped using the SFA report cards this past year. Due to the varying levels of surveillance, Dee's context had a more significant and constraining influence on her ability to negotiate the script and enact more culturally relevant teaching within the SFA period.

SFA Implementation and Autonomy

SFA implementation to a large degree was influenced by the role of the SFA facilitators and how much autonomy, flexibility, and choice they allowed within the SFA period. For example, at Fiona's school she had sporadic autonomy and choice in her content and skills. She reported that last school year she was able to choose her books. This school year she was unable to choose until just prior to school letting out. She then "ran to get a novel" by an African American author that she knew her students would enjoy. Dee on the other hand never had a choice as to which skills or books she could work on during SFA, since that was chosen by her SFA facilitator. This frustrated Dee because she never knew what skills she was going to be working on until the day before she received the new script. Additionally, she couldn't suggest what skills she thought her students needed to work on. Consequently, she felt constrained by this lack of autonomy and began to integrate reading and literacy throughout her ELA time, so she could be sure her students were getting what they needed.

SFA Implementation and SFA Structures

The final way SFA implementation played out between the two participants' contexts was the use or non-use of specific SFA structures like Cooperation Point trackers and role cards. For example Dee was required to use all of those mentioned, while Fiona used them her first year, but not her second year. These requirements forced Dee to engage in competition and consensus based rewards system for "team cooperation" and the SFA role cards incorrectly assumed equitable participation and exchange of ideas. Fiona had more freedom to structure her SFA time based on her style of engagement, motivation, and collaboration, while Dee had to adhere to the SFA point system, since she had to turn them in. These types of constraints hindered her ability to negotiate and enact culturally relevant teaching tenets like true collaboration and cooperation without competition (see below).

Identity and Experience Matter

Not surprisingly, although Dee and Fiona were both novice teachers, the fact that they were first and second year teachers made a difference to the degree in which they (a) felt constrained, (b) were able to and had to negotiate, and (c) enacted culturally relevant teaching. For instance, as a first year teacher, Dee was under considerably more surveillance and observations than Fiona was, which is typical of many first year teachers in the Freedom School System. This high degree of surveillance constrained her ability to stray too far from the script, since she always felt like "they" were going to come in and mark her down. She also had considerably less time with the script and theory of culturally relevant teaching, since she was newer than Fiona to Carter University. As such, at the time of data collection, she was just getting into how to integrate her own ideas and the strategies she learned at CU into the script. She also had less time

developing her own understanding of culturally relevant teaching and how it could work within a scripted literacy program. Because of her role as a brand new teacher, she struggled more than Dee to enact culturally relevant teaching in her classroom, especially during SFA. She still managed to do so, but it was to a lesser degree than Fiona. Finally, as a second year teacher, Fiona was privy to the fact that many of the other teachers in her building “were not using SFA” and “did not value SFA”, which gave her more confidence to alter the script.

[Mis]conceptualizations of Collaboration and Cooperation

A second difference stemmed from the analysis of observations, debriefs, and interview transcripts that revealed a strong thread of perceived student collaboration and cooperation within an SFA competition and consensus driven rewards system, predominantly found in Dee’s classroom and data. It was perceived and assumed by Dee and to some extent Fiona, that if students were in their groups, quiet, and working, that they were indeed *collaborating* and *cooperating*, which resulted in SFA Cooperation Points being awarded to Dee’s students. Both Fiona and Dee used the concepts of their students as “accountable for each other”, “cooperating”, “collaborating”, and “discussing”, to describe students working together to answer questions for SFA Team Talk exercises. However, my observations exposed several contradictions in this system, terminology, and how it was constructed and intertwined with tenets of a culturally relevant classroom. For instance, during Observation 3, I noted the following in my fieldnotes, “D-Each team can get 20 cooperation points (OC :they are quiet, but not working together...hmmm.) She tells them to start discussing. (OC They just list the numbers and answers on their individual papers but are not discussing.) Throughout the

rest of observation 3 field notes and several other sets of field notes, I documented similar circumstances where the students were quiet, working individually, and receiving cooperation points even though they were not discussing or collaborating.

Another aspect of this theme was the contradictory element of an extrinsic, competition and consensus based point system being used to reward this perceived collaboration and cooperation. For example, students and groups were only awarded points for cooperation if they had *consensus* on the answer. Each student had to have the same answer written and vocalized in order for the students to win points. In a culturally relevant classroom, multiple perspectives, explanations, and possibilities would be encouraged. Dee's explanation demonstrates that she doesn't see or understand the contradictions inherent in this system and how it plays out in her classroom:

There's different points, points for team cooperation and then there's points for answering questions as a group. They get for uh, they do a Team Talk questions daily as a team and as a team they are working together and it's important that they all agree upon an answer and that they all agree with it. So what you do is you go around to the different teams and you ask people using the Numbered Heads, and what is really important about SFA is um, assuring that everyone is working together and the accountability. I can call on any Numbered Head in the group and then if that person gets the wrong answer, then the whole group gets points, I mean doesn't have points because that person got the wrong answer, so it kind of builds accountability, so that everyone is working together, understands, and is actively participating in the groups (Deb2D)

Another example of this perceived collaboration and cooperation was revealed through Dee's observations and debriefs that showed that the division of labor using role cards for SFA's Team Talk, was inherently not collaborative nor cooperative. Dee explained that each student group used roughly the same roles or combinations of roles in the group depending on the number in each group. For example, one person read the question, one person looked up the answer in the book, one person checked to see if

everyone agreed, and everyone wrote the same answer down. This theme of perceived collaboration and cooperation was evident in both participants' data, however, the added element of competition and consensus driving this theme was found solely in Dee's data due to her use of the SFA cooperation points data trackers and consensus requirements. This theme demonstrated how her developing understandings of culturally relevant teaching were not adequately developed enough to see the contradictions in this system or the difference in truly cooperative, collaborative group work juxtaposed with the group work conceived and constructed by her within the SFA competition and consensus framework.

It is important to note that both participants saw the group work and collaboration aspect of SFA as congruent with the collaboration and equitable exchange of ideas and participation, and collective accountability tenets of culturally relevant teaching. However, as it actually played out in their classrooms, there was very little to no collaborating within the groups and the division of labor assigned by role cards were limiting in the equitable exchange of participation and ideas. Furthermore, the competition and point system piece that hinged on forced consensus was in direct opposition to these aforementioned tenets and norms of a democratic culturally relevant classroom.

Summary

This section presented three themes: (a) School context matters: SFA implementation within the school influences curricular negotiations and culturally relevant instruction within SFA; (b) Identity and experience matter: First and second year teacher differences, and (c) [Mis]conceptualizations of collaboration, cooperation, and

group work created a false sense of culturally relevant teaching within an SFA competition and consensus driven structure. While these differences played a role in the participants' contexts and the degree to which the participants implemented their scripted programs, it is important to note that the aggregated themes in cross-case analysis of constraints, negotiations, and culturally relevant pedagogy manifestations were consistent throughout the two cases and varied only by degree.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This qualitative multiple case study investigated the pedagogical practices, beliefs, attitudes, and identities of two, novice, African American, Teach For America educators who espoused a culturally relevant teaching philosophy and had to implement a scripted literacy program in their initial teaching placements. The participants, Dee and Fiona, were beginning teachers in their first and second years of teaching in urban, high poverty, elementary schools. Both participants were part of the Teach For America alternative certification program at Carter University. This teacher preparation program was designed to help these educators foster a culturally relevant lens on teaching and learning. The following research questions were investigated with their important findings detailed in Chapter Four: (a) *How do novice teachers prepared with a culturally relevant teaching framework implement a scripted literacy program?*; (b) *What culturally relevant strategies, resources, activities, and assignments do novice teachers implement during scripted literacy instruction?*; (c) *What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding culturally relevant teaching during literacy instruction?*; (d) *What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding the use of scripted programs during literacy instruction?*; (e) *How does scripted curriculum influence the identity of a novice teacher?*; and (f) *What larger contextual factors in the educational milieu influence the implementation of culturally relevant literacy instruction?* To answer these questions, this investigation utilized multiple data sources to guide the research process, (a) individual

interviews, (b) classroom observation fieldnotes, (c) university coursework assignments, (d) observation debrief transcripts, (e) teacher created lesson plans, and (f) visual representations. Each case's data was analyzed separately and had its own coding manual throughout within-case analysis. During cross-case analysis, the coding manuals and data were compared and contrasted which showed the similarities and nuances in the themes, categories, and supporting data for both participants.

Summary of Findings

Within-case and cross-case analyses revealed aggregated, salient, interconnected themes that answered these aforementioned research questions. The first theme of institutional and contextual constraints, constrained the participants' ability to enact the culturally relevant teaching they espoused. The second theme revealed that these constraints required the participants to engage in negotiations involving curricular decisions and negotiations of their identity development in order to navigate the constraints of the SFA scripted literacy program with the culturally relevant teaching beliefs they espoused. A third theme resulting from cross-case analysis showed the specific nature of how, when, and why aspects of culturally relevant teaching were defined, constructed, and implemented by participants. A fourth theme revealed through within case analysis, demonstrated that the school context related to the degree of SFA implementation fidelity greatly influenced how and when the participants enacted culturally relevant teaching. A fifth theme also emerged from within case analysis and showed the differences between the cases that were an outcome of their identity and experiences as first and second year teachers. A final theme emerged from within case analysis and demonstrated the misconstructions and [mis]conceptualizations of

collaboration, cooperation, and group work implemented by the participants as a way of aligning culturally relevant teaching and SFA structures. Each theme was directly related and interconnected to each other and the micro sociopolitical context of the participants.

These findings hold important implications for multiple stakeholders including: (a) educational policymakers at all levels; (b) teacher preparation program designers and teacher educators, (c) administrators and their novice and veteran teachers, (d) preservice supervisors and coaches, and (e) educational researchers, and (f) parents. To demonstrate how these findings could inform these stakeholders, I discuss the themes as they collapse into the three major categories of Contextual Constraints, Negotiations, and Constrained Culturally Relevant Practice (see Figure 6). I link these findings to the relevant literature and then describe implications, recommendations, and future research.

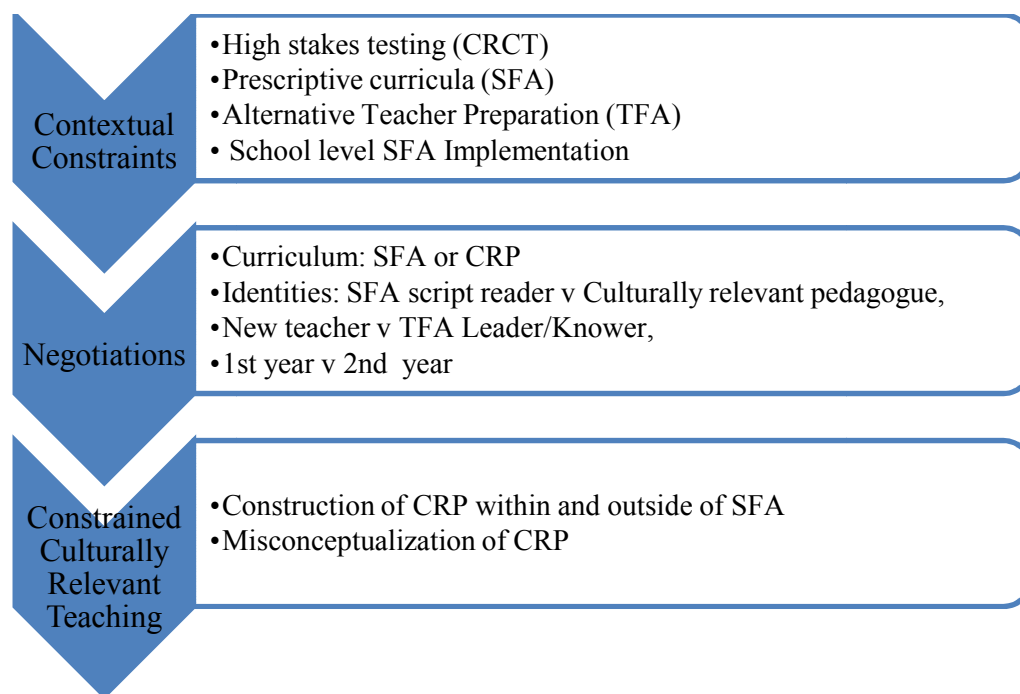


Figure 6. Themes Collapsed into Categories.

Contextual Constraints

The data revealed that several institutional and contextual constraints played a significant role in each participant's school context, identity development, attitudes, beliefs, and pedagogical practice. These constraints took several specific forms for these participants, including prescribed literacy curricula (Success for All), high stakes state testing (CRCT), and limited preparation through alternative certification (TFA). This aligns with research that asserts policies like No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) that specify instructional curriculum and practices and are tied to high-stakes state assessments, can have an especially powerful impact on classroom practice (Ogawa, Sandholtz, Martinez-Flores, & Scribner, 2003). Likewise, alternative certification has recently become the favored policy response to improving teacher quality and increasing the supply of teachers. The U.S. Secretary of Education's *Third Annual Report on Teacher Quality* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) explicitly promotes alternative certification, and NCLB includes participants in alternative certification programs in its definition of "highly qualified" teachers. Understanding how these federal policies play out in individual classroom contexts and hinders teachers and their students from realizing their full academic and social potential is important for teacher educators and policymakers, so that unintended consequences like teaching to the test, focus on basic skills, and low expectations can be exposed.

Testing as a Contextual Constraint

The findings revealed the role of high stakes testing in influencing and shaping the school context and the participants' curricular and pedagogical decisions. Chapter four detailed the changes in school schedules, focus on test preparation skills, and

reviewing past content in both Dee's and Fiona's school. This is congruent with Au's (2007) metasynthesis of studies on high stakes testing that showed the primary effect of high stakes testing is that "curricular content is narrowed to tested subjects, subject area knowledge is fragmented into test-related pieces, and teachers increase the use of teacher-centered pedagogies" (p.258). Dee and Fiona both agreed that SFA was not aligned with the standards or test, but the types of questioning and tasks were similar. The month before testing, both schools stopped using SFA partially or completely, so they could focus on test preparation solely. Fiona reported "using practice tests, building stamina and developing test-taking skills" as a way of preparing, coupled with some fun review sessions that included centers and games. She reported in her final interview, which was corroborated by one of her assignments, that she "didn't freak them out" and wrote them each a letter telling them it was "not the end of the world" and "just do your best". Dee opted for solely engaging reviews through games like Jeopardy and Password. She did not give the multiple practice tests like Fiona. In this instance, Fiona's strategy tried to balance the skill and drill instruction that is prevalent in many of today's classrooms especially around testing time, while Dee's test preparation was more fun for her and her students. These varying levels of the same contextual variable could be a result of a variety of factors including: (a) Fiona's socialization as a second year teacher, (b) Dee's desire to resist the skill and drill instruction in her classroom, (c) individual school pressure and monitoring, and/or (d) a lack of critical discussion in the teacher preparation program for discussing how to balance adequate test preparation and drill and kill practice and test preparation. Whatever the reason, testing played a major role in

curricular decisions for these teachers as their schools eliminated or drastically reduced SFA prior to testing and they adjusted their pedagogy based on these tests.

TFA and Alternative Certification as a Contextual Constraint

TFA and Lack of Preparation

Districts like Freedom School System, which serves predominantly low income and minority communities, are more likely to hire teachers like Dee and Fiona, who lack experience and teaching credentials (Lankford, et. al 2002). While neither participant explicitly said that TFA was a contextual constraint that influenced their curricular decisions or implementation of culturally relevant teaching, the data and chapter four showed how it was implicitly revealed and detailed throughout interview transcripts, assignments, debriefs. The very notion that Dee and Fiona as TFA educators had only five weeks of pedagogical and content training in their TFA Institute prior to being responsible for the academic and social growth of 15-30 students, was itself a constraint and profound influence on the context, negotiations, and curricular decisions. This finding is consistent with other research that found TFA teachers were constrained by their own inexperience and preparation (Veltri, 2008). Both participants were clear that they “had no idea” what they were doing in the beginning of the year, which drastically influenced their curricular choices and negotiations. It was primarily their lack of teacher preparation in literacy content and pedagogy that lead them to follow the SFA script verbatim in the beginning of their first year.

TFA and SFA: A Likely Pair of Constraints

TFA teachers are hired predominately in high poverty urban and rural schools because those schools are typically struggling and challenged by high teacher turnover

(Veltri, 2008). Research also shows that urban school districts like Freedom School System, are more likely to adopt state-mandated instructional programs which emphasize direct instruction and scripted lessons to improve students' performance on standardized tests (Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002; McNeil, 2000). In fact, over 20 of their 50 plus elementary schools chose either Direct Instruction (DI) or Success for All (SFA) as their school reform model. Therefore, being TFA teachers in urban schools meant Dee and Fiona were very typical in their placement at an urban school using a highly scripted program like SFA. Because they only had five weeks of training at the TFA summer institute, the script initially defined their reading practices and told them "what teaching reading was", to follow the script.

Educational researchers have long documented new teachers and their concerns with teaching and developing their specific subject matter (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Shulman, 1987) as well as their feelings of inadequacy (Fuller, 1969). Grossman and Thompson (2004) studied two first year teachers who had the opposite problem of Dee and Fiona; they had no language arts curriculum, standards, or school guidance, which was a major struggle as they floundered and did not know what or how to teach reading. Other studies have found new teachers were like Dee and Fiona, in that they initially felt comforted with the scaffold and guidance of the predetermined, scripted programs (Achinstein, 2004; Kauffman et. al, 2002; Shultz et. al, 2008). Proponents of policies that require curricular mandates like Success for All, suggest that for these reasons, *all* teachers need to be provided with a greater certainty and understanding about what and how to teach (Schmoker & Marzano, 1999). They posit scripted programs like SFA will improve student achievement and create equity across schools (Slavin, 2002), especially

those in underfunded districts, which tend to hire high numbers of under qualified and beginning teachers (Lankford et.al, 2002).

On the contrary, while Dee and Fiona agreed that the guide was initially helpful, they soon wanted to use their new content and pedagogical knowledge and skills that they were simultaneously learning in their alternative certification literacy courses, as the new basis for their instruction. Once they got over their initial trepidation with teaching reading, they both desired to focus more on balanced reading approaches that utilized literacy centers, literature circles, drama, art, and guided reading groups instead of the SFA script. This growth and confidence was seen in the teachers studied by Shutlz et. al (2008) who engaged in similar extension of literacy outside of their mandated curriculum. Unfortunately, Dee and Fiona were unable to do so unless it was outside of the 90 minutes of SFA time or when SFA was on hold. What was once seen as a helpful and necessary guide, soon became a constraint on their ability to grow, become effective professionals, and try ambitious pedagogies (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This finding is important because first year teachers are engaged in the process of learning to teach, and what they learn in their initial years of teaching about students, content, and teaching, will influence their teaching practices and trajectories for years to come (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Additionally, this finding supports existing research that argues that designing and enforcing curricula, preparing teachers alternatively or traditionally, and supporting novice teachers through professional development and mentoring, should take the developmental trajectory of novice teachers into account (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Glickman & Gordon, 1987; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Shulman & Shulman, 2004).

TFA and Multiple Stakeholders as Constraints

Their membership in Teach For America created other constraints within their context and on their practice, such as multiple observers, stakeholders, and foci. For instance, as Teach For America, “highly qualified” teachers, Fiona and Dee were required to have ongoing mentoring and coaching by Teach For America Program Directors, Carter University coaches, and SFA observers. Each stakeholder wanted and valued different aspects of teaching and learning. For example, TFA clearly “wanted to see data” showing “significant gains”. Carter University wanted to see them teaching their students “holistically” in “culturally relevant ways” and teaching in “terms of who the students are, where they come from, you are making connections to their lives”. Carter University’s TFA preparation program, played a role in their coaching, but also Fiona and Dee had to complete numerous projects and assignments within their classroom practice. Finally, as new TFA teachers, they (especially Dee as a first year) had more than the average number of administrative and SFA observations of their classroom practice and SFA implementation, which was a constraint on their curricular decisions and culturally relevant teaching within SFA. With all of these stakeholders involved and valuing different aspects of their teaching, it is no wonder their membership in TFA influenced their context and classroom practice.

Success for All as a Contextual Constraint

No Child Left Behind provides a context steeped in accountability that is interpreted and implemented differently in individual districts and classrooms. In this study, this accountability context intersected with the schools’ chosen reform model, Success for all, which constrained Dee and Fiona by established rigid, high stakes

accountability standards and prescribing instructional content and methods (Ogawa, et. al., 2003). Title I schools such as Dee's and Fiona's are strongly encouraged through financial incentives (more than \$50, 000) to adopt a comprehensive school reform (CSR) model in order to receive this and other federal funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Both Fiona and Dee were very aware of the financial ties of SFA, their schools, and the district and felt "decisions are made and the kids are not considered". As Fiona said in chapter four, "It makes me sad because it's not about the kids. It's about the money, the other stakeholders, it's whoever it's about, but it's not about the kids" (Int1F). The majority of these reforms chosen by schools are externally created by private developers and include highly scripted programs like Direct Instruction and Success for All (Tushnet et. al, 2004). The implementation of CSRs stemmed from influential business and government leaders that used various means of promoting CSRs through legislation and institutionalizing their use as the new silver bullet for school reform and improvement (Rowan, Camburn, & Barnes, 2004; Correnti & Rowan, 2007). As such, widespread adoption of these reforms spread across our nation's schools without knowing or valuing their effects on students or teachers.

Rowan and Correnti (2007) found that of the three CSRs they studied, SFA had the highest level of "procedural controls" that specified rigid instructional routines and provided schools with the most highly specified plan for enforcement of implementation fidelity by requiring an SFA facilitator at each school. This research is consistent with the findings in this study that related to surveillance and monitoring, degrees of implementation fidelity, and use of scripts and mandates. In Dee's school especially, "implementation to fidelity" through surveillance and monitoring were indeed constraints

on her teaching during SFA and her ability to implement culturally relevant teaching. Likewise, (MacGillivray et. al, 2004) found that surveillance played a major role in how and why teachers implemented the scripted program Open Court. Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) assert that the “use of the term fidelity to characterize adherence to the literacy program suggests that dissent is an expression of ‘infidelity’(p. 56). They suggest that, “Instructional policy environments that define professionalism in terms of fidelity and, thus, infidelity do not leave room for dissent and disagreement” (p. 56). In their study, two new teachers resisted the Open Court scripted program based on their students’ needs and had great personal costs. While both received positive evaluations for their teaching and were liked by their faculty Achinstein and Ogawa say their principled resistance forced one to resign, while the other was fired and left the profession. Both Dee and Fiona reported high levels of observations and adherence to SFA implementation fidelity, especially in the beginning of their first year of teaching. These SFA fidelity constraints influenced their context, curricular decisions, and culturally relevant teaching within SFA as evidenced by their debriefs, interviews, lesson plans, and observations.

SFA is a highly structured, teacher-directed, skills-based reading program that is based on a five day reading cycle. Critics (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 2006 ; Sleeter, 2005) suggest that it is the epitome of the banking model of education (Freire, 1972), where students are passive learners and knowledge is deposited into them. Dewey’s (1916) question is as relevant today as it was almost a century ago, “Why is it, in spite of the fact that teaching by pouring in, learning by a passive absorption, are universally condemned, that they are still so entrenched in practice?”(p.38). Fiona and Dee echoed Freire and Dewey’s concerns and were frustrated deeply by the lack of rigor, low level questioning,

and whole-group direct instruction that were the focus of the program. They saw the script as a major constraint on their teaching and their students learning because it was “remedial”, “boring”, and “the same thing over and over”. Additionally, they felt like their autonomy and creativity were constrained by the script. Both participants were disturbed and constrained by the low expectations embedded in the program by the number of pages (four) their students were expected to read and the lack of higher-level, critical thinking questions and tasks. This finding, that Dee and Fiona thought SFA lacked rigor, and impinged upon their autonomy and creativity and needed adaptations to materials and time, is consistent with Datnow and Castellano’s (2000) study of 47 educators who were interviewed about their SFA implementation. In their study, similar to Dee and Fiona, every teacher made adaptations to the script based on their students’ needs, their beliefs, and experiences.

The lack of rigor embedded in scripted school reform models like SFA has major implications for students and society. Some educational researchers call this second generation discrimination, which is the unequal access of urban schoolchildren to receive higher level learning and thinking because of tracking and basic skills curriculum and instruction (Sleeter, 2005). Scholars and educators assert this concentration of lower-level, basic skills in predominately poor and minority school districts like Freedom School System, is a means of sorting students for the lower levels of our stratified work force (Anyon, 1981; Oakes, 1985). Both Dee and Fiona exhibited and reported high expectations for their students in terms of careers, education, and becoming well-rounded citizens, and therefore felt the need to supplement the SFA basic skills curriculum within

and outside of SFA. As Fiona said, she wanted them to “become good thinkers and not just workers” (I2F).

Negotiations

Schools and the teachers within them respond to and implement school reforms, like Success for All, in different ways for different reasons. Datnow (1998) observes that some teachers push and sustain reforms while others may react with resistance or by actively subverting them. Teachers’ ideologies, rooted in their experiences and interactions, include their beliefs and values about education, teaching, schooling, and life, and heavily influence teachers’ roles in school reform efforts (Fullan, 1993). Furthermore, like Dee and Fiona, teachers feel responsible for responding to their students’ needs and will make adaptations to policies and reforms to do this (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). As such, Negotiations were an important finding of this study as the participants sought to reconcile their desire to be culturally relevant pedagogues while using a mandated, decontextualized, scripted literacy program in a high stakes testing environment. Negotiations for Dee and Fiona took the form of curricular negotiations and identity negotiations as a result of the intersections of their beliefs and attitudes surrounding the oft competing ideologies and foci of culturally relevant teaching, Teach For America, and Success for All. These findings confirm recent studies that have found new teachers actively negotiating the micropolitical contexts of their urban schools and the policies that rule them and what they learned in their preparation programs rooted in social justice and culturally relevant frameworks (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Athanases & DeOliveira, 2008; Bergeron, 2008; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Flores, 2007; MacGillivray et. al, 2004; Shultz et. al, 2008; Smagorinsky, et. al, 2002) study. These

studies are examples of how novice teachers are attempting to challenge, accommodate, and subvert the local and federal constraints of high stakes testing and scripted programs, so they may teach in accordance with their own educational beliefs and the theories learned in their preparation programs that advocate for educational equity for diverse students.

New Teachers Negotiating the Curriculum

Beginning teachers like Dee and Fiona actively negotiating and supplementing decontextualized scripted curriculum and Eurocentric textbooks, is an exciting finding. Ironically, after their initial need for the script, Fiona and Dee were similar to the dozens of teachers in Crocco and Costigan's (2007) study that found teachers had a harder time working within the constraints of the script than developing their own lessons. Curricular decisions to teach beyond the scripts and textbooks are essential for a healthy, diverse, democratic society (Sleeter, 2005). As Pinar (2004) stated, "The school curriculum communicates what we choose to remember about our past, what we believe about the present, what we hope for the future" (p.20). Fiona and Dee supplemented the SFA script with dozens of relevant examples and critical thinking questions. They also supplemented the standards and textbooks with missing voices, perspectives, and events in history using articles, videos, read alouds, poems, and research projects. Dewey (1938) saw textbook-focused teaching as inherently anti-intellectual, since it denies the ability of human intelligence to make sense of students' lived experiences and environments. Both Pinar and Dewey are asking educators to question the written curriculum, and how it plays out in the classroom. As such, it is important to have teachers like Dee and Fiona who are quietly yet actively subversive in their classrooms, but also using their voice in class

discussions and this research study, rather than simply and blindly conforming to the externally developed curriculum they are required to use in the form of textbooks, standards, and SFA scripts.

New Teachers and Identity Negotiations

Identity negotiations were more implicit throughout the data as Dee and Fiona navigated their numerous membership roles, responsibilities, and identities that were often incongruent and conflicting. As TFA members, Dee and Fiona are known for being leaders, highly intelligent, and distinguished among tens of thousands of other applicants from the country's best universities. This TFA identity of being a "leader", "change agent", and "a knower" stood in sharp contrast to their feelings of being "overwhelmed", "not wanting to rock the boat", and "having no idea what to do" as the identity of the underprepared, novice teacher was revealed in chapter four. This feeling is consistent with what Borko and Livingston (1989) called "expert turned novice" phenomenon (p. 489), which happens even to expert teachers who must teach new course material or content knowledge. Initially, as novices who did not know what to do, they accepted the script gratefully, but as their identities were shifting into wanting to be culturally relevant pedagogues, they desired to bring in multiple perspectives, critical thinking, critical literacy, students' lives, and integrated content to help make connections across the curriculum and with their students' communities and lives. As teachers in a school with SFA, they were forced to use a "teacherproof script" that made them feel like a "robot" and not an effective teacher. As their multiple identities intersected with new content and pedagogical knowledge, confidence, and experience, they found ways to accommodate, negotiate, and make space for these competing identities, roles, and responsibilities

(Shultz, et. al, 2008; Smagorinsky, et. al, 2002). They realized they could compromise and make space for the majority of their new literacy methods and culturally relevant teaching strategies throughout their other content areas, instead of the 90 minutes of SFA time. They also recognized that they could and should supplement the SFA script with their own critical thinking questions, relevant examples, and connections to students' lives. As their identities shifted with their confidence and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), so did their curricular negotiations, which resulted in more attempts to implement culturally relevant pedagogy, *within* SFA and *because of* SFA. Borko and Livingston (1989) suggested novice teachers are initially limited in their ability to see interconnections and possibilities, but with time, practice, and experience these become more evident.

Constrained Culturally Relevant Teaching

Learning to construct culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy is emphasized in the extant literature as a critical component of teacher preparation in order to meet the needs of all students (Gay, 2000; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Furthermore, teacher preparation programs with a conceptual coherent framework that locates multicultural education at the forefront and not the periphery of a program, by infusing culture throughout the entire program, is essential for preparing teachers for our diverse classrooms (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2005; Nieto, 2001; Sleeter, 2005; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Programs like Carter University's alternative certification program where faculty embed culturally relevant tenets throughout all of the courses, fieldwork, and assignments, while constructing diversity as a resource and not a deficit, are heeding this call from multicultural teacher educators and scholars. With this framework, Dee and

Fiona were able to challenge themselves, their students, and the constraints on their teaching by “teaching against the grain” (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Dee and Fiona carved out small, but important spaces *within* SFA to include critical thinking questions, relevant examples, students’ lives, and high expectations to supplement the rigor, engagement, and relevance that was missing from the script. *Because of* SFA, they needed to embed culturally relevant literacy instruction, resources, and critical literacy throughout the rest of their day. Since they were so limited during SFA, both Dee and Fiona seemed to make it a priority to carve out larger spaces for culturally relevant teaching, so they could reconcile their beliefs, attitudes, and identity involving SFA with their beliefs, attitudes, and identity regarding CRP.

The Nature of Culturally Relevant Teaching

[Mis]conceptualizations of culturally relevant teaching was an important finding in that while Dee and Fiona knew the gist of culturally relevant teaching from their preparation program, they were still at the early stages of truly using it as a lens for all teaching, learning, and curriculum. This was evident in the ways they constructed culturally relevant teaching in words and actions with a focus on adding to the curriculum. Additionally, it was most notable with Dee believing the competition and consensus based rewards system she used in SFA, was aligned with culturally relevant tenets of equitable learning, collaboration, and democratic exchanges of ideas. The adding of culturally relevant resources in Dee and Fiona’s classrooms is consistent with Banks' (1999) research on multicultural education that shows many school and university educators have a limited conception of multicultural education, and view it primarily in terms of including content about ethnic groups, women, and cultural groups. Banks

(1992), Levels 1, 2, and 3 regarding the integration of *ethnic content* into the curriculum is consistent with what and how Dee and Fiona were supplementing the curriculum. Level one, *The Contributions Approach*, which focuses on heroes, holidays, and distinct cultural elements was evident in Fiona's and Dee's read alouds, assignments, and lesson plans. Level two, *The Additive Approach* where teachers add content and perspectives without changing the curriculum's structure was evident in history lessons, social studies, and read alouds for both teachers. Level three, *The Transformative Approach* where the primary structure of the curriculum is changed to facilitate students viewing issues and events from the lens of diverse ethnic and cultural groups was partially implemented, but not to the extent that it was truly transformative. For instance, Dee would look at historical events like the Civil War from an African American soldier's perspective or Fiona would show videos by particular Native American tribes that told their story of the Trail of Tears, which was different from that of the textbooks. However, in both of these instances the content, contribution, and perspectives were added on to the existing curriculum rather than changed. There was no evidence of any Level 4 ethnic content integration, which is *The Social Action Approach* where students make decisions on important and relevant social issues and take action to solve them. This is not surprising since both Dee and Fiona were beginning teachers working within several prescribed programs across the curriculum. They both set goals for themselves in terms of their culturally relevant teaching instruction and activities for next year, so I hope and believe that these early and important steps will continue to evolve across their teaching trajectory as they become more confident finding resources, designing curriculum, and implementing culturally relevant teaching.

Dee's assumption that group work that utilized a competition and consensus based rewards system during SFA, was aligned with culturally relevant tenets, she demonstrated her novice, newly constructed conceptualizations of behaviorism and sociocultural theory that are the foundation of these two competing ideas. For instance, by encouraging the extrinsic motivation of points and competition, she was aligned more with behaviorism and not the true collaborative learning inherent in culturally relevant teaching classrooms. Additionally, student groups had a division of labor that was not equitable, and the forced consensus in the name of being accountable for each other's learning was a misinterpretation of that tenet of culturally relevant teaching. It is no surprise that there were [mis]conceptualizations of culturally relevant teaching. After all, Dee only had less than a year to understand, define, and implement this view of teaching and learning into her classroom. As such, as a critical multiculturalist, I cannot fault Dee for her misunderstandings, especially as a novice teacher so early in her career. I believe she is committed to the work, "the movement", her students, and affecting change. In classrooms all over the country, teachers are attempting to implement culturally relevant teaching, but instead contribute to deficit perspectives and views of cultural groups that continue to perpetuate stereotypes and promulgate multicultural education using heroes and holidays (Gorski, 2005). I did not see that in their classrooms, and I hope that during their time in the classroom and beyond, that they stay committed to the tenets of culturally relevant teaching.

Lastly, while Dee and Fiona were willing to teach in culturally relevant ways, alter the SFA script as they saw necessary, and openly challenge the use of SFA during class discussions and interviews with the researcher, neither one demonstrated the desire

or passion to take a stand in a larger forum. This is not surprising given their novice teaching status and the vast literature base that shows teacher resistance to reforms is usually a “close the door and teach” type of resistance due to needing and wanting job security (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). While disappointing that the resistance is limited to the classroom level, it is understandable and nonetheless respectable considering possible risks and consequences similar to those in Achinstein and Ogawa’s study (2006) mentioned previously where two novice teachers were forced out of the profession for vocally challenging similar programs.

Implications and Recommendations for Policymakers

Similar to other studies, the data in this study revealed that particular types of testable, measurable, and low level knowledge were used as mandated literacy curriculum in Dee’s and Fiona’s classrooms. Pinar (2004) asserts that intellectual inquiry as a goal for teaching has been changed to a focus on test scores. He argues that this focus on testing has taken control of the curriculum, what teachers are allowed to teach, and what children are permitted to study. In Dee and Fiona’s classrooms, questions geared towards finding answers in the text and retelling the story dominated the SFA literacy scripts and test preparation. As such, this type of curriculum was not engaging and was in fact “boring” for the students and teachers. One should ask, what good is it for students to decode, sound out words, and locate discrete answers in a story, if they associate reading with boredom and are not taught to question, critique, and evaluate what they read?

What is probably most disturbing is the idea that people making the decisions to use scripted programs would never allow it for their own children’s schools, which is evident in the reports that show SFA is only located in high poverty, urban, and rural

schools (Tushnet et. al, 2004). The idea that poor students and students of color need basic skills prior to higher-level thinking is based on a deficit perspective of diversity (Sleeter, 2005). With curriculum acting as a gatekeeper that regulates who gets access and opportunities within and beyond school, it is important for policymakers to step back and ask themselves, are the needs of diverse students really being met by NCLB, AYP, and CSR or have the consequences of prescriptive curricula, high stakes testing, and “highly qualified” alternatively certified teachers created more inequity instead of less? Former Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, who was a staunch supporter of these school reforms did just that. After seeing the negative effects on teachers, students, schools, and communities, she declared that “accountability turned into a nightmare for American schools”(Ravitch, 2010), and produced graduates who were drilled regularly on the basic skills but were often ignorant about everything else. Glickman (2001) suggests that standardized curriculum institutionalizes a single definition of an educated person, when instead a diversity of ideas and perspectives should be welcomed and encouraged to meet the needs of our diverse, democratic nation. A multicultural curriculum would locate students and their communities as sources and producers of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1994, Sleeter, 2005).

Recommendations include asking policymakers to consider more thoughtfully the role multicultural teacher education, scholars, and research have in current educational policy decision-making. Whose voices are being heard and valued in the discourse surrounding NCLB, core standards, accountability measures, equity, school reform, and textbooks? Who has a seat at the table and who does not? How can teachers’, parents’ and

students' voices be represented in the design and implementation of school reform models? Lastly, would you send your child to a school with Success for All?

Implications and Recommendations for Teacher Education

Educational researchers often point to the attrition rates that show roughly 46% of all new teachers leave within five years, while teachers in urban, high poverty districts leave at a rate of 50% greater than low poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2003). For teacher education programs to ignore or downplay the job constraints that teachers cite as their reasons for leaving is to grossly under prepare teachers for the current educational milieu that drastically differs from many teachers' perceptions of teaching that results from their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 61). Many educational researchers have documented the "practice shock" (Veenman, 1984; Achinstein & Barratt, 2004) and "two worlds pitfall" (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1983) that results from the gap between teacher preparation and teaching in schools. Teacher preparation programs can use the finding of how contextual constraints hinder novice teacher's pedagogy by designing programs that are conceptually grounded in theoretical frameworks and coursework that explicitly expose and critique these macro and micro level constraints on teaching and learning. Teacher educators in these programs can ground their subject-specific assignments and readings in social justice and "teaching against the grain" (Cochran-Smith, 2004) frameworks that better prepare novice teachers for mediating and negotiating these imminent constraints. Grounding programs, classes, coursework, and mentoring in theories and research that unequivocally locates teaching in a larger political context and engages students in considering the sociopolitical context of the current educational landscape is essential to navigating and negotiating the impending constraints

they will face (Achinstein et. al, 2004; Achinstein, 2006; Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bergeron, 2008; Flores, 2007; Nieto, 2001; Schultz et. al, 2008; Sleeter, 2004). By conceptually framing programs of study and preparation with teaching against the grain or social justice frameworks, it situates the preservice or novice teacher as a political being (Bruner, 1996; Shor & Freire, 1987) who chooses implicitly or explicitly, consciously or “dysconsciously” (King, 1991) to participate in or challenge a system that has historically underserved students of color and of lower socioeconomic means (Grant & Wieczorek, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Zeichner & Hoefft, 1996). Second, this framework locates teaching and learning within a sociohistorical, sociopolitical, and sociocultural lens in order for teachers to holistically understand and evaluate their own schooling, identity, life opportunities, and construction of knowledge (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Sleeter, 2005). Third, the framework creates a theoretical and practical foundation for grounding acts of resistance to the various institutional constraints that are inevitable in their initial teaching placements (Achinstein, 2006; Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Schultz et. al, 2008).

As relevant to this study, literacy instructors could provide multiple opportunities for students to engage with scripted curriculum, critique it, and supplement the script akin to how Dee and Fiona did with critical thinking questions and questions that linked stories to students’ lives. Another avenue would be providing explicit learning opportunities on how to integrate critical literacy and culturally relevant reading, writing, and reflection opportunities throughout all content areas. Likewise, providing occasions for students to investigate multiple perspectives and contributions on a range of standards that are taught in their state (Sleeter, 2005). Teachers like Fiona and Dee, who are

actively negotiating and enacting constrained culturally relevant teaching practices within institutional constraints, should be used as examples for other preservice teachers. They can serve as cooperating teachers and guest speakers for teacher preparation programs. Videotaping their literacy instruction within and outside of SFA could help preservice teachers understand how and when they enact culturally relevant teaching within their constrained curriculum. This could also lead to formulating a group of committed educators who can continue networking on issues like scripted curricula. This group might collectively address these issues in forums that are larger than their classrooms, including school district board meetings.

Based on some of the [mis]conceptualizations that Dee and Fiona had about what constituted culturally relevant teaching, teacher educators could spend more time constructing culturally relevant teaching theoretically and practically, while comparing it with many of the behaviorist practices found in schools today. By explicitly teasing out what culturally relevant teaching is and isn't, could help preservice teachers see opportunities and reasons for enacting culturally relevant teaching within and outside of SFA. For example, studying and critiquing written or videotaped case studies of teachers' practice, lessons, or resources that exemplify positive and negative examples of culturally relevant instruction would help preservice teachers learn to question and think more deeply about developing and implementing curriculum. Looking at examples of quality multicultural children's literature versus literature that perpetuates stereotypes could be another example. Working collaboratively to develop culturally relevant lesson plans and activities using state standards, scripts, and focal children from their classrooms could help create necessary connections for preservice teachers as well. Reading and discussing

articles and case studies involving teachers who are “operationalizing culturally relevant teaching” in effective ways is another example (Morrison et al., 2008).

Finally, preservice teachers’ supervisors, coaches, and observers need to be aware of the various constraints such as scripted programs that influence field experiences. Interns can be frustrated that what they are learning in their classes cannot be implemented during scripted programs, which hinders their abilities to practice and implement their newly learned skills like guided reading, centers, and/or readers’ or writers’ workshop. Additionally, teaching interns how to negotiate these constraints through discussing, role playing, and questioning can help them build the necessary skills they will need when they experience these constraints on their own classroom practice.

Implications and Recommendations for Parents, Guardians, and Schools

It seems ambitious and unrealistic to ask parents and guardians to investigate and question the curricula used by their child’s school by reading educational research and attempting to do something. However, Murrell (2000) suggests that parents and community members can and should play an equal, genuine, collaborative, and active role in establishing competent multicultural educators and education that meets the needs of their children. He asserts that to effectively renew urban schools, we need to mobilize communities of practice and inquiry minded educators who are actively engaged in a cooperative effort of preparing practitioners and practice in diverse urban schools. Murrell suggests we also need to increase the number of community teachers-teachers (particularly of color) whose teaching practice is effective with students in culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse urban schools. This is part of one model for how teacher educators, teachers like Dee and Fiona, community groups (i.e., PTAs, Social

Justice Community groups), and professional societies (i.e., NEA, PAGE, AFT) could collaborate with parents and guardians understand and navigate controversial curriculum and prepare educators to effectively work in urban schools. The information in this study and the information provided by these aforementioned groups could help parents advocate for a more rigorous curriculum for their children.

As districts, administrators, and teachers evaluate scripted packaged programs for their schools, it is important to examine the quantitative and qualitative research surrounding their options because their choice plays a role in student achievement beyond test scores, teacher autonomy, and the understanding and possible uses of literacy. The choice limits what is taught, not taught, and how literacy is taught. It limits the possibilities of integrating content areas into reading, differentiating instruction, and choosing literature based on students' interests and backgrounds. The choice changes the pedagogy teachers use and effects their creativity to engage and motivate their students. It ignores best practices like guided reading groups and literature circles. While some literature on scripted curricula may point to increased test scores, it doesn't show the challenges faced by students and teachers as this scripted curricula influences their teaching and learning of literacy.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on this study and other recent literature that demonstrates how novice teachers are negotiating and supplementing scripted programs, I suggest the following lines of inquiry to further build this new and growing body of literature. First, continue studying novice teachers like Dee and Fiona who are prepared with a culturally relevant framework and see how culturally relevant teaching is integrated across their curriculum.

Second, conduct longitudinal comparative case studies that examine novice teachers like Fiona and Dee who espouse culturally relevant teaching with novice teachers that do not and look at their career trajectories and practice. Third, examine the specific links between alternative teacher preparation programs who espouse a culturally relevant conceptual framework for their courses with their graduates' literacy practices in a variety of contexts (i.e. ELLs, rural areas, study abroad etc). Fourth, develop and study opportunities for graduates of these programs that are focused on social justice and culturally relevant teaching frameworks to maintain communities of practice in order to collectively discuss and support each other as they attempt to circumvent scripted programs and testing pressures. Fifth, conduct a similar study to the one presented in this dissertation using data collected from the beginning of the first year to the end of the second year of teaching to document change in practice. Finally, each of these aforementioned possible research studies should and could be broadened to include community perspectives (King, 2008).

Conclusion

This study was conceived as a result of my past experience as an elementary teacher and my present position as a multicultural teacher educator. First, my passion for this topic came from my own struggles as an alternatively certified, novice, third grade teacher in an urban school who struggled for several years to navigate the micro sociopolitical context of my school and district. The constraints and requirements placed on me by (a) the mandated comprehensive school reform model, America's Choice, (b) the state standards that included both Georgia QCCs and Georgia Performance Standards, (c) high stakes testing, (d) limited resources, and (e) my own inexperience as an

alternatively certified teacher, interfered with my ability to implement multicultural education as a lens for all teaching, learning, and curriculum development. Furthermore, multicultural education was not a focus of my preparation program, and I only had one diversity class. I wondered how anyone could really teach *well* and *stay in teaching* with all of these constraints, lack of autonomy, and lack of preparation! I was also moved by my awareness of my own education compared with those of my third grade students who often had long term subs, inexperienced teachers, few academic resources, and some teachers who did not care or had low expectations. I thought, surely, if *I* had a preparation program that exposed me to the various constraints I would encounter, while teaching me to understand and construct culturally relevant theory and practice, I would have been a better navigator of my school context and a better teacher. As such, when I saw two of Carter University's alternative certification programs using a conceptually coherent culturally relevant framework, I knew it was my opportunity to see what *I* could have done had I had this type of preparation.

The second motivation for this study was my new role as a multicultural teacher educator. I wanted to see how students were translating theory into practice, which is a struggle with most disciplines, but especially multicultural education, which is heavy on theory and conceptualization but low on practice (Gay, 2000). I wanted to know what and how they constructed culturally relevant teaching in their practice. I also was very curious as to how teachers who espouse culturally relevant teaching could honestly bring themselves to teach a scripted program like SFA. It seemed so contradictory to me, and I had to know what prevailed, what was compromised, and at what cost to teachers and students. How were these two competing ideologies reconciled by novice teachers? I had

to know for these personal reasons, but also for professional reasons because my college students were often coming in saying, “I can’t do any of what you are saying because I have a scripted reading program in my placement.” Now, I have two more examples of new teachers who teach beyond the script. This study contributes to the growing body of recent literature that shows novice teachers actively negotiating their constraints in order to meet the needs of their students who have historically been underserved by the education system. In their first year and two years of teaching, they were learning more and more about the political educational milieu that influences their teaching:

Now . . . I feel like it’s about politics, and it’s making me angry. And I don’t know if it’s just because all of the controversy that is surrounding the school system right now, but I don’t like it at all. I guess it was like a honeymoon period where I didn’t really know too much, and now I’ve seen what really happens. And I guess that it is not a bad thing if I’m trying to change it, but that’s where I am now (I2F).

Her disappointment in the politics of schooling brings me to my final point. I suspect it is almost impossible to find any public school educator who is happy with the current educational milieu of testing, accountability, reforms, Race to the Top, furloughs, and negativity towards teachers and schools. Even staunch supporters of these current reforms (i.e. Diane Ravitch) have now seen the unintended consequences that have devastated our schools, students, and teachers. Teachers like Dee and Fiona are committed to culturally relevant teaching, their students, and their schools, yet are challenged by the policies. With so many excellent veteran and novice teachers leaving the profession because of these constraints on their practice and so many students suffering and suffocating under the regime of testing and scripted curriculum, we must ask ourselves, why don’t we stand up for ourselves and our students? If not us... who? If not now... When? (unknown).

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Semi-structured Protocol for Interview 1

1. Please describe the demographics of the students in your class.
2. How do the demographics of your class affect your teaching?
3. Please describe the literacy program you are currently using. (Can you give examples of a typical literacy block?)
4. What do you think about your literacy program?
5. How do you feel about your literacy program?
6. What would you change about your literacy instruction?
7. Tell me about your experiences of being a new teacher.
8. What does culturally relevant teaching mean to you? (What does it look like? Can you give examples?)
9. How would you compare your literacy program with culturally relevant teaching? (How do they differ? How are they the same?)
10. How do you implement culturally relevant teaching during your literacy instruction? (Can you give examples of resources, strategies, assignments, activities?)
11. How are topics and resources chosen for your literacy instruction?
12. What hinders your use of culturally relevant teaching during literacy instruction?
13. What supports your use of culturally relevant teaching during literacy instruction?
14. How does testing affect your literacy instruction

APPENDIX B

Data Collection Summary	
Research Question	Data Sources Addressing Questions
How do novice teachers prepared with a culturally relevant teaching framework implement a scripted literacy program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews 2. Observation Field Notes 3. Observation Debriefs
What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding culturally relevant teaching during literacy instruction?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews 2. Observation Debriefs 3. Visual Representations
What culturally relevant strategies, resources, activities, and assignments do novice teachers implement during scripted literacy instruction?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews 2. Observation field notes 3. Observation Debriefs 4. Lesson Plans 5. Assignments
What are the teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding the use of scripted programs during literacy instruction?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews 2. Observation Debriefs 3. Visual Representations
How does a scripted curriculum influence the identity of a novice teacher?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews 2. Observation Debriefs 3. Observation field notes
What larger contextual factors in the educational milieu influence culturally relevant literacy instruction?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observation field notes 2. Observation Debriefs 3. Interviews 4. Assignments

APPENDIX C

Excerpt from Dee's Coding Manual

Codes: Surveillance/Monitoring and Stigmas

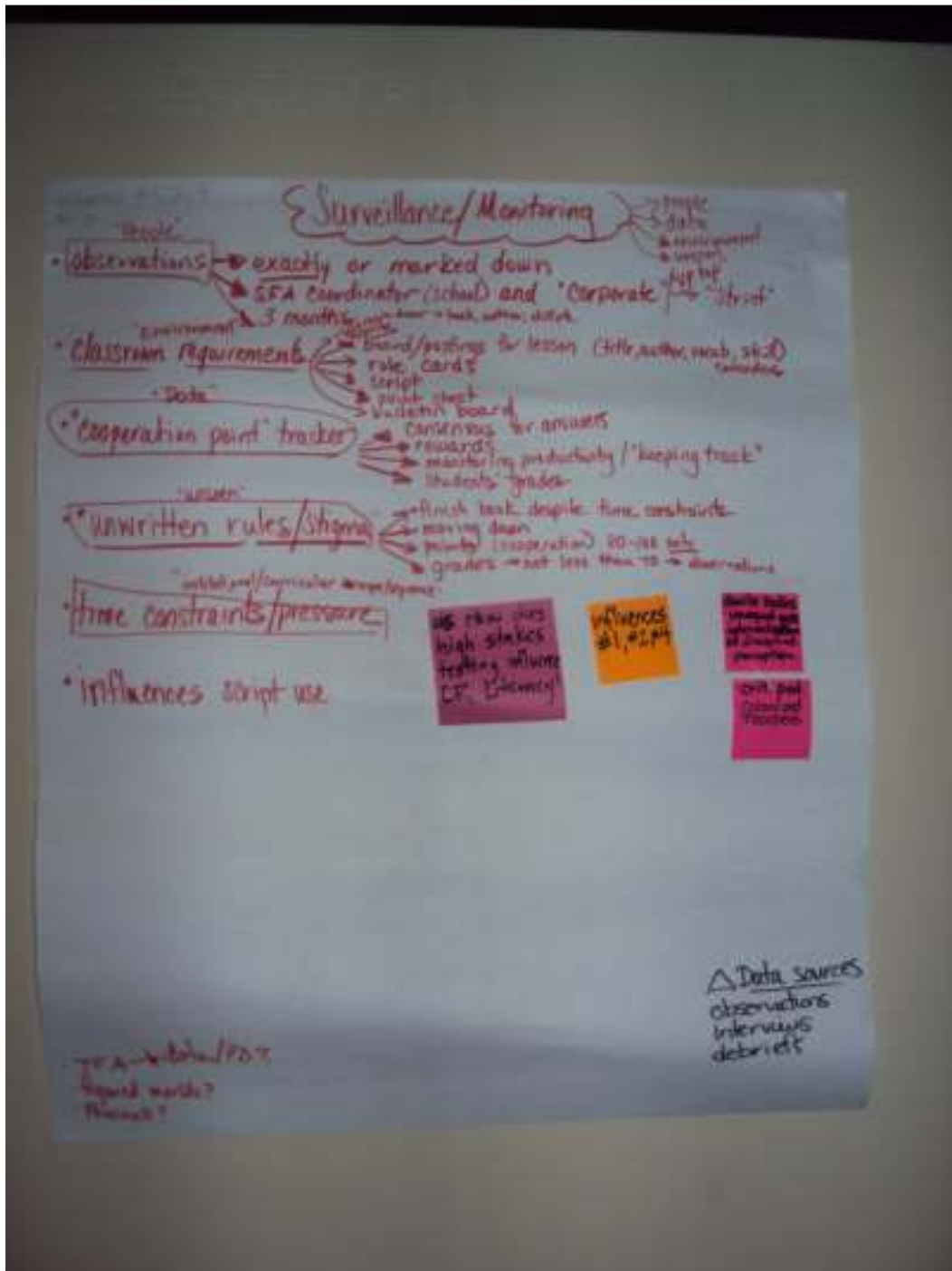
I1D	81-84	certain times of the year they really have you on observations and if you're not doing exactly what they say, like they'll look at the script and if you are not exactly where you are suppose to be they mark you down for um, the observation.
I1D	86-89	there's an SFA coordinator and she's not as bad as when the corporate or whatever you would call them are not there, but definitely when they're there and they are doing the observations where the people from up top come in and they're strict.
I1D	91	I would say every few months, maybe every 3 months maybe
Deb1DDee	55-59	I have to rewrite certain things to go on the board. There are certain things that need to be posted in the classroom when you're doing your SFA lesson, such as the author, the title the vocabulary words etc What else, um vocabulary words have to be posted, Team Talk Extenders, things of that nature.
	67-73	They are not directly integrated in the individual student grade. It is more so a tracker to make sure that the students are being productive working in the group, cause there is a lot of group work done during SFA, and it can become ineffective if people aren't doing their work. So that's kind of a way to make sure that they're um keeping track. Kind of a way to keep track of people being productive in their groups.
Deb2D	21-25	That doesn't happen. You can't not be done with a book or a packet (laughs). If you don't finish by, well, ya know, I've never tried it, um, it's just something that you can't do. You catch up, if you fall behind one day, you have to double it up in one of the next sessions or something of that nature. You're not allowed to be behind at all. It just doesn't happen.

Deb2D	27-28	No you don't have more time, it's just not allowed, and there's definitely a negative stigma if you take extra days.
Deb2D	54-59	you're SUPPOSE to be able to give any points, but there is definitely a stigma attached to anyone who gives less than 70 for those points, so you just won't see people giving students less than a 70, generally you see them giving, well actually, no you are only allowed to give it, I say there's just a stigma attached to it, but actually in the sheet where you have to plug in grades it says you're only allowed to give 80, 90, 100
	161-163	Um, I've never heard of anyone ever moving down honestly I don't think that happens. There is definitely a stigma related to that. I've never ever heard of that happening.
I1D	103-104	they have a vocabulary vault thing we are suppose to do, but I don't do it all the time unless someone is watching (chuckle)
Deb4D	28-30	Yes, you always have to use them. They should be out, the role cards should be out, the points with the sheets, everything should be out, your teacher guide sheet should be out in case they walk in.
Deb4D	42-54	I would tell them to make sure they get the program down first. Understand what it is that they require of you. Exhibit what they require of you when they come in the beginning of the year for their observationstions. Master what it is that they tell you that you need to do and then once you do that you can start incorporating and adding in your own ideas. So don't try and go in there and say, No, I'm not going to use the script, I'm going to do what I want kind of thing. Do what they tell you you have to do and then once you get that down pat, and you can do their requirements, then you'll be able to do ya know how do I say, like you'll be...you can hmmm let me see..once you get good at doing what they say you can incorporate and infuse your own ideas but still do what they are asking you to do. So when they come in and observe you, you can still justify that you are doing XYZ then you can do that. But you want to make sure that you get down pat the requirements first.

Deb4D	82-84	I just basically do it off of my um, at my discretion basically. I look at what things are important to me and what things I noticed that they look for in observations, and I kind of do it based off of that.
O1D	14	SFA bulletin board
O3D	19-20	On Smartboard:Week 2Title How to becaome a perfect person in just three daysAuthor Steven ManesNarrativeReading Goal QuestioningWriting Goal Writing a Cheer Vocab
O4D	21	8:35 Schedule on smart board :
O4D	94	Some teams I don't see the role cards out.
O5D	13-14	Team captains have role cards out, score sheet out, and graphic organizers. Starting with 2 minute edit on board. Day Three

APPENDIX D

Charts with Themes, Properties, and Dimensions



APPENDIX E

Course Syllabus: Carter University TFA Language and Literacy Class

ECE 6385/6386: Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners I and II ECE 6387: ESOL Language Acquisition Course Syllabus: Spring/Summer 2010

Carter University

Goal of the Early Childhood Education/ Teach For America Collaborative Certification Program

This program has been designed to prepare teachers to be relevant individuals who construct locally situated knowledge in order to make decisions for instruction based on meaningful relationships with students and families, knowledge of cultures and communities, and constant self-reflection and collaboration with other similarly engaged colleagues.

This certification program has been created specifically for Teach for America Corps Members and with the knowledge base, training, and experiences provided by TFA in mind. Specifically, this program is for the teacher who is eager to learn and highly motivated to work toward educational equity at both the classroom and the structural level. With this commitment in mind, this program has been purposefully created to provide platforms for co-constructed knowledge and action, to promote engagement in self-reflexive practice through the lenses of educational theory, research, pedagogy, and professional standards. The framework for this program provides choices and opportunities for intentional decision-making and dynamic group interactions. Teacher participants collaborate with faculty to shape the paths by which program process and content are determined. This program is based on the assumption that learning is a socially constructed process that builds on the knowledge and experiences of the learner and on the premise that a small group of committed individuals, when united in purpose and in mission, really do have the potential to change the world. This program of study has been informed both by research on teacher development and through collaboration with Teach for America leadership and is designed to support the social, cognitive, and emotional development of beginning teachers and their students as all grow and develop through intentional reflection and action. The courses in this program have been carefully constructed with this vision in mind and have been integrated in order to provide a coherent and comprehensive learning trajectory that supports the mission and purpose of this collaboration. This program, and each course in it, provides opportunities for teachers to engage with each other in order to reflect upon, articulate, and act upon their mission, vision, and philosophy as a teacher of children and an individual working to create a more just world.

Course Descriptions and Purposes

ECE 6385 and ECE 6386 are courses designed to prepare teacher candidates to be successful and reflective reading and writing teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students in urban classrooms. The foci of these courses are to continue to explore (a) literacy development during the elementary years, (b) theories relevant to learning literacy, (c) culturally relevant teaching strategies and skills that contribute to literacy learning, and (d) ways that teachers can build on students' culture and prior knowledge to best meet the needs of students in diverse classrooms.

ECE 6387 is designed to prepare teachers to be successful and reflective teachers of linguistically diverse students in urban classrooms, particularly those who are learning English as a Second Language.

These are field-based courses in which you will be asked to try the strategies you learn about in your classroom, as well as share what you've learned with classmates. Because these classes are focused on teaching literacy, you will be expected to engage often and widely in reading, writing, speaking, and listening assignments and activities both in and out of class. **These courses are reading and writing intensive.**

These courses focus on the teacher as a reflective practitioner of language and literacy instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students, affirming children's diverse backgrounds, abilities, interests, personalities, and experiences in order to nurture the holistic development of all children. Throughout these courses, we will consider our role in the creation of more just and equitable educative opportunities for all children, specifically the ones we serve daily in our classrooms.

Required Textbooks and Materials: Literate Lives, Flint **Teaching Literacy to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners I and II**

Literacy Sketchbook (Weekly, 15 points) (INTASC 1,3,4,7,8,9) (TESOL 1,2,3,4,5)

This notebook is a space for you to represent and record your emerging thoughts, questions, reactions, and disagreements (in any form you wish and can explain/interpret) to the texts, presentations, and discussions. You will also be expected to document your reactions to the readings others share in the Praxis group sessions. These recordings should make evident your careful reading of and response to the texts assigned and will be shared with course instructors weekly in addition to being submitted at the mid and end point of the courses. The reflections and reactions recorded here will be used for your monthly STC syntheses (submitted the 15th of each month).

STCs on Professional Readings and Workshops (Monthly, Posted on Livetext by 10PM on 15th, 15 points) (INTASC 1,3,4,7,8,9) (GSTEP 1,2,3,4,5,6) (ISTE 1, 3) (TESOL 1,2,3,4,5)

Square		What “squared” with your thinking? That is, what ideas did you encounter in the reading that were consistent with what you already know and/or believe about teaching?
Triangle		<p>What “pointed” you in new directions? What new ideas did you discover in the readings?</p> <p>Discuss the ways in which the readings provided new understandings about teaching and learning.</p>
Circle		<p>What thoughts are still “circling” in your mind? This paragraph will require the most thoughtful reflection. In it you will discuss the ways in which you think you could use the new information to build on what you already know. In addition, you should write about the things that still puzzle you. Write about your concerns. Write questions about things you don’t understand, things that make you think of your own learning, and <i>especially</i> things that you relate to your own teaching.</p>

**Optional Articles and Praxis Group (Sign up for presentation dates, 12 points)
(ISTE 1, 3, 4, 5) (INTASC 1,3,4,7,8,9) TESOL 1,2,5)**

You will meet with your praxis group weekly to discuss a range of issues/concerns/questions/explorations related to your literacy instruction and selected articles. Each month you will read and bring summary talking points to share with your group about the main points and implications of your articles. You will hand in a copy of the summary and post it to Livetext the night of your presentation.

**LITERACY CASE STUDY (April 12, 4 PM on Livetext, 25 points) (ISTE 1, 2, 3, 5)
(INTASC 1,2,3,4,7,8,9) (TESOL 1,2,3,4,5)**

This semester you will work intensely with a student in your class who is having reading difficulties. Through a minimum of 10 sessions (approximately 20-30 minutes in length), you will assess the student’s views, reading process, and ability to construct meaning from texts and will implement specific instructional activities in light of your ongoing assessments. The information from the sessions will provide the data for the writing of a report or a *literacy/language case study* (students should be given pseudonyms to assure confidentiality). A literacy profile is a case study of the student's strengths, needs, attitudes, and interests. You will also have the opportunity to discuss the language development of your student as appropriate. The literacy profile will also address instructional recommendations based on an analysis of the data collected through the various assessments. Instructional recommendations should be designed in light of the competencies a student needs to learn as outlined by the State Performance Standards for

the English Language Arts and should reference a minimum of 3 outside sources including the National Reading Panel's report on scientifically based reading instruction. These case studies are expected to be professional documents written with clarity and should be understandable to other teachers and to the student and/or parents. **Support and additional information regarding the requirements of the literacy profile will be distributed during the semester.**

Strategy Presentation and Annotated Portfolio (Sign up for presentation, Annotated Portfolio Due 4/26, 15 points total) (ISTE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (INTASC I,4,7,8,9) (TESOL 3,4,5)

You will sign up to present two literacy strategies from five different designated strands (SBRR). This will be a presentation for the class, and you will need a handout describing (a) the purpose, (b) the process, (c) link to performance standards, and (d) references used. You are also encouraged to explore and present technology-based strategies. Each presentation will be worth 5 points.

As others present the strategies you will compile their notes into a resource portfolio. Over the course of the semester you will choose one strategy from each strand to use with your students in your own context. Each of these strategies will need to be engaged in at least twice. You will tab those strategies and behind the handout provided by your colleague you will attach this annotation for each use (a) when/why you chose to use this strategy particularly and with whom you used it, (b) how it went, (c) what the student seemed to learn, (d) what you learned, (e) how/when you will use the strategy again in the future.

This strategy portfolio should be a document that aids you in your own instruction and helps you consider a range of approaches. The portfolio will be submitted to instructors on 4/26 and will be worth 5 points.

Semiotic Representation (4/2, 8 points) (ISTE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10) TESOL (1,2,3,4,5,6)

At the end of the course you will create a representation of your thinking about language, literacy, teaching and learning as it has evolved through this class. It can take any medium or form, but should be reflective. This semiotic representation is a reflective look at where you are, what you think, and what you want to do with these understandings. You are encouraged to incorporate digital tools, information, and platforms for this presentation. This will be presented during the final class meeting.

Participation in Class Assignments and Discussions (Weekly, 10 points total) (INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10) (GSTEP 1,2,3,4,5,6) TESOL (1,2,3,4,5,6)

Participation will be assessed using a “+”, “/”, “-“system. Full participation in class is a “+”. Limited participation (including not being in attendance for the full class or incomplete classwork) is a “/”. If you are absent, you will initially receive a “-“ (0 points). Students who are absent will not be able to capture an understanding of the collaborative process of thinking through the material that in-class participation makes possible; however, students may (a) complete all assigned readings, (b) complete an independent analysis of any responses shared during the workshop portion of the class, (c) obtain a copy of class notes from a peer, and then (d) submit a 1 page, single-spaced personal reflection and be eligible to receive partial credit “/”. Daily scores will be calculated and a percentage taken to equal ten points.

Full credit for participation will be given only to those who have not missed class sessions, arrived on time, and who have completed all in class assignments including writing prompts and participation in discussions and activities.

ESOL Language Acquisition Conference Proposal (2/15, 5 points); Conference Paper and Presentation/ Participation (5/10-24, 50 points) (ISTE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10) (GSTEP 1,2,3,4,5,6) TESOL (1,2,3,4,5,6)

Early in the course you will select a topic that you would like to research in more depth. You will write a conference proposal using the forms provided. Over the semester you will research this topic and write a 10-12 page paper on your topic of choice. Specific guidelines for this paper will be distributed by the second class session, and we will discuss possible topics and sources for information in class. You will be reading multiple research articles during these courses and will have several articles to use as examples. You will be presenting the culmination of this work in our final course sessions and will sign up for your specific presentation time slot. You will be required to incorporate technology and interactive engagements as part of your conference presentation.

Instructional Conversations- A Careful look at classroom discourse (3/1, 15 points) (ISTE 2) (INTASC 2,5,6,7,9) (GSTEP 1,2,3,5,6) (TESOL 1,2,4,5)

Record a representative hour of your classroom community. Listen through the entire recording for two five minute segments that you find interesting. Transcribe those segments (indicating the time started and stopped). Describe why you have chosen these segments and analyze the discourse using what you have gained from Choice Words and Cazden’s description of dialogical classroom structures. Pick out several other phrases or interactions from the hour to analyze with this in mind as well. You will submit your transcripts and a brief 3-5 page analysis.

Non-Native Speaker Interview (3/29, 5 points) (INTASC 1,3,9,10) (GSTEP 1,2,5,6) (TESOL 1,2,5)

You will have the opportunity to seek out and interview a non-native English speaker. Using the Interview worksheets included at the end of this syllabus, interview and write up your findings in a 2-3 page paper.

Literacy Sketchbook (5/24, 5 points) (INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10) (GSTEP 1,2,3,4,5,6) TESOL (1,2,3,4,5,6)

Final STC (5/27, 15 points) (ISTE 1, 3) (INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10) (GSTEP 1,2,3,4,5,6) TESOL (1,2,3,4,5,6)

At the end of the class, you will revisit your initial response to the questions on literacy learning/teaching and add to it a final and more comprehensive STC. This will be an opportunity for you to synthesize, puzzle, and consider your understandings at the end of the courses and to reflect upon your evolving view of literacy and language learning and teaching.

Dialogical Participation (5/27, 5 points) (INTASC 9,10) (GSTEP 3,6) (ISTE 1, 3, 5)

According to Freire (1970/2000) in a problem-posing pedagogy... the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for the process in which all grow. ...Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other. (p. 80)

Freire (1969/2000) explicitly defined dialogue, insisting that it must be a “horizontal relationship between persons...[a] relation of ‘empathy’ between two ‘poles’ who are engaged in a joint search” (p. 45). Later, Freire (1970/2000) elaborated on the concept of dialogue as he provided the elements that must be present for dialogue to exist, without expanding on the details, they are: love, humility, faith, trust, hope, and critical thinking. It is this Freirian definition of dialogue that I anticipate will be present during our class sessions. (Stinson, 2008) You will engage in a self evaluation process at the end of this course to discuss your view and interpretation of your level of engagement and Freirian participation, particularly in regards to the norms agreed upon by the class.

APPENDIX F

Responsive Interviewing Examples I1F

F-No, no we didn't do that one. We started the collage, but we did do the map making one, you saw that, did you see that?

K-No.

F-No? Oh, it was cool, really cool. They had to make a map of their special place in like the community or wherever and then they got up and talked about it.

K-Oh, good deal. Speaking of community, how does SFA involve the local community?

F-(pause)..I don't think it does.

K-last few..Do you think the scripted literacy program like SFA makes you the best teacher you can be?

F-(quickly) No.

K-Why?

F-Because I feel restricted and partly, that's partly my fault I guess because I could do a lot more in terms of making it work for my kids, but it's a little bit difficult just to go around what is already set than it is just to create what I would really like to do. So I don't think I'm being as effective as I could be.

K-Um, you already mentioned this that the structure of SFA and how it's set up and your literacy block, the question is does the structure of SFA and your literacy block allow you to teach both reading and writing every day?

F-No.

K-You said reading first...

F-Reading for 5 days and writing on the 6th day.

K-Um, what would you, I think you kind of touched on this, but in case you had anything to add um, what would you change about SFA or your literacy instruction?

F- Um, obviously we do have SFA again next year my resolve has been to just reach out like find more resources that are going to, that I can add to the SFA block, um and also that I can use throughout the day. So something has to happen, like I won't go another year like with what happened last year where my kids are like, bored, and they're not really being pushed to the level that they can be pushed to. Um, so I'm pulling in more outside sources, and I'm just going to figure it out.

K-You said that they're bored, do you think that they don't like SFA?

F-They hate it. They hate it. They really do. Like they don't like it at all.

K-You said for keeping things like for SFA, what would you keep?

F-I think it's important for them to dialogue about literature, but I do that in literature circles, so I feel like, I don't know I would keep the dialogue, um the vocabulary is really good that's about it.

Example 2

F It might or it will if we have a visit, but other than that we're teaching them how to um, like context clues, we're teaching them testing strategies. we're teaching them how to go through the passage and finding the answer. Underlining, eliminating, like all those things are what we're teaching at that time not SFA.

K-When you say a visit, what do you mean?

F-Um, from, I don't know what they're called but like 3-4 times a year we have um a lady that comes in and observes.

K-Um, do you know when she is coming?

F-Yeah, generally we know.

K-And when she comes, what do you do?

F-What we're suppose to do (laughs)

K-So you follow it verbatim?

F- Yeah, we follow it verbatim when she comes and then she gives us a debrief sometimes at the end and that's it.

APPENDIX G

Reflective Memo Excerpts

Post Observation 2 Memo Fiona

Observed yesterday and today. The principal's song---indicative how she feels for these kids and fights for them. Ask Fiona if her principal, school and staff support CRP? Is it a culture of the school or is she in a class by herself? Who are her role models for teaching?? Why is she so caring even when others around her are not? What was her schooling like? Do other people criticize or give her a hard time when she has kids all over the floor or doing CRP? Does she hear a lot of negative talk about "these kids" in the teachers' lounge? Does she see herself in this school in 3 years? 5 years? Where does she see herself? What does she mean by an impact on her life? Does she have a lot of teacher friends? How does she describe herself from last year to this year to next year? How has she grown? What does she want to learn? There seems to be a lot of misbehavior during SFA..does she agree? What would she recommend to a new teacher in her place CRP but SFA?? What are her strengths? What are her weaknesses?

Post Observation 5 Memo Fiona

Observation 5

Why are the students working in CRCT Math coach? Morning work different every day? Are all reading grades SFA related? When do you TEACH writing? There is no explicit teaching about writing or writing skills. Ahhhhh. This is so frustrating. How is there not time in 4th grade to teach writing EVERY day!?

Post Observation 6 Memo Fiona

She seems frustrated. What are her biggest frustrations as a teacher? Script? Testing? Working and teaching? What does she like/not like about teaching? Florida trip--I wonder how kids pay for this trip? Wouldn't it make the other kids feel bad and mad that they can't go and keep hearing all the kids that do get to go? Doesn't sound organized or right. Finally some writing...every 6th day? Ahhh. What does she see as the purpose of schooling? What does she wish she was getting more of from TFA and CU? Is there a disconnect between her school and what she is learning? Will she finish her My America idea so close to the end of school? When does she get to do these projects? How does she teach other subjects?

APPENDIX H

Observation Excerpt

NON SFA time:

The class voted on carpet or chairs.. they chose carpet for read aloud. Girl in skirt in chair. Move desks to side and sit in the middle. Kids could lounge, lay down, sit etc. She sits on a bean bag chair.

(How is seating normally in this room? Why? What is the environmental print? Classroom library?)

Affirmed students answers to questions, clarified questions and misinformation about text/vocab.

“Any other thoughts on illustration?”

Blues Journey “What do you notice about? _____ any predictions?kids answer, lounge, connected to social studies (covered wagons), drew on students prior knowledge, cross curriculum..where were they going. What genre? Connected student’s answer to previous text by same author. **(How was book chosen?WHY Have you always done read alouds? Why) (CRP) OC It seems she knows some good reading strategies, where did she learn these? Would she feel comfortable teaching reading without SFA??)**

African American characters, storyline, history, talk, themes (CRP)Kids asking questions., very engaged, attentive, eyes on her even while lounging..T asks--Anyone ever felt that way –brothers crying?? (Text to self connections) Vocab questioning (cease)...kids could guess last word. How is this character feeling? Sad...Questions about the blues..have you heard about the blues? What do you think about that line _____?What does that mean? You are on the right track, I just want you to explain. Who hasn’t spoken yet?? Look at this picture. Has anyone ever felt that way? (CRP)

I’m going to read that again..what do you think that means??? Drawing on students knowledge, critical thinking, affirming students’ guesses. Helped make certain connections and walked them through connections to history (Harlem Renaissance, Great Migration, Billie Holiday, lynchings, MLK), characters, and themselves. (CRP)

Great read aloud strategies and connections **(Where did you learn these?)**

“I predicted that, Ms. F_____.” “Great, good prediction”.

What are dues?? Gave student relatable example about getting in trouble... (CRP)