ABSTRACT

Toward an Intersectional Learning Community:
A Hermeneutic Phenomenology Describing K–12 Educator's Experiences with School
Discipline

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Recent research indicates a critical factor in prosperous and equitable learning experiences is to limit or eliminate exclusionary discipline practices (Gregory et al., 2017; Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Educators may choose to meet students with relational and research-based approaches in building community relationships or respond with outdated punitive and retributive systems when negative classroom or school behaviors arise. These retributive responses to discipline historically and disproportionately impact students of color.

This qualitative study describes the lived experiences of in-service educators concerning their choice of discipline methods. The goal is to accurately describe the nuances of teacher decision-making when those decisions involve whether to employ an integration of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/practices (CRP) and Restorative Justice, Discipline, and Dialogue (RDP) as elements of a Professional Learning Community (PLC).

This study also explores in-service teacher metacognition, the intersections of cultural consciousness, and the successful use of restorative discipline practices. The goal is to advocate for an integrated approach to CRP and RDP that considers teacher metacognitive strategies and skills to improve in-service teacher development within PLCs. This approach promotes the development of an intersectional learning community and ultimately seeks to eradicate social and emotional inequities that disproportionately impact children of color.

Critical race, transformative learning theories, and restorative dialogue are the principle lenses for this study (Armour, 2016; Bell, 1995; Christie et al., 2015a; Delgado, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Mezirow, 2003; Payne & Welch, 2015; Taylor, 2008). This study's primary focus is educators' lived experiences, understanding that knowledge is not neutral and echoes the power and social relationships (Johnson et al., 2018). This study utilizes a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. Data collection includes three participants and three semi-structured interviews with teachers from a small charter school in Houston, TX. The results indicate three findings, including teacher experiences directly impacting their responses, the importance of critical consciousness, and the need for intersectional learning communities. The research details the findings, derived implications, and recommendations for future research. This study promotes a shift in the collective dialogue around teachers building critical consciousness, leading to more humanizing teaching and learning.

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A Hermeneutic Phenomenology Describing K–12 Educator's Experiences with School
Discipline

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Brooke Blevins, Ph.D., Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Education

Approved by the Dissertation Committee

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August 2021

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Page bearing signatures is kept on file in the Graduate School.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

coming alongside me in this work in the early days of the pen symposium when this writing was just a twinkle in my eye.

I would also like to thank the friends who kept up with me in spite of my lack of availability during this season. Elizabeth Solomon, Emily Gilds, and Jeanine and Dante Norwood, you are more family than anything else to me. Thank you for loving me and cheering me on, even in the long silences, and during the long pandemic.

Shout out to my fur babies, Reese, Dakota, Mandy, and James Baldwin. You cannot read this, but everyone needs to know that you were all part of the comfort I needed while writing and conducting this study, especially James.

To Drs. Tony L. Talbert and Nick Werse, you have cheered me on and helped me move my ideas, research and writing forward in ways I had thought were years and years off. Thank you for leading me to the table, and for being my co-conspirators in dismantling it. You have each pushed me to write, championed my work, and encouraged me to proudly enter this field. I cherish you both!

To my favorite co-conspirator, my advisor and chair Dr. Brooke Earl Blevins. You have shaped and challenged me for good. I truly look up to you and hope to be more like you in my growth as a scholar. Thank you for letting me text you at all hours, for being so accessible to me and making me feel as if I was your one and only advisee. I remember walking in the woods, going on and on to you about this vision I had for the impact of my research. You shared in that moment with me, and with God. I don't think you understood the impact of your words to me then. Now look! You have helped me accomplish the beginning of something truly special. I love you like a sister and a trusted confidant now, and that relationship and bond are for life. Thank you for all your

encouragement, brutal honesty and critique, and above all, for championing. You push each one of us towards the excellence and the possibilities that you see within us. I appreciate your genuine heart for equitable and humanizing education, as you embody and model everything you believe. You've been the absolute best advisor and doctoral chair an emerging scholar could ask for. I love you to pieces! Thank you!

To my battle buddies, the ones who have been in the trenches with me and put up with all my tomfoolery for three years, my cohort mates. For those of you who came to my study group sessions on Saturdays and listened to me go on and on about wild fantasies of changing the world, to Sherita, my ace!! You're the best accountability and thought partner a Dr. could ask for! To Taylor, Cris, Suraju, Sagirah, Ty, JJ, Nadine, Kyndra, Claudine, Amy, and Becki, each of you made a special impact on my journey to this moment, and I love you all for that. Thank you!

To Tanya Madrigal. You and I are the most unlikely school besties! I love you with all my heart, and I don't think anyone truly understands the bond we share. Through every single moment, good, bad, and ugly, you were there. We saved each other, and we made it! I am so proud of us!! I cannot wait to celebrate and continue our sisterhood!

Finally, I want to thank my teacher and educator family for helping me along the way and providing me with the access I needed to complete this study. Many thanks to the Bonton family for keeping me employed during the pandemic and all of my research participants. Thank you for keeping it real with me, for opening up for the purposes of this study, and for encouraging me to finish strong. Ultimately, this work is about all of us and for all of us. Thank you all so much for your continued love and support. Here's to becoming Dr. Gibson!

DEDICATION

To the Gibson, King, Roberts, and Hill families; those here now and those we've lost. I love you all; this is for you.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Problem of Practice

Introduction

When social justice efforts collide with political interests, tensions arise that are ever-present across the landscape of American public education. The nation's learners are overwhelmingly more diverse than their teachers (Benton-Borghi & Chang, 2012; Clark et al., 2016; Donnor et al., 2018; Geiger, 2018; Verdugo, 2002) and educators encounter a combination of seemingly insurmountable social challenges. Educator's punitive responses to schooling community challenges, such as student violations of classroom agreements and codes of conduct, often impact the most marginalized learners. The obligation to enforce punitive codes of conduct signifies, perpetuates, and normalizes a culture of punishment in schools, which forces educators into a difficult quandary within an already tenuous profession, where educators meet diverse social groups with universal practices. So, the question becomes, how can in-service educators work with an increasingly Black and Latinx public school demographic and combat a variety of sociopolitical and economic challenges that intersect with systemic racial injustices?

Hegemonic structures continue to pervade the American school system, and disrupting these structures has been the focus of theories and research for decades (Freire & Macedo, 2018; Harro, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Many researchers and theorists have devoted attention to racial injustices through the lens of critical race theory (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and disrupting hegemony in schooling environments through culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

1

Research also exists around the benefits of restorative practices for learners of color (Armour, 2016). Critical consciousness requires practitioners to introspectively address their beliefs, intersectional identities, and subconscious biases that may impact classroom interactions (Jiang et al., 2016; Peters et al., 2018). However, in today's highly politicized landscape, any attention to racial discourse is ripe with passionate divisions, which may discourage educators from authentically doing racial justice work on behalf of their learners.

A clear actualization of CRP in concert with RDP presently evades educators and school leaders. Therefore, educators who can thoroughly examine their biases and cultural assumptions related to the practice of CRP with RDP have a significant opportunity to develop competencies for enacting a more robust and culturally holistic pedagogy. As a researcher and an advocate for school culture, I am curious about how educators' lives shape how they handle student behaviors in their classrooms. Therefore, in this study, I investigate teacher decision-making, readiness, and success concerning classroom discipline decisions. This chapter describes a lack of practical connection between CRP and RDP, teacher decision making, and metacognitive strategies as well as outlines the purpose, philosophical assumptions, and critical terms needed to describe the need for and implement this study.

Statement of the Problem

Punitive and retributive discipline strategies are normative in most American public schools, and traditionally, educators do not philosophically adhere to restorative or transformative discipline. However, students of color are disproportionately affected by punitive discipline, and as a result, are more likely to enter the judicial system once they

complete grade school (Gregory, 2017). On average, students of color experience higher

punitive discipline rates than do their White peers (Gregory et al., 2017; Gregory &

Fergus, 2017). These exclusionary disciplinary actions often cause student removal from

classrooms based on discretionary classroom behaviors where teachers have the option to

select various methods of discipline, including restorative practices (Amstutz, 2005;

Armour, 2016; Jones & Armour, 2013; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Payne & Welch, 2015).

These realities led me to ponder the following: Why does it seem as if educators choose

to engage in systems that promote cycles of further harm and suffering, as opposed to

healing and restoration through liberatory practices, when possible?

Several possible answers exist. First, educators who do not believe racial

injustices play a role in their pedagogical decision-making may be less likely or less

willing to enact CRP or RDP in their classrooms. Or perhaps, a predominately White

teacher workforce bolsters hegemonic ideals that continue to permeate American public

schools. In particular, the colorblind approach that exists in educational practice hinders

progressive CRP approaches. Therefore, in-service educators who are uncritical of their

identities' privileges may unknowingly harm students of color due to a lack of awareness

and attention to CRP. As a result, teachers miss out on the richness of the cultural capital

that students bring and instead may opt for a one-size-fits-all approach to classroom

discipline and academic responsiveness (Blaisdell, 2018; Gordon, 2005; Howard, 2006;

Matias & Mackey, 2016; Picower, 2009, 2017; Yosso, 2005).

Currently, there is a dangerous disconnect between the ideals of pre-service

teacher education and practical in-service experiences (Brooks & Houston, 2015;

Bustamante et al., 2016; Hogan-Chapman et al., 2017; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). While pre-

service teachers are often required to take coursework about multicultural education, diversity, and social justice, they become in-service teachers once they leave the confines of teacher education programs. They must face the day-to-day realities and pressure to be apolitical. They remain out of touch with culturally relevant practices, among other influences. The exercise of reflective and metacognitive strategies then focuses on standardization of learning rather than personalized intersectionality, including the educator's stories and cultural narratives. Therefore, this study is primarily concerned with in-service educators' lived experiences, including attention to metacognitive thinking skills, CRP, and RDP, to bring teacher decision-making and motivation to the forefront of the conversation.

Purpose of the Study

America's public-school teachers are considerably less racially and ethnically diverse than their students (Benton-Borghi & Chang, 2012; Clark et al., 2016; Donnor et al., 2018; Geiger, 2018; Verdugo, 2002). Educational disproportionality reinforces the imperative that predominately White in-service educators approach their practice with fervent intentionality, reflecting on their cultural identities to better serve an increasingly diverse student population. This hermeneutic phenomenology establishes the need for a culturally sustaining learning community for educators, which addresses teacher metacognitive strategies related to the successful integration of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and restorative dialogue and discipline (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

This study explored the essence of the in-service educator's experiences from an ontological standpoint. The focus was on teachers' descriptions and lived experiences concerning their repertoire of potential responses to student behaviors. Furthermore, I

questioned the potential role that metacognitive thinking played in a teacher's reactions to learner behaviors and whether their thoughts and feelings about themselves, their classrooms and school communities impact their decision making with learners of color (Clark et al., 2016; Donnor et al., 2018; Geiger, 2018; Martell & Stevens, 2017; Verdugo, 2002). To locate the essence of teacher's descriptions and lived experiences, I developed the following research questions for this study:

1. What are the experiences of in-service educators in Houston, TX, who implement discipline practices with diverse student populations?

2. How do in-service educators in Houston, TX, describe their decision to implement either punitive or restorative discipline practices?

The sub-question for this study includes:

a. What are the catalysts for disciplinary responses among K-12 educators?

b. What are some of the cultural and sociopolitical aspects impacting both teachers and learners that help define responses to behaviors?

c. How do national, district, and administrative policies shape educator decisions on learner behaviors?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approaches present in this phenomenological study are Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Transformative Learning Theory (TLT). Both are employed using an ethic that maintains restorative dialogue as an essential form of communicating new understandings. This theoretical approach centers on systemic racial inequities and the lived experiences of the research participants. The general sense is that knowledge is not neutral and reflects the awareness of power and social relationships. There is also a need to engage in a way that does not alienate educators and their unique experiences (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Mertens, 2007).

Critical race theorists hold that racialized identities inform experiences and sociopolitical positioning (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005). With this understanding, the conversation around how teacher's racial identities shape their decision-making becomes paramount to classroom structures and engagement with diverse student groups. Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is included in this element of the theoretical framework because it is an expression of CRT in teaching and learning. CRP and CRT focus on engaging students by remaining attentive to their diverse cultural capital as an asset to the broader learning community (Owen et al., 2017; Yosso, 2005).

Transformative learning theory enables the study to center on adult learning's importance, leading to paradigmatic change. Adult learning first impacts the individual, with the goal that new adult understandings reverberate throughout the learning community (Christie et al., 2015a; Henschke, 2011; Knowles, 1984; Merriam & Bierema, 2014; Taylor, 2008). Therefore, I propose that an intersectional learning community leads to more collaborative, democratic, and humanizing education modes.

Restorative dialogue (RD) is a relational approach to mitigating conflict and also handling decision-making. RD also enables the research to take an invitational and welcoming tone, inviting various voices and identities to enter the dialogue (Amstutz, 2005; Jones & Armour, 2013; Payne & Welch, 2015). Restorative dialogue is impactful in school settings, where educators can begin to bridge gaps in relationships between one another and with students. Restorative dialogue can occur in the interview setting or the form of formalized group settings known as restorative circles. In these spaces, a variety

of experiences, ideas, and new understandings emerge. This study utilizes a restorative dialogue approach in gathering and organizing data and how findings are shared later on.

A convergence of CRT and TLT and restorative dialogue supports the proposal of an intersectional learning community. Figure 1.1 illustrates how the theoretical framework exists at the intersections of restorative dialogue, CRT, and TLT. This framework supports the ultimate goal of promoting an intersectional learning community.

Theoretical
Framework: Promoting an
Intersectional Learning community

CRT: Culturally
Relevant
Pedagogy

Restorative
Dialogue

TLT:
Adult Learning
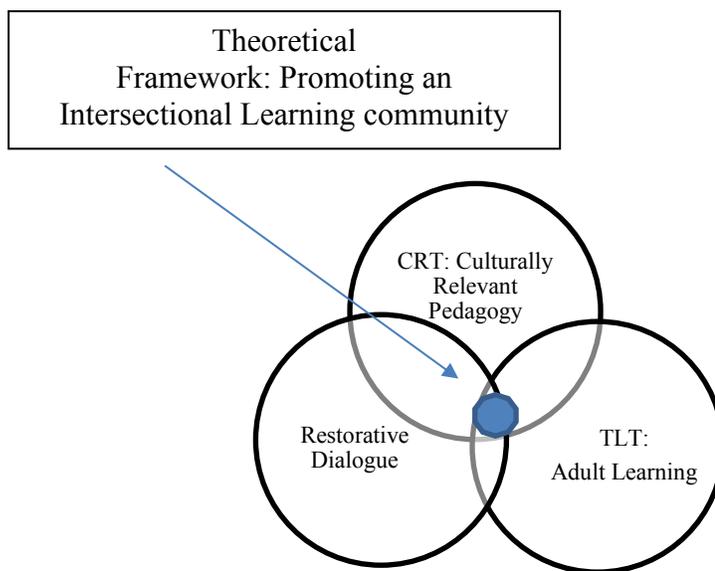
Figure 1.1. Locating the framework.

Research Design

In this qualitative study, the focus was on what and how teacher's thinking about their decision-making processes impacted classroom discipline. The study reflected curiosity about why teachers choose punitive measures over restorative discipline practice. Due to this recurring phenomenon, a phenomenological approach was best suited to answer the research questions and derive essential meanings, and new understandings based on the participants' lived experiences.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the nature of the disciplinary origins of a phenomenology "draw from philosophy, psychology, and education" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 104). In most phenomenological research, the researcher will choose from two main philosophies: either Husserl's transcendental phenomenology or Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology (Crowther et al., 2017; Dahl, 2019; Guignon, 2012; Larrison, 2009; Sloan & Bowe, 2014; Wehler, 2014). In this study, Heidegger's model is the best mode for capturing and interpreting the research participants' stories. Heidegger established the hermeneutic circle, a reflexive model for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Throughout this study, this reflexive approach deepens the research process. Grant Osborne's (2006) hermeneutic spiral also adds nuance to the reflexive research process mode.

Throughout the HP process, I researched the transformative learning theory and critical race theory. Because my design is hermeneutic, it is primarily interpretive, which means I must keep in mind my thinking, learning, and growth throughout the process. Therefore, these two theories as my theoretical framework provide me with clear, descriptive language for describing what I see, hear, and experience with my research participants.

I also point to how this study is best suited for the work of "providing a model of possibility" (hooks, 1994, p. 131) for an intersectional learning community. Therefore, as throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretations of findings on my participants' lived experiences, I map out how intersectional identities can converge to provide rich and co-generative opportunities for professional learning and growth that impact student behaviors and development and achievement. Throughout this study, I use

8

CRT and TLT to guide the HP process of interviewing in-service educators to derive the essential meanings of their lived experiences with the hope of designing a more enriched learning community that is intersectional.

Definition of Key Terms

Andragogy: The process of adult education and learning (Knowles, 1984).

Anti-bias: An educational approach that considers equity, diversity, inclusion and
　　promotes awareness of implicit and unconscious biases that can negatively impact
　　schools and communities. Anti-biases work seeks to disrupt and dismantle all forms
　　of discrimination that hinder student learning and promotes civil democratic societies
　　(El Ashmawi et al., 2018).

Anti-racist: An educational approach that is opposed to and challenges racism in schools
　　and communities.

Critical conscientization: "conscientizacao" describes a holistic world view and approach
　　to education and social development in school spaces. Critical conscientization allows
　　for examining political and social contradictions that harm societies and stem from
　　and lead to oppression, allowing for transformative illumination to take place (Freire,
　　2018; Gay, 2003).

Critical Race Theory: The theory of race that holds race as a White social construct that
　　has resulted in upholding oppressive systems and that it is essential to analyze and
　　dismantle the construct of race to address oppression (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 2012).

Cultural Competence: Awareness of worldviews, and the development of positive
　　attitudes and understandings of diverse people groups, coupled with an ability to

9

engage and interact with diverse groups effectively with attention to and respect for various cultures (Pedersen, 2007).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: An approach coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) describes a teaching method practice that focuses on strengthening student's cultural integrity and academic achievement.

Emancipatory and Liberatory Pedagogy: An invitational approach to education and learning promotes self-awareness, social engagement, activities, and genuine dialogue that leads to self-actualization and high regard for the rights and freedoms of others in the community (Nouri et al., 2014).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology: A form of research that focuses on interpreting the essences of lived experiences of participants experiencing a particular phenomenon.

Intersectionality- a concept that involves connecting various facets of one's identity as it is personally perceived and socially constructed to add to shared awareness and develop an understanding of others and the world (Pliner et al., 2011).

Intersectional Learning Community (ILC): A transformative "identity-conscious" (Costino, 2018, p. 1) approach to the professional learning community that leads educators toward self-examination that leads to improved educational practices.

Professional Learning Community (PLC): A systematic and schoolwide approach to student achievement promotes a collaborative and inquiry-based approach to curricular design towards student achievement.

Restorative Discipline Practices (RDP): A disciplinary system of engaging harms done and offenders in a way that promotes open dialogue over exclusion and making

amends between victims and offenders. The restorative model promotes authentic

accountability over punitive justice and reactionary exclusion from school

communities. (Armour, 2016).

Race: Socially constructed categories based on countries of origin.

Racism: An oppressive system that upholds unilateral and hierarchical categorizations of

race and maintains specific racial categories superior to others (E, 1992).

Teacher Metacognitive Instrument: An instrument for measuring teacher metacognition

and informing awareness of metacognitive strategies in teaching practice (Jiang,

2016).

Testimonio Pedagogy: A multicultural branch of Chicana feminist educational thought

promotes dialogue and belonging as a student engagement model and reciprocal and

reflexive learning between teachers and students (El Ashmawi et al., 2018).

Tikkun Olam: A Hebrew phrase that loosely means to repair self leads to improving the

world.

Transformative Learning Theory: An adult learning theory that focuses on the

paradigmatic shifts in adult cognition (Christie et al., 2015a; Knowles, 1984).

Transformative Leadership: A form of leadership that emphasizes internalized and

intrinsic understanding, reflection, and development, to promote outward change and

progression in thought, action, and community engagement (Gunn, 2018).

Whiteness: A uniquely American social construct that defines White culture and

ideologies.

Conclusion

Chapter One outlined the overall purpose and problem of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology. The stated concern is a lack of attention to the impact that in-service teacher decision-making can have on student discipline, assumptions, and positionality on teacher decision-making. This chapter provided an overview of the research design and methods, a definition of the key terms, and a summary of the research findings. Chapter Two introduces the primary literature that supports the importance of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

In the context of the 21ˢᵗ Century demographic disparities in U.S. public education, in-service educators who are less invested in social justice issues may acknowledge the importance of culturally relevant and restorative practices without fully applying the prescribed practices. When educators fail to address the fullness of their humanity and calling, they permanently stunt their professional growth, self-engagement, and overall awareness of how to humanize the learning experience for themselves and their learners. Doing the reflexive and metacognitive work is imperative and is often overlooked or even discouraged. Instead, a more open and less critical path building relationships and standardization and compliance are normative.

Therefore, this literature review examines the primary literature pertinent to the bridging of transformative learning theory (TLT), critical race theory (CRT), culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), restorative discipline practices (RDP or RP), and teacher metacognition within a professional learning community (PLC). The review also provides an overview of the characteristics of these frameworks, theories, and findings, including commonalities, differences, and nuances. The first section discusses the background and justification of hermeneutic phenomenology as the approach to exploring teacher lived experiences. The second section reviews the literature on transformative learning theory, which leads to the third section on the importance of adult learning. Section four outlines the primary and current research on CRT and CRP and proposes

integrating CRP into teacher education in a way that promotes critical and cultural consciousness. The literature review continues with sections five through eight and covers problems and needs in schools, cultural awareness, and teacher decision-making. The literature review also includes a discussion of the school as a learning community, transformative practices that allow for the convergence of teacher's identities, and an explanation of the intersection of dialogical and culturally sustaining pedagogies. The conclusion proposes the addition of these practices as part of developing an intersectional learning community where attention to adult learning, culturally sustaining, transformative practices lead to in-service teacher development, social consciousness, and student growth and achievement.

The Hermeneutic Phenomenology (HP)

As I discussed in Chapter One's research design section and as I will describe later in the methodology section of Chapter Three, I have chosen the hermeneutic phenomenological approach for my research. I include descriptions here in the literature review because the nature of an HP is so philosophically grounded that it is embedded in every facet of my research. As I read more on taking an interpretive approach to phenomena, I began to see how I have adopted this philosophy in many ways as the researcher. The very notion that "as I read more," I began to learn and understand more is in itself a reflexive statement, a key feature in an HP study. Simply put, HP is not merely a way of designing my research or crafting my methodology; it is also a way of being and thinking about human life and experiences. Therefore, I include a discussion and brief historical background of hermeneutic phenomenology. Understanding how the seminal writers in the field and phenomenological research have evolved are vital to realizing

more productive dialogue around teacher lived experiences. Teacher experiences shape metacognition and decision-making in the classroom.

First, phenomenology is a qualitative approach to research that concerns understanding the essence of an experience. The phenomenological approach began as an element of German philosophy, and due to developments in research, later became a proper research methodology. There are many essential phenomenologists; however, the top three discussed here are Husserl, Heidegger, and Van Manen. These three prominent researchers are the leaders of phenomenological studies, and most 21st century researchers are still looking to these three for the most grounded understandings in this field of research. For example, Sloan and Bowe (2014) provide accurate and precise descriptions of how phenomenological studies evolved and how these three researchers aided the process and even collaborated to gain deeper understandings. Sloan and Bowe (2014) discuss how Husserl led the way with an approach known as descriptive phenomenology, which later became transcendental phenomenology.

For Husserl, a researcher could "bracket off'" intentionally separate their own lived experience and focus primarily on the experiences shared by research participants (Crowther et al., 2017; Dahl, 2019; Guignon, 2012; Larrison, 2009; Sloan & Bowe, 2014). This approach further develops with Heidegger's work, which produced an interpretive approach to phenomenology. Heidegger argued that bracketing off is impossible. Instead, a process known as reflexivity is necessary for a revolving data collection and analytic process that came to be known as the hermeneutic circle (Crowther et al., 2017; Dahl, 2019). Heidegger's interpretive approach became the hermeneutic approach, which I adopted for my study. Van Manen has enriched

15

Heidegger's work and continues to add to the field of HP for practical purposes, including enriching classroom teaching and learning.

Also included in this conversation are theologians who have utilized the HP process to practice Biblical interpretation. I have read these authors and researchers, and due to my experience with biblical hermeneutics, I value Paul Ricoeur's and Grant Osborne's work in contributing to the discourse community on HP. In particular, Grant Osborne coined the phrase "Hermeneutical Spiral" for his (2006) work of the same name. Osborne describes the spiral as a "cone…not twirling up forever with no ending in sight, but moving even narrower to the meaning (essence) of the text and its significance for today" (Osborne, 2006, p. 23). Osborne made it clear that contextualization is also essential in biblical hermeneutics, and the same is true for Van Manen's practical outlook on HP for pedagogical methods.

Therefore, the language and practice of the hermeneutical spiral are present in the interviews with my participants. I have chosen to describe the foremost researchers behind this type of study here in the literature review; however, more details on how I intend to apply this design are detailed later in Chapter Three. The following discussion describes the importance of transformative learning theory in understanding how adults learn and transform thinking. Chapter Three also describes how the hermeneutic phenomenological research design helps discover the essence of teacher lived experiences with school discipline practices.

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)

This study takes place through the lens of transformative learning theory (TLT), which helps inform adult learning. Throughout this study, I rely on two researchers whose work is central to understanding how education transforms and how adults learn. Mezirow (2003) and Freire (2018) both inform the utilization of TLT throughout this study, and they both provide clear implications for teachers, schools, learning environments, and communities.

Mezirow and Freire

The two foremost transformative learning theorists that I discuss throughout this study are Jack Mezirow and Paulo Freire. Both have made influential contributions to the field in TLT. First, Mezirow's focus on the self in the transformative process is my key focus here. Later on, I will discuss Freire's influence on understanding the world's personal experiences in terms of liberation and freedom in terms of critical consciousness (Christie et al., 2015a; Freire & Macedo, 2018; Mezirow, 2003).

To start, Mezirow was influenced in large part by Jurgen Habermas. Habermas crafted a Communicative Action theory (1984 and 1986) that describes various actions as they are motivated by reason. Habermas describes these categories as Strategic and Instrumental action (Christie et al., 2015a). Habermas is concerned with how reason impacts actions in the "system-world," which translates to how singular human behaviors impact organizations. What Mezirow does with this focus is narrow in on individual transformation, and he emphasizes how rational internal dialogue can help individuals make outward changes that positively impact their communities. Therefore, the aim of transformative learning for Mezirow is to help individuals confront their assumptions,

17

how they act upon those assumptions, and if they find that their premises are lacking in

any way, to alter them. Mezirow eventually listens to the individual conscious raising

process into ten steps:

1. Disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination
3. Sense of alienation
4. Relating discontent to others
5. Explaining the options of new behavior
6. Building confidence in new ways
7. Planning a course of action
8. Knowledge to implement plans
9. Experimenting with new roles
10. Reintegration

Critical components of Mezirow's theory of TLT are that individuals or adult

learners face disorienting dilemmas that shake the foundations of previously and long

helped assumptions and cause individuals to question the validity of their experiences

(Christie et al., 2015a; Dix, 2016; Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010; Mertens, 2007;

Mezirow, 2003).Adult learners need to develop the dialogical skills to work through their

changing perspectives. Rational discourse is, therefore, a key component of

transformative learning theory.

Implications for Teachers

Overall, the lens of transformative learning theory provides educators with a way

forward for deepening ways of being and knowing, which are foundational elements of a

genuine and critical understanding of adult learning or andragogy. Ultimately, teachers

are also adult learners who encounter learning through self-direction and toward

transformative experiences, from which lifelong values can emerge and develop

(Merriam & Bierema, 2014; Morrison et al., 2019). Self-directed learning is especially

the case when the knowledge helps the teacher make connections from the practices themselves to the broader campus community of teachers and students who can benefit the most from their learning experiences. The following section carefully examines and contextualizes the facets of adult learning.

Adult Learning

Andragogy is the art and the science of adult education (Knowles, 1984). Based on adult learning theory, adults require attention to self-directed learning, which can be a catalyst for transformative learning experiences. This section outlines andragogy and self-directed learning as integral components of preparation for education and integration of transformative learning experiences. Here, I contextualize andragogy as a key factor for consideration when working with adult learners. Self-directed learning is a marker of attention to critical adult learning methods. I also describe how self-directed adult learning provides a vehicle for transformative practices that promote change in adult learners and the systems, processes, and organization of the school community. K–12 education often conflates adult and student learning; however, while the two forms of education overlap, there must be clarity on how they are two distinct forms of knowledge (Christie et al., 2015a; Henschke, 2011; Knowles, 1984; Mezirow, 2003). Understanding adult learning is crucial for this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology. Throughout this study, principles of adult learning remain at the forefront of the phenomenological process. It is essential to understand how this study explores aspects of adult learning at each level of the research process and how adult learning can lead to transformative learning and education.

The Teacher as an Adult Learner

In-service educators require explicit and ongoing professional learning with attention to adult learning theories, self-directed approaches to learning, and an emphasis on transformative practices that promote school and community improvement. Opportunities for self-directed learning can aid in the adoption and use of transformative learning practices. Such practices can help teachers as adult learners exercise their pedagogical methods and disciplinary responses efficiently and independently. When educators intentionally practice their learning as adults, their proactivity impacts student growth, achievement, the school, families, and communities.(Christie et al., 2015a; Dix, 2016; Knowles, 1984; Taylor, 2008).

Andragogy in Context

Considering theories of andragogy (Christie et al., 2015b; Henschke, 2011; Knowles, 1984; Merriam & Bierema, 2014) will help to ensure that the adult learners receive the most valuable learning experience so that they can help themselves and contribute to the discourse community, and help improve student achievement and behaviors. Often, school environments with low student academic performance combined with an increasing number of discipline referrals present a need to use interventions, such as restorative practices, which will be described in detail later on in this chapter. To introduce specific interventive models on a campus-wide scale, educators and administrators require ongoing professional development and education. Continuous professional learning will ultimately help the school community make decisions that impact student treatments and achievement. Therefore, as a group of adult learners, educators will require an educational process that focuses on adult learners' andragogical

20

assumptions (Knowles, 1984). These include what the adult learners need to know, how this research accounts for their experiences and self-concepts, and other considerations such as readiness to learn, orientations, and motivations to learn.

Adult learners need to know how and why particular intervention practices and models are the main focus to address their campus and district needs. Building awareness required attention to the specific data and intended outcomes that educators need to know for the adult learner to be inherently motivated to learn (Knowles, 1984). Any adult learning requires devotion to timely and applicable practices based on the needs of the students in the school community. To successfully commit to such a paradigm shift, the adult learners will need to know how and why it is beneficial, influence the teachers, impact instructional time, affect students, and reach their families. Implementing new models will require consideration before educators can invest in the educational process of learning thoroughly. In general, the adult learner needs to know and understand "why?" before they can appreciate the learning objectives and then begin to utilize the practices as well.

Adult learners must have the readiness to learn and grow (Fives & Buehl, 2014; Knowles, 1984). Therefore, it is helpful for adult learners to engage in the practices that they will eventually model. Experiential learning will solidify the teacher's experience as an individual and in their learning community. Experiential learning experiences help teachers understand and convey the genuine importance and value of their learning for the organization. Keeping in mind adult learner needs, it is also essential to consider the importance of self-directed learning opportunities.

Toward Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning (SDL) is at the forefront of adult learning. Teachers are a group of self-directed leaders who are accustomed to independence. Therefore, the educator will want to establish a climate of mutual respect and professional regard. Building a mutually respectful learning space can be done and modeled in the school community and in team meetings where the educator is practicing inviting and collaborating while delegating expectations and results alongside other adult learners. Another method that helps achieve SDL is obtaining vital information about the adult learners that helps in organizing instruction. Personal attributes such as age, work experience, education, and ethnicity, help build relationships and set the tone for learners first to identify themselves and then one another (de Bruijn & Leeman, 2011; Morrison et al., 2019). Since each member has their knowledge of themselves and their unique relationship to learning, it will be important to consider and remember the importance of allowing SDL when preparing the delivery of content and protocols that impact student behaviors and achievement.

Overall, learners' analysis helps the educator link theory and practice through SDL (de Bruijn & Leeman, 2011; Morris et al., 2017, 2017). Teachers are adult learners who have accumulated a rich collection of life experiences that they bring to their professions. These experiences are to be respected and valued in the shared space of the learning environment and leverage cultural assets that can provide rich and in-depth attention to the school or campus culture and overall needs. The experiences of each adult learner are regarded as resources for their independence and collective benefit. The more often the educator communicates and considers this their various lived experiences, the

richer the learning experience. As a group, understanding this dynamic can aid in the relationship-building process intrinsic to a learning community. The method of engaging adult learners in SDL creates space and opportunities for transformative learning experiences that develop adult learners and enrich their environments and constituents.

SDL and Transformative Learning

SDL leads the way to transformative learning. However, this can also be a challenge for many adult learners. Acknowledging that knowledge is not neutral, truly transformative educational practices challenge and disrupt by forging discourse on controversial topics such as White Supremacy, Christian hegemony, heteronormativity, capitalism, patriarchy, and other oppressive systems. Due to their exclusionary nature, these systems harm marginalized communities that have the most to lose and where education reform is most needed. Transformative educators and learners readily address systemic injustices by addressing the curriculum in a way that acknowledges biases and does not reinforce them (T. K. Chapman & Hobbel, 2010; Freire & Macedo, 2018; hooks, 1994). Therefore, adult learners must confront a variety of these concerns as they engage in professional learning.

In academic environments, adult learners require transparent systems that allow for inner reflection and practice with outward actions best suited for a democratic educational path to interdependence, social sustainability, hope, justice, and liberation (Dix, 2016; Mertens, 2007; Mezirow, 2003). Moving forward, a discussion of critical theory will allow for a more robust path towards a teacher developing more culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogies.

Critical Theory

A clear understanding of foundational theories and philosophies is imperative for entering the conversation on a culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogy. Critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and particularly culturally relevant pedagogy all find their roots in critical theory. As part of the social sciences, critical theory (CT) originated in German philosophy, particularly in the Western European Marxist tradition, or the Frankfurt School (Bohman, 2016; Horkheimer, 1982). Critical theory distinctively combines the tenets of philosophy and the social sciences, deliberately pairing enlightenment and responsive activities that disrupt dominant and oppressive social systems.

According to CT leading theorist Horkheimer, "critical" theory seeks to be distinguished from the "traditional" approach in that it serves a practical purpose and has a liberatory and emancipatory focus (1982). With this in mind, theorists do not seek to achieve some individualized goal but instead seek human agency and liberation (Bohman, 2016). Ultimately, CT's practical purpose is to promote democratic societies where human beings can learn to examine, honor consciously, and co-create within their shared lived experiences(Clark et al., 2016; Martell & Stevens, 2017; Palmer, 2007; Wall, 2016). Thus, educational theorists further developed critical pedagogy where the focus shifts to critical theories entering the classroom and school discourse communities.

Critical Pedagogy

With the understanding that critical theory involves wedding philosophy and practical approaches to morality within a democratic society, critical pedagogy then frames this relationship within the context of modern schooling and education (Allen,

2004; McLaren, 2003). In the United States, it stands to reason that if democracy exists, so too must a democratic expression of schooling prevail within United States classrooms. In this way, critical pedagogy is rooted in the guiding philosophies of critical theory and focuses on the class as the "principal determinant of social and political life" (Allen, 2004, p. 121). Fundamentally, critical pedagogy (CP) has a controversial nature (Ladson-Billings, 1997; McLaren, 2003), and teachers who operate through a CP lens must be in a constant state of inquiry about themselves, their learners, and the community at large to engage in reflexive, and responsive dialogue (Richmond, 2017; Shady, 2015).

Such dialogue requires examining one's lived experiences and encountering them truthfully and wholeheartedly before engaging with and honoring learners' stories and narratives (Palmer, 1983, 2000, 2007). A dialectical understanding of schooling allows practitioners to identify factors of "domination and liberation" (McLaren, 2003, p. 194). However, while CP will enable practitioners to examine issues of hegemony, domination, and liberatory practices needed to move beyond oppression, the explicit mention and focus on racial injustices is primarily absent (Allen, 2004; Matias & Mackey, 2016; McLaren, 2003; Picower, 2009; Treinen & Warren, 2001).

For example, the work of McLaren (2003) includes a viable conversation on the importance of theory, the social construction of knowledge, and goes into detail on class, culture, and hegemony; and yet only briefly mentions prejudice as taking on a "commonsense or ideological character that is often used to justify acts of discrimination" (McLaren, 2003, p. 208). This gross avoidance of racism and its intersections with all of the aforementioned social dynamics is an impediment to doing any original work in United States schooling, with its predominately White teacher

workforce, and where systemic and systematic White supremacy and racism persist and prevail (Allen, 2004; Blaisdell, 2018; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Picower, 2009). Allen (2004) also highlights the lack of attention to racism and emphasizes reinforcing and placating the dominant White narrative within CP.

In this context, a more nuanced discussion in the works of legal scholars Derrick E and Richard Delgado had already begun to center race as a permanent social construct that impacts all of life and law in the United States (E, 1992). As a result, Critical Race Theory (CRT) entered the realm of United States civil rights and racial justice discourse (E, 1987, 1992, 1995; Delgado, 2012).

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) crosses disciplinary boundaries and allows for the discussion and understanding of race as a permanent and significant factor in determining inequity in the United States. The basic tenets of CRT include racism as ordinary and as a social construct integral to advancing Whiteness. Delgado and E both reiterate race related to the United States' economic system and, consequently, intersect with capitalism and property rights (E, 1987, 1992, 1995; Delgado, 2012). Due to the intersection and subsequent conflation of property rights, human rights, and capitalism with what is best for United States citizens' collective. Therefore, CRT identifies that the dominant group's priorities are normalized while all other needs are cast aside.

Furthermore, this connection between the United States economy and democracy filters into the education system and adversely impacts educators and learners. This form of injustice plagues the United States and primarily affects marginalized groups, namely African American learners (Clark et al., 2016; Dixson & Dingus, 2007; Johnson et al.,

26

2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). "Consequently, the intersection of race and property presents the need to understand social (and consequently, school) inequities" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 48). The need to understand and impact schooling led to the development of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.

Critical Race Theory and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) provides a powerful dynamic for enacting critical race theory (CRT) principles (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRP strategies include learning about children and families, developing and teaching expectations, considering the child's perspective during the lesson planning and unit design process, teaching and modeling empathy, and using group time to discuss conflict (Price & Steed, 2016). Also, educators should consider sociopolitical factors and their impact on decision-making regardless of their awareness of CRP and include disciplinary decisions, which too impact educational decisions (Nieto, 1999).

In the more than 20 years since Gloria Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) wrote toward a *Critical Race Theory of Education*, there have been many appraisals written on the importance of enacting CRP in education, and yet today, there is still a need to reform teacher education, revise programs committed to social justice, and overhaul entire curriculums to support an increasingly diverse public-school system (Allen, 2004; Blaisdell, 2018; Clark et al., 2016; Howard, 2006; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Picower, 2009; Treinen & Warren, 2001). Ladson-Billings theorized about teaching itself in a way that was groundbreaking at the time and even more pressing now. Initially, Ladson-

Billings and Tate identified race as having been untheorized. Race is not a series of isolated acts, and it is deeply ingrained in American society.

There is an essential and ongoing discussion taking place concerning preservice teacher readiness for critical pedagogy and the radicalization of prospective teachers (Bartolome, 2004; Brooks & Houston, 2015; Bustamante et al., 2016; Christ & Sharma, 2018; Kirkland & Gay, 2003; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). While Bartolome seeks to prepare preservice educators, what happens when those educators move into schools without the support systems and PLCs to support their learning? In response to this gap, this study's focus investigates the ongoing engagement of in-service educators within professional learning communities meant to sustain CRP and RDP.

Many researchers address the importance of effectively and equitably supporting student learning through CRP (Bartolome, 1994, 2004; Bottiani et al., 2018; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Nieto, 1999). Mainly, Bartolome explores changing demographics and the clashing of pre-service educators' ideologies, as they must seek to compare CRP with what is known as natural and healthy. She examines teachers' ideological orientation and acknowledges that challenging and transforming the external and underlying hegemonic understandings of educators is often ignored and does not come into the process of teacher education programs (Bartolome, 1994, 2004; Kirkland & Gay, 2003). Next, examining some problems and needs in schools can provide details and context for how adult learning and CRP can combine to support learning communities and meet these pressing needs.

Problems and Needs in Schools

This section outlines several areas in American schooling where attention to adult learning would be beneficial. These areas impact teachers, students, schools, and professional learning communities. These considerations also impact teacher experiences and weigh on their decision-making regularly. Social and emotional learning, racial disparities, and agency often converge and force educators to weigh many seemingly invisible factors when considering approaching their teaching practices.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an essential factor for an educator to consider when establishing respectful learning environments where restorative processes are more likely to be trusted. Howard Zehr defines Restorative Justice as: "a process to involve to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, to heal and put things as right as possible" (Zehr, 2002, p. 37). Zehr's definition led other experts in the field to seek additional clarity for education, where restorative became increasingly important. The H.E.A.R.T framework (Kehoe, 2018) calls for developing student social skills using restorative practices (RP). Kehoe's study combines SEL and restorative practices to address challenging student behaviors and offers a compelling and concise delivery of the benefits and impacts of restorative practices on student behaviors. Along with SEL, Zehr provides a detailed outline of goals, guiding questions, and signposts to guide the restorative processes (Zehr, 2002).

Racial Disparities and Zero Tolerance in School Discipline

Race plays a role in the effectual impact of Restorative Justice processes in schools (Armour, 2016; Clark et al., 2016; Donnor et al., 2018; Jones & Armour, 2013; Payne & Welch, 2015, 2015). Armour details the fallout from punitive strategies, as African American students in Texas face the brunt of the exclusionary practices and are disproportionately impacted. The trauma associated with disciplinary practices has the most significant impact on racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA youth, children in foster care, and those who are economically disadvantaged (Armour, 2016). Also, punitive systems exacerbate BIPOC students and leave teachers with little recourse for culturally sustaining improvements, which subsequently impacts teacher turnover. For example, White teachers are more likely to leave economically disadvantaged schools than are Black and Hispanic educators (Armour, 2016).

The zero-tolerance discipline exacerbates racial disparities in school discipline. Hoffman estimates that Black students "were disproportionately affected, with an additional 70 black students per year recommended for expulsion" (Hoffman, 2014, p. 69) following policy changes that expanded zero-tolerance discipline policies. The seemingly more stringent method to school discipline may seem like the most appropriate approach. Still, with a lack of attention to racial disparities that impact learners (Howard, 2006), zero-tolerance only worsens the alienating impact of discipline on learners of color. Considering recommendations for expulsion and the proportion of days suspended, Hoffman found that the expansion of zero-tolerance led to an increase in the percentage of black secondary students under recommendation for expulsion. Punitive discipline

would fall into the exclusionary category, as zero-tolerance policies seek to isolate and push learners without critically engaging with learners from a cultural vantage point.

Armour (2016) also notes the importance of school-controlled factors and that administrators must set the tone for the school culture and implement RDP from the top down. Educators and school leaders should not practice indifference to these issues but seek to establish supportive relationships with learners and peers to bolster a warm school community. Consequently, safety arrives not through aggressive and punitive force but the welcoming of dialogue and engagement within Restorative Justice, dialogue, and discipline practices.

Teacher Agency

Teachers who feel empowered and supported within their professional learning communities are more likely to be willing to take risks. In an environment of trust, teacher agency is crucial in reinforcing a willing and supportive administrative team. Such a situation makes space for educators to examine their internal beliefs and the many ways those beliefs shape outward actions. One such principle worth considering is teacher agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Harro, 2013). Emirbayer and Mische went about reconceptualizing agency as an "internally complex temporal dynamic" (p. 964).

Agency takes place within an internal conversation and categorizes the self as a "dialogical structure" and "thoroughly relational" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 974). A personally challenging inner dialogue is vital in the profession. When a teacher is blind or ignorant to their internal dialogue, it warps their sense of what they can do and their understanding of their learner capabilities. Awareness of one's power or agency to create and co-create new realities is integral in the process of developing readiness for CRP and

RDP. Both CRP and RDP require educators to raise their consciousness, and metacognitive ownership allows educators to see the possibilities for their critical awareness. When educators have and take ownership of their agency, they can create and co-create with their colleagues and learners and build capacity for cultural consciousness, which ultimately positively impacts learners of color. With a new capacity for critical awareness, the educator can create and hold space to integrate Restorative Discipline practices. However, for productive disruption of hegemonic systems to occur, critical consciousness must be at the forefront of teacher decision-making.

Critical Consciousness and Teacher Decision Making

A teacher's deepest vocation ought to be a process of becoming more fully human while standing in solidarity with her learners to help them realize their full humanity as well (Palmer, 1983, 2000, 2007; Wall, 2016). Dehumanization is a marker of our current educational landscape; it is often described as the safest and best to lean towards a less radical form of pedagogical methods that do not disrupt hegemonic norms. Freire describes the problem of humanization, and the question then becomes "is their hope" for the kind of mutuality that he espouses (Freire & Macedo, 2018). Freire points to the reality that for mutual humanization to occur, "an uncompleted being" must become conscious of their incompletion (Freire & Macedo, 2018, p. 44).

However, educators who seek to be restorers of humanity must disrupt the distortions that interfere with humanization, which empowers educators to liberate their learners from these fixed mindsets that hegemonic norms promote and release themselves from such oppressive mindsets as well. In the becoming process of humanization, educators must first self-realize and then self-actualize. Educators must develop critical

cultural consciousness and pair it with the confidence to take actions that fully express humanization (Bartolome, 1994; Cherian, 2008; Freire & Macedo, 2018; Palmer, 1983; Rubel, 2005). Teachers must intentionally align themselves with this critical consciousness and restoration to combat the continuation of oppressive systems.

Educators can establish a robust model of humanity and actively embody liberation and live out their humanity. Adopting and embodying liberatory habits of mind can break the adhesion to the oppression that depletes the possibility for emancipation. Educators can come into complete alignment with themselves and their model of humanity. Freedom is not a gift to be received quickly; it must be taken by force, pursued steadily, consistently, and intentionally (T. K. Chapman & Hobbel, 2010; Freire & Macedo, 2018).

However, not many educators are willing to take the risk of this process, and therefore, the cycle of reinforcing hegemonic norms continues. Some factors for reluctance may include a lack of content knowledge (Meschede et al., 2017), confidence in the process (Brooks & Houston, 2015), through transformative action, educators can disrupt this cycle. When teachers commit to the humanization of themselves and the students they work with, teachers become agents in an ongoing struggle for more democratic and liberatory forms of education. The process of humanization includes a more profound, almost spiritual level of self-awareness and knowledge. Educators can become active participants in developing their liberation pedagogy before doing so for their learners (Freire & Macedo, 2018). Developing a liberatory pedagogical mindset becomes an act of critical discovery, as educators seek to engage their personal stories, lineage, privileges, histories, and biases. Doing the internal work can combat the

manifestations of dehumanization that are prevalent in today's sphere of American public education.

Freire describes liberation as painful childbirth, which means that it can only come by intense labor, pressure, and even painful sacrifice of mind and body. The level of investment that a truly liberatory educator embodies requires both self-regard and also some self-sacrifice. All other inactive educators in this process automatically become complicit actors in the manifestations of dehumanization that rob today's youth of fully realized humanity (Freire & Macedo, 2018; Roz Camangian, 2017). Teachers should adopt a radical posture in a position of solidarity that requires constant attention to self-awareness, which can also take the form of metacognition. The idea here is that no reality can change or transform itself. Instead, members of the learning community must become active agents of their realities. Educators can become examples for the model to reach the student level.

Educator reorientation requires a "profound rebirth" (Freire & Macedo, 2018, p. 61) as they reach a point where they can no longer be in alignment with oppressive systems. Freire describes this shift in consciousness as analogous with a religious conversion, whereby the educator endures a "conversion to the people" (Freire & Macedo, 2018, p. 61). Punitive discipline practices (Armour, 2016) are an oppressive system that the newly converted educator can disrupt and resist. The humanist educator who is seeking to revolutionize learner experiences as they experience their liberation must deliberately weigh in on the truth of what punitive structures destroy in their learners to reach mutual liberation(T. K. Chapman & Hobbel, 2010; Freire & Macedo,

2018). Before a predominately White teacher workforce can examine oppressive systems, an examination of the meaning of Whiteness in the educational context is crucial.

Teacher Metacognition

The way teachers reflect on their thinking impacts how they respond to students (Jiang et al., 2016). In Jiang et al.'s study, "Metacognition is generally defined as how individuals monitor and control their cognitive process" (Jiang et al., 2016, p. 404). Some researchers propose that metacognition comprises knowledge and variables that weigh into the cognitive dialogue (Dix, 2016; Mezirow, 2003). Recently, researchers have adopted a comprehensive view that suggests the inclusion of metacognitive knowledge, experiences, and skills. Jiang et al. adopts this integrated approach, as does the present researcher (Jiang et al., 2016). Much of the current scholarship linking metacognition with CRP looks at teacher-student relationships and not teacher-self relationships (Jiang et al., 2016; McCabe, 2011; Spruce & Bol, 2015). Several studies highlight specific aspects of a teacher's thoughts and beliefs and how those thoughts and beliefs can profoundly impact teacher decision-making.

Understanding racial constructs are part of what it means to comprehend the meaning of diversity. Jenny Gordon's (2005) work asks critical questions concerning colorblindness, racial biases, and other sociopolitical factors affecting instruction. Gordon developed a diversity inventory that required participants to consider race, class, and gender as they filled it out. Yet, even Gordon, a White educator, realized her resistance to focusing on race because she also included gender and class. Her colleagues echoed her resistance to race in their responses.

Teacher metacognitive abilities can impact levels of attention to power, privilege, and cultural differences. A specific prescription exists in Ann Gregory and Edward Fergus's work, in which they describe social and emotional learning and equity in school discipline. Their study describes how, mainly, that Black and Latinx male students are more likely to face academically detrimental punitive and exclusionary disciplinary action, such as suspension and expulsion. The prominence of these subpopulations proves that race and gender are intricately linked to the ways that U.S. schools choose to implement disciplinary practices (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). This study also examines the prevailing "colorblind notions of SEL, which does not consider power, privilege, and cultural differences, and thus ignores how individual beliefs and structural biases can lead educators to react harshly to behaviors that fall outside a White cultural frame of reference" (Gregory & Fergus, 2017, p. 117). Gregory and Fergus attempt to establish an SEL concept that stresses equity and points to the importance of examining the role of teacher metacognition in decision-making around disciplinary practices. Any form of teacher education that does not allow for critical self-assessment robs the educator of practices that indicate proactive and preemptive thought behind classroom implementation.

Examining Whiteness

The acknowledgment of whiteness is a critical factor for White teachers seeking to embody a transformationist pedagogy and remain self-aware (Allen, 2004; Gordon, 2005; Gregory et al., 2017; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Howard, 2006; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Picower, 2009; Smith & Crowley, 2015; Treinen & Warren, 2001). In particular, Howard addresses the racial disparities, the achievement gap, and how White educators

can challenge their presumptions and biases about students of color. Many biases include

lowered expectations. Expressing these biases causes learners of color great harm and

exacerbates an already challenging educational landscape. For educators to challenge

their mindsets, they must have a certain level of metacognitive skill that empowers them

to question their pedagogy within their teaching context. The challenge, once again, is to

reach critical conscientization (Freire & Macedo, 2018).

White teachers must grapple with colorblind ideology and their unconscious

biases. If White teachers hope to be transformationist in their pedagogy, they must come

to terms with their privilege and lack of knowing or even wanting to see (Blaisdell, 2018;

Gordon, 2005; Howard, 2006; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Picower, 2009; Treinen &

Warren, 2001). Coming to terms with White privilege requires challenging presumptions

and intentionally raising consciousness and self-awareness. The unwillingness to know

and see racial disparities, check presumptions and privilege, and unconscious bias and

colorblindness are among the key factors of resistance to CRP and RDP.

Several viable discussions exist on the perils of White social dominance (Allen,

2004; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Picower, 2009; Treinen & Warren, 2001). In Howard's

(2006) writing, themes present are cultural competence, the achievement triangle, and

White transformationist teachers. He does not mention restorative practices. Howard

outlines three factors of Whiteness that plague American public schools. They are "the

assumption of rightness, the luxury of ignorance, and the legacy of privilege" (Howard,

2006, p. 118). He asserts that educators must challenge their assumptions and disrupt the

privileged thinking that what is suitable for one learner must be helpful for all learners. A

lack of attention to assumptions can lead to blind thinking and hinder transformational

work (Mertens, 2007; Mezirow, 2003; Roz Camangian, 2017).

White educators face difficulties with challenging White dominance because, as

dominant groups, White educators benefit from hegemonic power structures. It is crucial

for White educators seeking to do the work of transformationist pedagogy to make

connections and choose to engage the learners' stories and honor and revere their lived

experiences as valuable social currency. Valuing the lived experiences of others requires

an asset-based thought process, as opposed to a deficit mindset. A paradigm shift of mind

requires attention to metacognitive skills.

Beliefs determine outcomes, and transformationist educators are profoundly

aware of this and seek to do the work to impact their inner beliefs. Howard connects his

work to that of Parker Palmer (1983, 2000, 2007), who describes teaching as a vocation,

not merely a job. Educators must employ their agency to leverage vocational power to

challenge the connections between beliefs and practices. Howard contrasts two groups of

educators: White teachers who are working towards a transformationist pedagogy and

White teachers resistant (Allen, 2004; Shim, 2018). He notes that those who are willing

to do the work have committed themselves to continual introspection on their stances and

behaviors concerning race and cultural differences and have publicly noted their

difficulties and struggles and cannot reasonably approach these issues without building

their critical consciousness.

The recognition that transformationist work requires integration and a clear

framework that cannot happen in isolation within a professional learning community is

present in the work of Howard, Palmer, and many other researchers in this field (Dix,

2016; Howard, 2006; Mertens, 2007; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 1983; Roz Camangian, 2017; Sweetman et al., 2010). Transformationist work helped establish clear frameworks that visually organize the importance of acting out a transformationist teaching ethic.

The achievement triangle is one such foundational model that represents this truth. The triangle model displays the intersectional realities of self, practice, students, rigor, relationships, responsiveness, equity, competence, and responsive teaching. In this model, Educators are either working towards a transformationist framework or complicit with the culturally hegemonic forces at play (Dix, 2016; Howard, 2006; Mertens, 2007). Overall, educators get to decide where they stand and whether they will engage in critically deconstructing their knowledge of self, their practice, and those in the schooling community.

Critical Deconstruction

When educators assess the intersectional realities of their lives and experiences honestly, they can more fully realize where they can address gaps in their teaching practice. Drawing on these experiences can aid emerging teacher educators to foster and "scaffolds critical deconstructions" (Roz Camangian, 2017, p. 30) that can help what Roz Camangian describes as "pro-people politics" to move forward with increased energy (2017, p. 30). Pro-people political engagement describes the social transformation as being led by oppressed people, for oppressed people (Freire & Macedo, 2018). Societal transformation results from not silencing one's identity but remaining at the center of the conversation as fully as possible while realizing how the social movement and intersectional identities overlap and intertwine. Educators must seek to truly embrace their identities to truly embody, in an incarnational sense, the honesty and forthrightness

that they wish to see in the world, a reality that affirms the full humanization of the oppressed and marginalized. Educators must move beyond conflating diversity into cultural and phenotypical traits (Roz Camangian, 2017) and move into a disruptive dialogue that adequately addresses racial diversity issues with critical consciousness and challenges what educators face in the work of doing so.

Critical Consciousness and Tikkun Olam

A specific mode of critical consciousness involves a concept known as *tikkun olam. Tikkun olam* is a Jewish phrase and ethical concept rooted in Rabbinic law and simply means "repair of the world" (R. Chapman, 2013; Cherian, 2008; Kahane, 2012; Leslie, 2016; Winer, 2008). Many researchers posit and agree that this repair begins with an introspective or self-reflection. Self-examination that leads to repair of the world is necessary because across the current landscape of schooling in the U.S., standardization and accountability are conflated and often replace a focus on equitable and democratic schooling (Giroux & McLaren, 1986). Therefore, the ethos of *tikkun olam* drives practical wisdom that can lead to enrichment in adult learning and student achievement (Kahane, 2012).

Not only can *tikkun olam* guide educators as adult learners, but it can also help guide me as the researcher, as it promotes an ethical lens that supports adult learning toward more democratic forms of learning. Facets involved in an ethic driven by *tikkun olam* are transformative learning and empowering educators as "transformative intellectuals" and critical thinkers (Giroux & McLaren, 1986, p. 213). Interviewing within a phenomenological framework with this lens helps me frame educators, as independent critical thinkers. *Tikkun olam* also promotes confronting biases and social

injustices. Chapman (2013) discusses how various and opposing viewpoints are examined and potentially brought into focus when applying *tikkun olam*. *Tikkun olam* encourages shared dialogues and intersectional coexistence when confronting beliefs that are often seen as oppositional.

To move towards intersectional learning communities, *tikkun olam* comes into focus because it promotes partnerships and collaboration rooted in participants examining themselves and what happens when they bring their fullest identities into a learning community. Through *tikkun olam*, educators and school leaders can understand how to examine self critically, and therefore begin to develop the social consciousness that leads not only to student achievement but also democratic social engagement.

Toward Political and Ideological Clarity

Educators must embrace the work to deliberate a significant paradigm shift (Roz Camangian, 2017). Education is ripe with reactionary spaces that force us to reckon without voice and positionality, and we must be strategic in this effort. Part of that effort is to embody what it means to be anti-racist and anti-biased fully, and one's identity, not silencing it in the face of political discomfort. It is well established that educators ought to implement culturally relevant pedagogy to prepare learners for a democratic society (Brooks & Houston, 2015; Clark et al., 2016; Dixson & Dingus, 2007; Freire & Macedo, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2005; Martell & Stevens, 2017; Verdugo, 2002).

Bartolome studied four exemplary educators at Riverview High School and found that, in general, the educators proficiently created and sustained caring, just, and equitable classrooms with attention to their awareness of "asymmetrical power relations" (Bartolome, 2004). The educators also questioned the normative power structure,

specifically meritocratic explanations of the social order (p. 104). The exemplary teachers rejected the deficit views of minority students and refused to romanticize the dominant culture (p. 109). Bartolome's study describes the teacher's responsiveness to their learner's needs for authentic mentorship, empathy, and encouragement. Teacher education's implications are that it must be transformed and deal with in counter-hegemonic discourse to be effective (Bartolome, 2004).

Bartolome (2004) introduces naming and disrupting hegemonic systems that disproportionality impact students of color. Naming and disrupting systems can take place through unpacking the need to synthesize teacher preparation and CRP principles. She also proposes ways to help beginning educators develop explicit methods for communicating their political and ideological identities. Similarly, Martell and Stevens's (2017) case study of 13 social studies educators who self-identified as race-conscious suggests that the educator's stated beliefs aligned with CRT's central tenets. When preservice teachers engage in foundational CRT and CRP, they can practice resistance to hegemonic norms. Resistance can, in turn, help disrupt exclusionary biases, values, and beliefs (Accuardi-Gilliam, 2017; Bottiani et al., 2018; Meschede et al., 2017).

Therefore, culturally responsive and transformative teachers reject deficit views of minority students and refuse to romanticize the dominant culture (Accuardi-Gilliam, 2017; Bartolome, 2004). Characteristically, transformative educators are: relational and vocational, relevant and responsive, strategic and iterative, emergent and constructive, restorative and transgressive, and liberatory and political (A. M. Brown, 2017; B. Brown, 2018; Freire & Macedo, 2018; hooks, 1994). Teacher education implies that it must be transformed and deal with in counter-hegemonic discourse to be effective (Bartolome,

2004). Counter-hegemonic discourse cannot occur in the vacuum of an individual teacher's classroom but must also happen within the school as a learning community.

The School as Community

The school as a community provides educators with a learning space where they can begin to examine themselves critically, their practices and engage and interact with other educators in the field. In the school as a community, teachers can generate ideas, consider their role in the classroom and school community spaces, and begin to cogenerate ideas with other educators. They can help one another build skills and enact more democratic forms of education. Therefore, when in-service educators have the room to consider culturally relevant practices, anti-bias, and anti-racist practices connected with their own lived experiences, they can bring their understandings to the school community and begin to engage in ways that benefit themselves and their learners.

The work of Shady (2015) describes the role of cosmopolitanism and its ability to shape the building of community in favor of an ethic of sameness, over-identifying unique identities. The school environment is a community that includes many socially constructed categories of representation. When community members do not adhere to the standard narrative or cosmopolitanism, they are often ostracized (Shady, 2015). However, according to Shady, actual community development involves human interactions through Socratic self-examination (2015). This sort of liberation helps individuals disrupt the toxicity that can develop within the sameness that cosmopolitanism promotes (T. K. Chapman & Hobbel, 2010; Harro, 2013; Shady, 2015). Socratic, or co-generative dialogue involving questioning oneself, can lead to liberation from oppressive systems and hegemonic ideals.

An educator who is unafraid to address self consistently while addressing traditional hegemonic structures has immense power to disrupt and dissolve systems that ultimately keep the nation's most underprivileged marginalized. Roz Camangian describes his experiences as a former gang member as being caught up in the hegemony (Roz Camangian, 2017, p. 30). This realization helped him to problematize this in his teaching ethic. The kind of inner developmental work crosses over into professional learning communities, where it becomes imperative for educators to participate and communicate their inner knowledge effectively in shared learning spaces.

Moving from critical self-dialogue into actionable co-generative dialogue is a crucial feature in school communities that are seeking to establish thought patterns that lead to action steps that are socially conscious and culturally sustaining (Hogan-Chapman et al., 2017; Roz Camangian, 2017). Such school environments require educators to engage in critical listening and storytelling to form actionable responses. Specifically, Camangian raises questions about how to respond to racial contradictions and how those contradictions shape experiences. He writes about taking back teacher education to situate the practitioner directly within the conditions that cause political trouble. Roz Camangian and others who share similar thought patterns that lead to practice are examples of educators who remain sincerely in touch with their personal experiences and remain connected to the importance of interconnectedness. Grappling with the school's interconnectedness as a community makes working towards an anti-racist and anti-bias framework of teacher education easier to frontload and manage.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are proven to be effective methods of building healthy results-oriented school communities. For PLCs to thrive, trust between principals, teachers, and students is essential. These collaborative communities are essential for teacher collaboration, as well as student achievement. Hallam (2015) studied trust and collaboration in teacher relationships and made connections with Principal support for teacher collaboration benefits. They found that the more an educator felt trusted within their PLCs, the more they were likely to be vulnerable, and share their feelings, pedagogical struggles, and fears, which connect to how authentically they bring themselves to planning (Hallam et al., 2015). The more authentic an educator is in the planning and data analysis process, the more realistic they can be about student achievement, which leads to more promising results.

PLCs help support high-quality teaching. Working to build an active PLC requires administrations' collaborative efforts, teams of teachers, and trust from the district-level officials to implement best practices (Hallam et al., 2015; Shady, 2015). Without productive dialogue and a lack of trust, high-quality teaching is difficult to muster. Hallam et al. explored trust development within teams, the principal's impact on trust development, and the relationship of trust to collaboration. They found that the best PLCs included a generous balance of formal and informal collaboration. There was also a movement from softer relationship building to more challenging productivity. The more vulnerable a teacher could be in the informal, the more willing they were to participate in the more challenging work of designing instruction. Restorative practices help achieve this, and Hallam and Smith did not include restorative in their study as a possibility for sustaining meaningful dialogue (Hallam et al., 2015; Shady, 2015). Ultimately, a robust

PLC is an appropriate context for a metacognitive process that includes RDP and CRP. However, for the PLC to be culturally sustaining, the collective orientation must be toward a culture of mutual vulnerability and collaboration. Therefore, transformative learning and practices can begin to unfold.

Transformative Practices

The proposal for increased attention to teacher awareness through metacognition is a transformative notion. This section details several transformative ideas that help imagine a social reality in American public schools that embraces racial dialogue and equity in action at CRP and RDP intersections. This section concludes with a call for an improved professional learning model, which I have named an intersectional learning community. Such a community involves increased attention to a teacher's thought journey and trajectory. Therefore, the understanding that a teacher's lived experiences, beliefs, and background understandings will ultimately show forth in the ways they enact their pedagogy. Therefore, it would be advantageous to the learner if teachers were encouraged to honestly examine the intersectional realities of their own lives and consider how those realities play out within the school community's intersectional realities. The transformative practices detailed here provide concrete examples of the various ways intersectionality within teachers converges with school communities.

Restorative Justice, Discipline, and Dialogue

Restorative Justice initially began as a movement based on the need to rethink responses to crime but has since evolved into a radical school discipline approach (Amstutz, 2005; Pranis, 2005; Zehr, 2002) and provides the space necessary for CRT and CRP to unfold. Within Restorative spaces, practices such as Restorative circles allow for

46

inner and communal dialogue that can drive cultural shifts within professional learning communities.

The overuse of punitive discipline ultimately involves further contact with the criminal justice system. Zero-tolerance policies are detrimental and worthy of scrutiny due to their disproportionate impact on students of color (Hoffman, 2014). Restorative Justice cannot occur without recognizing racial injustice, and colorblind teachers will not see the need for CRP or RDP (Accuardi-Gilliam, 2017; Gordon, 2005). The negative impact of punitive discipline has been well documented (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Glanzer, 2005; González, 2012; Hoffman, 2014; Verdugo, 2002). The mere presence of zero-tolerance policies increases the likelihood of future disciplinary problems and leads to learners' indefinite alienation from the learning space.

Restorative Practices

Restorative justice, discipline, and dialogue are areas that carry many benefits for educators and learners as co-practitioners of the "weaving" (Pranis, 2005, p. 59) process that takes place within learning communities and partnerships (Amstutz, 2005; Hammond, 2015; Pranis, 2005; Zehr, 2002). Circle practices are the defining element of restorative work that can help educators and learners balance their academic and behavioral lives by focusing on the communal aspects of restorative dialogue. Pranis proposes that restorative circles have a community-building impact, where storytelling becomes an element of relationship building and collective action (Pranis, 2005, p. 59).

RP requires an introduction to research-based restorative principles, which include the emphasis on correct responses to wrongdoing instead of punishing behaviors and the importance of stakeholder involvement in the process of conflict resolution

process. Restorative circles have specific rules that adult learners must understand and value learn before implementing. The rules include defining the kind of circle needed based on the context and behaviors, establishing circle guidelines, norms, arranging the talking circle, pre-conference work, facilitator preparation, centerpiece creation, and introducing a unique talking piece. The RP process includes attention to behavioral steps to be performed by the adult learner, which involves consideration of cognitive components. Teachers will need to practice, adjust, and adapt based on the circle participants' tier of focus and needs (Amstutz, 2005; Jones & Armour, 2013).

The active element in circles connects with CRP in that it gives space for the metacognitive work to be fully expressed and lived out in universal space. Restorative circles are the place for restorative dialogue that leads to action. Circles provide a space to work out behavioral issues and deep understanding and healing of inner wounds. It is a beautiful space for educators to restore classroom balance and bring back positive energies (Pranis, 2005). Circles invite the co-practitioners into a space of shared dignity, which speaks to the interconnected aspects of restorative. This makes it such an appropriate space for CRT and CRP to be fully actualized (Zehr, 2002; Pranis, 2005; Amstutz & Mullet, 2015; Armour, 2015).

Restorative practice experts focus on students with challenging behaviors and the strategies an educator can employ to nurture healthy and positive teacher-student relationships (Amstutz, 2005; Kehoe et al., 2018; Pranis, 2005; Price & Steed, 2016; Zehr, 2002). Much of the current research in the restorative field focuses primarily on the early childhood classroom setting. It includes using group time to discuss the conflict, learning about children and families, developing and teaching expectations, and

developing and teaching empathy. All these strategies involve students remaining in the classroom. This article helps develop a case for the same approaches and options to include restorative practices and be employed in k-12 public education.

The social discipline window (Olstad & Miller, 2012) is an example of a visual that offers a pictorial depiction of progression through the restorative process. It contains two axes that represent the movements between who and how discipline is enacted with and for. Rightly enacted restorative discipline is done with others, and this is represented in the fourth quadrant on the diagram. Educators can refer to this to gauge their level of engagement with the restorative practices. Using this tool can help educators improve their teaching and leadership practices, as they seek to become less punitive, permissive, and neglectful, to build capacity for more restorative implementation.

The implementation of restorative discipline programs requires paradigm shifts from the top down to be active and address the learning, not just safety in the school environment (González, 2012; Payne & Welch, 2015). Support for this approach comes from the research on school-based restorative discipline programs. Findings include that restorative "allows the entire community, including teachers, families, schools, and communities to resolve conflict, promote academic achievement, and address school safety" (González, 2012, p. 291). Restorative practices support school-based restorative programs' powerful impact and bring to light the negative impact of zero-tolerance policies and other punitive discipline measures.

Curriculum reform with restorative justice is fundamental and requires getting personal, political, hard work, get meta metacognitive- cultivating self-knowledge (Hawkes & Twemlow, 2015; Jones & Armour, 2013; Payne & Welch, 2015). These

processes are for the benefit of the learner and the collective benefit of the learning community. In a punitive classroom setting, the educator embodies traditional practices, leaving out the student's voice and leaving the educator's thought processes and cognitive skills unchecked and ignored. A punitive culture is counter to the recommendations for cultural awareness present in CRT and CRP and the inclusivity encouraged by RDP. Heavy dependence on zero-tolerance reinforces the hegemonic forces that CRP and RDP seek to combat. A punitive discipline only works when someone in the community becomes the other, and a hierarchical structure takes precedence over a horizontal and communal structure.

Restorative processes are for the benefit of the learner and the collective benefit of the learning community. Restorative practices require a balanced understanding of a community of stakeholders, a concern for all involved. A community with this sort of understanding is the perfect environment for the cultivation of integrated CRT and CRP because, like CRT and CRP, "Restorative Justice prefers inclusive, collaborative processes and consensual outcomes" (Zehr, 2002, p. 26).

The Call for Restorative Practices

Hoffman concludes that the time is right to end zero-tolerance policies, as their expansion only leads to more racial disparities and does little to increase achievement and disrupt racial biases that are underlying policies. Zero-tolerance policies only result in alienating learners, while a restorative approach could alleviate and address racial biases while also lowering the rates of expulsions and other punitive disciplinary models. In response to these exclusionary practices, Dr. Marilyn Armour describes a pressing need for Texas schools to adopt restorative practices (2016). Armour was the primary author of

50

a grant that partnered with the Texas Education Agency to fund restorative training for teachers and administrators in ten regions. Armour describes the detriment of zero-tolerance policies as a punishment and exclusion system and as a misguided strategy for school safety.

Hammond notes that an overemphasis on compliance exacerbates cognitive function in learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The consequence for a heavy focus on compliance over cultural and linguistic inclusivity is that it leads to a dependence on zero-tolerance and punitive practices that alienate learners based on assumptions and biases of what learner expressions of frustrations ought to be (Hammond, 2015). Hammond also outlines "categories of hope" (p. 93) that describe the possibilities for learners in the academic realm, and this could become a model for the behavioral side as well. Much of Hammond's writing includes the language of restorative discipline (Amstutz, 2005), including a shared understanding of specific goals and relational bonds based on mutual trust. In this process, the educator takes on the ally's role, allying with the learner in this shared hopefulness (Amstutz, 2005; Hammond, 2015).

The learning partnership alliance features include four features that mark it as a viable addition to the argument for a combination of CRP and restorative practices. First, a pact or a formal agreement between the learner and educator establishes the learning goal and acts as a covenant agreement (Amstutz, 2005; Hammond, 2015; Pranis, 2005; Zehr, 2002). A relational approach harkens to the peacebuilding model present in the writings of Pranis (2005) and Zehr (2002). The teacher as an ally and warm demander is another feature of the learning alliance, and this includes a healthy balance of care and

51

push, where learners can take risks and gain confidence (Hammond, 2015). CRP and RP require introspection on the part of educators. Therefore, it is essential to consider what role teacher metacognition might play in learning CRP and RP in the growth and implementation process.

Anti-Bias and Anti-Racist Teacher Education

Several researchers address teacher resistance in anti-bias and anti-racist teacher education by grappling with the idea that challenging teacher education offers a valuable opportunity to address social justice issues (Derman-Sparks, 2016; Lin et al., 2008; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Treinen & Warren, 2001). Particularly, Shim asserts that to engage in racial justice work effectively, teachers must work through the loss of idealism and their understandings of race dialogues. Shim supports her assertions by introducing the context of cultural globalization, inequity in society in schools as an ongoing educational problem (Shim, 2018).

These concerns connect to social justice issues, and educators must take these broader issues into account to begin the work of disrupting inequities and inhumanities. Shim's key factor echoes the work of (Freire & Macedo, 2018) in the dialogical method of liberatory education that is not a mere technique but a means to transform social relations in the classroom. Therefore, a relational dialogue is an integral part of reaching clarity and critical consciousness to enact CRP and RDP. Shim also examines emotional reactions that lead to resistance and candor acceptance of racial dialogue (2018). She examines the emotional worlds of teacher educators who must encounter and equip themselves to help pre-service educators enact robust programs of social justice and action. Engaging professional dialogue that empowers educators to select modes of

developing their CRP wheelhouse encourages courageous educators. They are willing to confront their own professional needs with transformative practices.

Testimonio Pedagogy

Testimonio pedagogy is closely related to restorative practices and incorporates culturally responsive pedagogy El Ashmawi (El Ashmawi et al., 2018). Its enactment enables educators to develop their culturally responsive pedagogy within a community of dialogue. The pedagogy seeks to strengthen educator preparation for diverse learning communities and encourage educators to tap into their social identities to employ such a practice. The question could be here; what is the value in developing their pedagogy instead of a collective pedagogy? Collective speaks of communal and would benefit a broader community.

A collective testimonio pedagogy is more urgent than a relaxed form of social action. Often there seems to be too much discretionary freedom left to pre-service educators and those responsible for guiding them, and not enough of urgency for critical conscientization and enactment of culturally responsive pedagogy or restorative practices. Testimonio pedagogy is a process of actively listening to the lived experiences of others and embraces one another's "funds of knowledge" (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). El Ashmawi implements testimonio to invite learners to engage in reflection and dialogue about their personal experiences. Testimonio created spaces for critical consciousness and encouraged students to see their complex social realities and identities. The imperative here would be for educators also to be involved in this formative process.

Testimonio is described as an inherently political act as it requires action alongside an awareness of self and others. Once one has become aware of themselves and

others' realities and lived experiences, it compels them to embody then and act out that awareness through social action. This social action can come through the intimate dialogue of testimonio pedagogy and other dialogical modes of instruction (Allen, 2004; El Ashmawi et al., 2018; Richmond, 2017; Shady, 2015).

Having various modes of instructional dialogue like testimonio pedagogy provides in-service educators with options in their decision-making. Because teachers have so many options within their control, throughout this study, I inquire about their lived experiences and how those experiences might impact their decision of whether to choose normative punitive measures or more collaborative and transformative practices.

Toward an Intersectional Learning Community

Patricia Hill-Collins describes intersectionality as a critical social theory that helps inform the connection between critical analysis and social action (Hill-Collins, 2019). While a professional learning community might center student learning and achievement, an intersectional learning community challenged educators as adult learners to form a learning community based on understandings of diverse identities and lived experiences. In-depth and preemptive attention to andragogy as the art and science of adult education leads to more robust pedagogy or children's education (Owen et al., 2017). Therefore, the purpose of researching the lived experiences of teachers is to propose a kind of learning community that takes into consideration those lived experiences as a necessary component in a professional learning community.

I chose the term "intersectionality" because it most accurately describes the kind of critical social environment that allows for the convergence of teacher's experiences and the kinds of social actions that liberate and helps build and perpetuate truly

54

democratic education and citizenship (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Costino, 2018; Hill-Collins, 2019; hooks, 1994; Love, 2019). These liberatory practices include restorative dialogue, culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies, and other transformative practices that are communal, dialogical, and emancipatory. Pliner et al. (2011) note that an intersectional approach to collaborative teaching can enrich pedagogy overall. Alejano-Steele et al. (2011) supports an intersectional approach and argues that educators need to confront their identity issues to engage in a vibrant and formative learning community.

An intersectional learning community has the potential to transform educators into facilitators and co-creators that challenge students to take on greater responsibilities in their learning (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Hill-Collins, 2019; Pliner et al., 2011). This notion counteracts efforts to exclude students based on harm done and instead refocuses the philosophy of schooling and discipline altogether. An intersectional learning community has the potential to help mitigate racial disparities and injustices in schooling.

Conclusion

Public school education in the United States has always been ripe with hegemonic structures and a dense culture of power (Delpit, 1995). Across the landscape of 21st-century education in the U.S., attention to social issues of racial injustices, disparities, and inequities has taken center stage. The classroom has become a tense, reflexive microcosm of the nation's most heated and political debates. It can be tempting to respond in a way that demands a rush towards pedagogical improvements for learners; however, the real onus is on educators and school leaders to act within themselves and learn how to respond to the present demands adequately.

This study focuses on those in-service educators' lived experiences and examines the phenomenon of their responses to student behaviors. Throughout the study, I focus on adult learning and transformative methods which rightly address teacher awareness of race, privilege, power, and the positive uses of restorative practices and teacher-centered outcomes that are representative of current literature (Gregory et al., 2017; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Jiang et al., 2016; Kehoe et al., 2018; Price & Steed, 2016). I attempt to build on the educational literature and suggest a new theoretical perspective to address specific concerns around educating teachers for success with disciplinary actions towards African American learners.

Ultimately, this study's findings have the potential to aid in developing a framework category or an entire instrument that can help inform educators on best practices for proficient teacher metacognition and to disrupt the reliance on punitive disciplinary practices that disproportionately push out Black and Latinx learners. As CRP and CRT can help inform and realize the need to think of and dialogue concerning society as racialized, this understanding reinforces race as a permanent inequity factor. It crosses over into the need for integrating restorative practices as a mode of productive and co-generative dialogue.

When adult learners can learn and develop competencies rooted in the process of inquiry, analysis, and social action requiring self-actualization and self-awareness (de Bruijn & Leeman, 2011; Dix, 2016; Freire & Macedo, 2018; Mezirow, 2003), they can begin to form learning communities that take into consideration how all of life is connected.

However, few are actualizing a transformative pedagogy that addresses restorative practices, which moves toward actualizing integration of these models even more necessary for 21st- century educators. I propose that to disrupt normative hegemonies, a synthesis of transformative learning theory, critical race theory, culturally relevant pedagogy, and restorative discipline practices are essential in on-going professional learning for in-service educators—the reinforcement of an intersectional professional learning system that is foundationally democratic and culturally sustaining. The teacher lived experiences can become fertile ground for transformative learning to take root and grow. When explicit attention is on the importance of adult learning, culturally relevant teaching, restorative practices, and teacher self-awareness can all converge to the benefit of student behaviors, engagement, and achievement.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

In 21st century American education, Black and Latinx's learners are still

disproportionately punished with punitive measures. This study seeks to understand

teacher decision-making when they control whether to address student behaviors in a

punitive manner or choose more restorative and liberatory practices. To understand this, I

have chosen a qualitative research method known as hermeneutic phenomenology (HP).

According to Van Manen (1990), a hermeneutic phenomenology involves

interpreting the lived experiences for their essence or more profound nature. In this study,

I examine in-service educators' lived experiences for the more profound nature of their

decisions about discipline. Throughout the study, I orient myself towards an

intersectional learning community that involves an overlap of attention to educator's

identities, restorative dialogue, culturally relevant pedagogy, and metacognitive skills.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe the essential meaning of the lived

experiences of the research participants, in this case, 2nd-8th grade teachers at a small fine

arts charter school in Houston, TX.

In Chapter Two, I established a need for an intersectional learning community

that affirms the use of culturally relevant, restorative, and transformative practices in

adult education. Understanding the essence of teacher's lived experiences is a

foundational starting point for building a more robust intersectional learning community.

In Chapter Three, I describe my positionality, background, and relationship to the

educators at the charter school where I work, and where I conducted my research. Next, I describe the purpose of choosing a hermeneutic phenomenological design for my research. I continue the chapter with a discussion of the data collection and analysis, a description of the campuses and participants, and conclude with a focus on ethical considerations, limitations, and delimitations.

This study has a two-fold function. First, the study focuses on in-service educators' lived experiences as it pertains to diverse student populations and disciplinary practices. Secondly, the study examines the phenomenon of teacher awareness of what factors intersect and impact their decision-making about discipline and what practices might benefit an intersectional professional learning community. The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the experiences of in-service educators at the participating charter school who implement discipline practices to diverse student populations? And,

2. How do in-service educators in Houston, TX, describe their decision to implement various discipline practices?

The sub-question for this study includes:

a. What are the catalysts for disciplinary responses among K-12 educators?

b. What are some of the cultural and sociopolitical aspects impacting both teachers and learners that help define responses to behaviors?

c. How do national, district, and administrative policies shape educator decisions on learner behaviors?

The sub-questions lead to more in-depth interview questions for the participants as they emerge. The research inquiry focuses on the catalysts for disciplinary responses among my participants and how various policies impact their decision-making.

Researcher Perspective

As the researcher, I am aware that I will always bring my beliefs and philosophical assumptions to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). First, the stance I take in my research is primarily ontological. The nature of reality is a primary concern. Characteristically, an ontological standpoint allows me to see how reality is seen through many lenses. Consequently, I am curious about how teacher's experiences of their realities shape their decision-making. I report their perspectives and themes that develop throughout the research.

My goal is to get as close to my participants as possible so that I can genuinely "gather essential meanings and values as accurately and authentically as possible (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Secondly, there is also a strong axiological component of my research. Therefore, I am continually aware of the "value-laden" nature of the research based on my proximity as a researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 21). According to the work of Van Manen (1990), a hermeneutical phenomenology involves interpreting the lived experiences for their essence or more profound nature. In the case of this study, I examine the lived experiences of in-service educators for the deeper nature of their decision-making on disciplinary practices. Too few educators have tapped into this intimate relationship within themselves, where they can truly realize this level of investment with one's pedagogy. Through the lenses of transformative learning theory and critical race theory, I engage in data collection, analysis, and interpretation that bears adult learning principles and how conscious social raising occurs (Freire & Macedo, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Mezirow, 2003).

Since I am conducting a hermeneutical phenomenology (HP), a clear understanding of how my lived experiences shape my worldview and relationship to this

study is critical. In an HP study, a researcher positions themselves amongst the participants to get as clear a view as possible of the lived experiences. In my case, I am no exception. I am a Black middle-class woman who identifies as Christian, particularly in the liturgical expression. These intersectional realities in my life cause me to wonder what it means to be fully human and care about how interactions between humans in communities shape their lives.

Consequently, I feel research ought to be a reflective, iterative, and emergent process that requires a positive relationship with participants and values their intersectional identities and lived experiences. I also care genuinely about disparities that exist for Black and Latinx students and how teachers across racial lines misuse discipline measures; this comes from my understanding of equality, equity, and liberation. My background in liberation theology informs my teaching ethic. This research is philosophically grounded in constructivist and transformative worldviews, and my overarching philosophy is that teaching is a calling and vocation, not merely a profession (Palmer, 1983, 2000, 2007). I also understand teaching as a deeply spiritual practice, requiring a synthesis of body, mind, and soul, concerning what it means to be fully human (Palmer, 1983, 2000, 2007; Wall, 2016).

Also rooted in my positionality is an understanding of *tikkun olam*. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, *tikkun olam* means "repair the world." It is a Jewish concept that I feel has lasting implications for the work of education, learning, and organizational change. I approach this research with the more profound value and understanding that as I collect data and interview participants, I am also doing the inner work of correcting my assumptions and misunderstandings. In doing this, I can become a more well-rounded

human. When I bring my more well-rounded self into educational spaces, it adds value and richness to those spaces. Therefore, when I repair or develop myself, I can also help transform my environments and communities.

I have already spent one year working with and among the teachers who participated in my study, so we have emergent and positive professional rapport. The small Fine Arts Charter School has three campuses across Houston, TX. This school has an important place in my heart as an educator because I landed my first teaching job. The principal, owner, and superintendent hired me there to teach 2nd grade in 2007. On May 28, 2007, the school first opened the doors to its flagship campus, and I was their first and only 2nd-grade teacher at that time.

Not only do I work with the educators in this organization at the present moment, but I also understand what it is like to be a charter school teacher in Texas. These teachers have fewer resources than teachers in a larger independent school district (ISD). I know this to be true because, after six years of teaching as an elementary school teacher, I became a High school teacher in a nearby ISD. This experience changed my understanding of education, and I received many resources, autonomy, grant writing opportunities from an extensive education foundation, and more. The charter currently has three campuses made up of predominately Black and Latinx teachers and learners.

By the time I began working at the charter again in 2019, I had a broader perspective on education and learning. I also returned with a wheelhouse full of tools such as restorative practices and culturally relevant pedagogy. However, the biggest reason for my return was that I began serving as their CREW Culture Coordinator, a role for which I wrote the job description and standard operating procedures. In this role, I

have access to all three campuses. At each campus, I work closely with the principals to implement and account for a CREW standard, an acronym that describes the positive behavior structure in use by the district. CREW stands for Community, Responsibility and Relationships, ethics, and teamwork. These four basic principles help the organization align with the positive behaviors and instructional supports, or PBIS. This system includes the use of restorative practices and culturally relevant pedagogy.

I visit each campus and implement CREW strategies with the administrators, teachers, and students in my current role. In this way, I also support and train campus administrators and teachers in restorative protocols known as circles. Together we practiced with three tiers of intervention, which I describe in greater detail throughout this study. As the researcher, I remain reflexive and mindful of how my thinking changes as I adhere to the research methodology. I am also mindful of how my perspectives impact my methodology as various themes and new understandings arise. My knowledge of myself also informs the interpretive and theoretical framework that I employ throughout this study.

Theoretical Framework

Within this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology (HP), The theoretical framework of my research study consists of an inductive a priori convergence of transformative learning theory (TLT), critical race theory (CRT), and restorative dialogue (RD) to form a transformative framework. This lens guided the study (Freire & Macedo, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Mezirow, 2003; Zehr, 2002). These three theoretical elements offered a "transformative-advocacy lens" through which to understand the descriptions provided by my participants towards a raised consciousness

63

and improved social experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 64; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This combination of approaches directs attention to systemic racial inequities and the lived experiences of participants with the understanding that "knowledge is not neutral" and reflects the impact of power and social relationships in schooling and teaching (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 25; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Mertens, 2007). This lens also informs my choice to conduct this study as a hermeneutic phenomenology, which centers on the lived experiences of a group of 2nd-8th grade teachers at the participating charter school.

Research Questions

Critical race theory, transformative learning theory, and restorative dialogue inform the research questions. Because the research participants experience their profession in a predominately Black and Latinx school; therefore, the questions inquired about the nature of their experiences and which experiences come into play when exercising decision-making power towards students in a classroom setting. Through the lens of a transformative framework, attention to social realities and constraints plays a significant role; therefore, inquiry about how policy shapes teacher decision making. Due to the "participatory and discursive" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 25) nature of the transformative framework, the research inquiry considers the humanness of every interaction and how one's self-perception drives how humans order and perceive the world.

Data Collection

This qualitative study describes the lived experiences of in-service educators

concerning their choice of discipline methods. Using a phenomenological design, I

collect data through interviews to understand that I bring my full self to the interactions.

Therefore, the teachers that I interact with also bring their whole selves and how they

construct knowledge to their work as classroom teachers. With CRT as a critical lens,

racialized conversations take place. Maintaining that race is a social construct and that it

is a part of how and this helps to identify and describe the essence of teacher

metacognitive strategies adequately and look for themes or whether they correlate to the

successful integration of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and restorative dialogue and

discipline (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Data Analysis and Intended Outcomes

In conducting a hermeneutic phenomenology, data collection and analysis happen

in a reflexive process of memo-ing and documenting my understandings due to the

interpretive nature of an HP. As I do this, I keep in mind the constructivist language of

CRT and the adult learning aspects prevalent in TLT. I then draw themes from what I

learn to propose an intersectional learning community for educators that include attention

to teacher's intersectional realities. I would like to eventually develop a new form of the

professional learning community at the participating charter school, known as an

Intersectional learning community (ILC), that requires prioritizing teacher's experiences

and how those experiences shape their pedagogy.

Overall, there is an interconnectedness in my theoretical framework. My

philosophical worldview informs my choice of CRT and TLT as the a priori lenses of my

qualitative design. The research methods guide this constructivist and transformative

worldview, which works well when applying hermeneutic phenomenology principles.

Figure 3.1 is a depiction of this interconnection.

My Research Framework: The Interconnection of
Worldviews, Design, and Research Methods
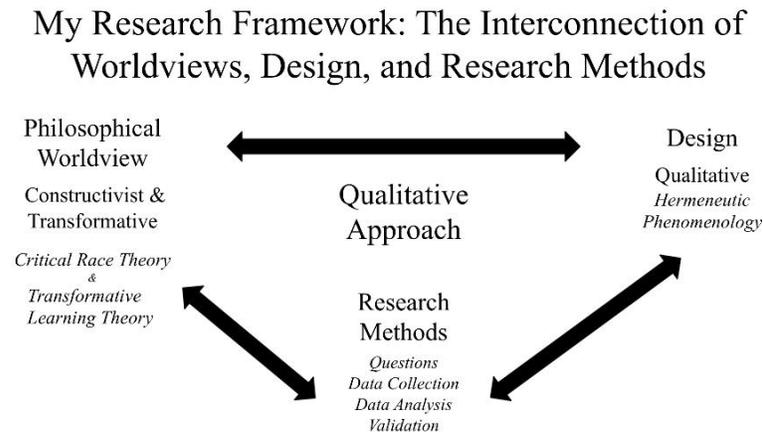
Figure 3.1. Research framework. Adapted from Figure 1.1 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018,
p. 5).

Research Design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a qualitative study is an approach for

understanding the meaning that individuals give to their lives. A hermeneutic

phenomenology has a qualitative focus. In this study, I implement the approach described

by Martin Heidegger (1889- 976). Heidegger believed that a researcher could not divorce

their lived experiences (bracket) because researchers are always entangled in the world

and experiencing it with others. He used the word "dasein" to describe the relationship

between the self and the world. Each person is dasein (Cerbone, 2008; Guignon, 2012;

Sloan & Bowe, 2014). The primary focus is on social and human problems. With this in

mind, I chose a qualitative approach to focus solely on my participants' voices, a group

of 2nd-8th grade classroom teachers.

66

The specific theory of knowledge or epistemological grounding for my research is the notion that lived experiences shape our biases, judgments, and understandings. Since I am exploring how in-service educators experience decision-making concerning student discipline, I assert that Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology (Cerbone, 2008) is best suited to provide a nuanced understanding of the experiences of my participants.

As previously stated, a hermeneutic phenomenology focuses primarily on defining the essential meaning of lived experiences. In this study, I described teacher's lived experiences and how their worldviews, thoughts about their abilities as an educator, and how they contextualize their teaching experiences impact their decisions to discipline students.

This qualitative study describes the lived experiences of in-service educators concerning their choice of discipline methods. Using the hermeneutic phenomenological design, I conducted observations and interviews to identify and described the essences of teacher metacognitive strategies adequately and look for themes or whether they correlate to the successful integration of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and restorative dialogue and discipline (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

With this design, the problem itself is one of coming to an understanding. To begin to define the essence of an educator's experiences, a discussion of how teacher education informs teacher decision-making is necessary. Teachers' lived experiences can shed light on the disproportionate use of punitive discipline in schools. The focus is primarily on open-ended questions that allow the teachers to make various connections based on their own intersectional identities in the research questions. Research questions

were designed, so that very few assumptions are made and allow the essence of lived experiences to come through organically based on the responses.

Site Selection and Participant Sampling

The quality of the site and sample selection can impact the interpretation of data. This study took place at a small fine arts charter school located in Houston, TX. The campus locations are in Humble, TX, Northwest Houston, TX, and Channelview, TX. The primary and largest campus is in Humble, TX. All of the campuses comprise a predominately Black and Latinx fine arts charter school that began at one location in 2007. The Humble campuses serve grades K–8, while the Northwest and Channelview campuses serve only grades K–5. As the district culture coordinator, I am responsible for visiting all three campuses each week. However, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all campuses have been closed as of March 11, 2020. Students and teachers have been meeting virtually via zoom and google classrooms. Therefore, my site visits were dependent on whether to convene virtually or in person.

I worked with three 2nd–8th-grade educators located at a small fine arts charter in Houston, TX, to build rapport and discuss the research study's nature and intent. Each teacher has at least one year of training in restorative practices and some developmental knowledge of integrating culturally sustaining pedagogies. The qualitative sampling strategy included gathering information about each teacher's lived experiences as shown in Table 3.1, and confirming and disconfirming whether teachers have had the option to use RP and employ CRP in diverse classroom settings, what choices are for and with students, and how those choices connect to the teacher's ordering of their experiences.

Table 3.1

Participant Background Characteristics

Name/Pseudonym	Formal Teaching Experience	Specialty Or Content Area	Teacher PD Experiences
Ms. E	20 yrs.	Special Education	RD/CRP
Mrs. Y	15 yrs.	Early Childhood to 8th Grade	RD
Ms. T	6 yrs.	Early Childhood to 8th grade	RD

The group of participating teachers is a group of self-directed leaders who are accustomed to independence. Therefore, I sought to establish a climate of mutual respect and professional regard (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). I made sure to remain inviting and collaborative while sharing expectations and results. Before initiating the research process, I considered the self-concepts of each teacher. Using a secure google form, I obtained the age, work experience, education, and ethnicity to begin. I wanted the teachers first to identify and describe themselves (Morrison et al., 2019). Table 3.1 shows the information collected before the start of the research process. Since each teacher has their understandings of themselves and their relationship to learning in general, it was essential to consider and remember this as the researcher in preparing research questions for interviews and observations.

Data Collection

This study examines the correlation between educator's identities and lived experiences and their decisions regarding student behaviors. The data collection process includes capturing the essence of how the teachers make discipline decisions and the extent to which their lived experience and intersectional identities play a role in those decisions. This data will inform the development of an intersectional professional

learning community that integrates the teacher's experiences as a core factor in implementing restorative practices and culturally relevant pedagogy.

The data collection process consisted of five steps. First, I decided to work with at least one or two teachers per campus. Following this, I requested permission from the district, and the district provided access and permission to interview teachers across all three of its campuses. Next, I issued consent forms and a schedule of potential dates to each participant. Teachers had the right to consent or opt-out of the process. Teachers who agreed to the interviews were given a brief pre-assessment questionnaire with self-identifying questions. From there, teachers received a meeting schedule and interview times to meet their needs. The interviews consisted of 30 minutes to 60-minute-long sessions, and emerging questions and dialogue were noted via recording and by hand. This process included a blend of interviews and observations (Paterson et al., 2003).

Throughout the data collection process, I spent time with each teacher in one-on-one sessions and virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions. Together, we worked to build rapport. Through a combination of inquiry and note-taking, I prepared timely notes that are thick and rich in narrative description and record aspects of each teacher's experiences that included detailed descriptions and interpretations of their insights and observations. I remained reflexive throughout the interviews by using the hermeneutical circle or spiral to locate and represent my evolving understandings and those of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Throughout the collection process, I maintained a research journal in which I continually elaborated on initial analysis, sought exceptions, and noted variations and criteria to confirm participant experiences.

Data Explication

Throughout the qualitative research process, data collection and analysis are interrelated (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis process involves deciding how to represent the data, read through it, and code it appropriately to organize themes and form an interpretation. Using Creswell and Poth's "data analysis spiral" (2018, p. 185), I avoided a fixed linear approach and instead integrated analytic strategies throughout the research process.

Based on the phenomenological research design, I employed a data explication process. Data explication included created and organized files, read through the text, drafted margin notes, and formed initial codes. I described and classified those codes into themes and described personal experiences and the phenomenon's essence. Coding led to the development and assessment of interpretations by developing significant statements and group statements into meaning units. I represented the data by describing what happened, using a textual description, then explaining "how the phenomenon was experienced" through a structural description, followed by a composite description of the phenomenon's essence (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In phenomenological research, data analysis is not always the best way to describe the analysis process. There is more of a process of "phenomenological reflection" (Van Manen, 2015, p. 77). This process entails trying to grasp the essence or essential meaning of something. I ensured validity and reliability and articulated the phenomenon as clearly and concisely as possible, using my phenomenological questions and Moustakas' (1994) approach to guide the study. I conveyed my understanding of phenomenology's philosophical leanings, used data analysis procedures with precision, communicated the

overall essence of my participants' experience, and finally embedded reflexivity using the hermeneutical circle or spiral throughout the study.

Finally, in my writing up the research, I employed the hermeneutic spiral through the limitations and delimitations and the final write-up of findings. The spiral included maintaining an organization of how I perceived content and how that content fit various themes. The spiral also guided the process of reflexivity, a hallmark of the HP design. Figure 3.2 is my example of the hermeneutic spiral and is a simplistic representation based on my need to connect my understandings to my interpretations of my participants' shared experiences.
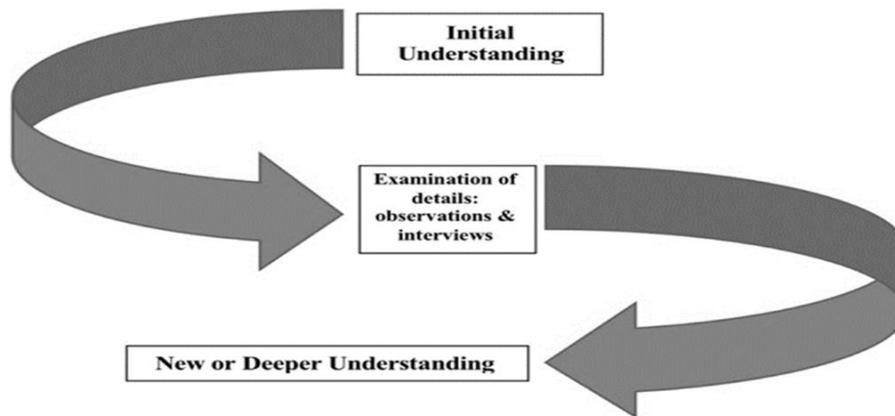
Figure 3.2. The hermeneutic spiral.

Ethical Considerations

The procedures that are most consistent with phenomenological design begin with examining ethical issues before data organization. I made sure to protect the identities of my participants and maintained disclosure of comprehensive findings. To maintain participant consent and confidentiality, I drafted recruitment plans and gained approval from my superintendents, followed by the campus principals, and finally, the teachers. In

the plan, I included details on any potential adverse effects. I provided a detailed plan if any of my participants decided to leave the study or even the organization.

I stored data on a digital cloud with a private folder that is accessible to the individual participants. I also communicate with my participants via a separate research-oriented email as opposed to my email account. I sought a location that minimized power imbalance and locations that offered privacy and protection for the participants. Based on the teachers and campuses, I accommodated any meeting locations, including virtually, and emphasize the purely voluntary nature of participation.

Throughout the design of this qualitative study, there were considerations for what ethical issues could arise during the study and plan how these issues needed to be addressed. Ethical concerns can occur at every stage of the research process. Therefore, I prioritized the importance of maintaining awareness of the ethical issues before conducting the study, at the beginning of the study, while collecting data, analyzing and reporting data, and finally publishing the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

First, before conducting the study, I received approval from the Baylor University Institutional Review Board. I also requested access to my teacher participants through the participating charter school's district superintendents and administration. I received their permission to request access to 3–5 2nd–8th-grade teachers for my study.

At the beginning of the study, the leadership and staff were notified and invited to discuss meeting times with the principals and teachers. I provided participants with consent forms and waivers, describing the study's nature and detail the overall purpose and goals. Leadership and teachers received a questionnaire to locate the teacher's

cultural, religious, gender, and other identities that need to be respected. At this stage, I decided to omit the names of the organization and participants.

While collecting data, I made sure to respect the study sites and minimize disruptions. My goal was to maintain a positive rapport with my participants through transparency and honesty. I avoided disclosing my impressions and other sensitive information. The study process included a core restorative ethic of welcome throughout (Wall, 2016; Zehr, 2002). Participants acknowledged that data are in storage for at least five years, according to APA standards.

Throughout the explication, I avoided process biases in terms of taking sides and only reporting positive results. The research reported multiple perspectives and applied fictitious names or aliases. I reminded participants that as the researcher, I am also including and checking my own biases, applying the hermeneutic and the analysis spiral throughout the study.

Throughout the reporting and publishing process, I reported data honestly. The appropriate language was employed for the research audiences and made sure to follow APA guidelines throughout. For the publishing process, I provided the school with practical results.

Limitations and Delimitations

In this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology, I interpreted the lived experiences of in-service teachers in grades 2nd–8th. Based on the nature of a hermeneutic study, I was limited to the interpretations I produced. However, the findings were subject to other interpretations. Also, the purposive sampling procedure limited my ability to generalize other areas of teaching. Another limitation was the COVID-19 pandemic, which

relegated much of my interactions with my participants to virtual settings such as Zoom and Google meet. I anticipated that this would not only impact my interview settings; it would also impact teacher responses. The teachers I interviewed were expected to teach in a virtual setting as well. So, the behaviors that students exhibited in those settings varied from the behaviors they exhibited in brick-and-mortar school settings. Consequently, while I focused on teacher's experiences, those experiences were shaped by the teaching and learning environments and were subject to change throughout the data collection period.

Throughout the data collection process, my focus was on the teachers' lived experiences and their decision-making on classroom discipline. I did not focus on student behaviors, I primarily engaged with teachers on how they responded to student behaviors and why. Therefore, I omitted specific information about students and any academic content delivery or recommendations related to my interactions with the teachers, regardless of my thoughts or feelings. Unless teachers' specific experiences required the inclusion of content delivery and student-related stories, the focus remained on how each participating teacher described their lives, located their race, gender, class, and other intersectional identities, and how those intersections impacted their disciplinary decisions.

Conclusion

Chapter Three presented the qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology design and methodology. I provided the research questions towards describing educators' lived experiences with school discipline. I described my perspective as the researcher and

made connections to the participating charter school, the teachers there, and I described the theoretical framework for the study.

I described how the lenses of critical race theory (CRT), transformative learning theory (TLT), and restorative dialogue inform the research design and my interactions with the participants. I also described the participating charter school, and how I selected 3–5 2nd thru 8th-grade in-service teachers. I described the data collection, analysis, and validation procedures. Finally, I provided the ethical considerations, as well as the limitations and delimitations of this study.

This hermeneutic phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of in-service educators to derive themes and patterns that can serve as the foundation of a model of possibility for an intersectional learning community that informs educators on the importance of teacher's self-awareness in decision making on school discipline. The results of this study have implications for how schools and school leaders provide professional learning and how teachers engage with what are considered best practices. To that end, Chapter Four examines the results and discusses the implications of the research findings, and summarizes the data by delivering the interview themes and patterns.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Implications

Introduction

Chapter Three described the hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology and theoretical framework. Chapter Four presents the research findings and connects the study's findings by applying the hermeneutic phenomenological research process of reflective journaling, data explication, and recording new understandings in response to the research questions. Connections to current literature and the transformative and critical race theoretical frameworks are also present throughout chapter four.

This chapter describes the research sites, which are three campuses of a predominately Black and Latinx fine arts Charter school in Houston, TX. As the researcher, I describe my experiences interviewing three Black women teachers from this site and those interviews' outcomes. This chapter also includes a thematic analysis of each participant's interviews and each interview's implications based on the themes. For each of my participants, I describe their first, second, and third rounds of interviews. In keeping with the hermeneutic spiral, I also describe my new understandings based on the interviews. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion on how the data addresses each research question. Based on all three participant responses, the importance of taking time to build professional learning communities that thrive on collaboration and theorizing that leads to teacher actions is of paramount importance. Throughout the three-phase process of data collection in the fall of 2020, I made occasional adjustments due to

COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Ultimately, I connect the themes and ideas to the overall theoretical framework to lay the foundation for an intersectional learning community.

Participant Descriptions and Interview Summaries

The research site is a small fine Arts charter school located in Houston, TX. Since 2007, the school has served a predominately Black and Latinx student and teacher population, with a Title 1 designation in Texas. This charter opened in 2007 and was the site of my first teaching assignment. In 2019, I rejoined the staff as a culture and climate specialist, also known as the CREW coordinator to the district. As the CREW coordinator, I worked at the district level as a trainer of trainers for restorative practices and other positive behavior systems designed to improve student behavior and campus morale. The charter includes three campuses, and I am responsible for serving all three campuses in my current role. Since beginning this study, the leadership asked me to serve as an instructional coach and testing coordinator to accommodate the smallest campus, which serves grades K-5.

For my study, I worked with three participants who teach in grades 2nd-8th. Each participant has a pseudonym to protect their identities and privacy. Ms. E teaches 2nd grade, Mrs. Y teaches 6th grade, and Mrs. T teaches 5th grade. I had previously spent a year working with all participants as their campus culture coordinator and have had the chance to train each of them in tiers 1-3 of restorative practices. We were attempting to build our restorative focus when the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, which slowed our efforts considerably. I interviewed participants during the Fall term of 2020 from September to December. When I began interviewing participants in September,

78

each of them had made significant adjustments to their teaching styles due to the

pandemic. All of our interviews were conducted remotely via ZOOM. Table 4.1 shows

each participant's age, gender, race and ethnicity, education level, and years of

experience as educators.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographic Data

Participant	Age	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Highest Level of Education	Years of Experience	Texas State Certification
Ms. E	46	Female	Black	MA Leadership and Admin M.Ed. Child Development	20	Yes
Mrs. Brown	50	Female	Black	MA Higher Ed. and some Doctoral Studies	20	No
Ms. T	37	Female	Black	BS In Marketing	6	No

After acquiring the participant demographic data, the hermeneutic spiral requires the

researcher to record initial understandings, including beliefs and biases. This step is part

of the spiral's reflexive nature, which requires the researcher to revisit their assumptions

throughout the research process.

Researcher Initial Beliefs and Biases

Based on the Hermeneutic Spiral, the first step for the researcher is to examine

their personal beliefs and biases before completing the data's explication. Before

beginning the interview process, I journaled my understandings of the study and what I

might find through the interviews. After the participant interviews, I describe how each

initial understanding is changed based on the participant responses. Here is a list of the

personal biases and assumptions I could identify before interviewing participants:

1. Overall, because we all identify as Black women, I figured we would have a common language around our collective marginalization and individual experiences navigating racism and discrimination.

2. Each of the participants is Black women educators; therefore, we will all mostly agree on the importance of education centers on Black and Latinx children.

3. The older the participant, the more likely they agree with punitive discipline, including corporal punishment.

4. As Black women, each participant would agree with the importance of socially active and democratic teaching.

5. Each participant had received some training the previous year in restorative practices, so I assume they remembered some of those practices' language and understood their importance.

6. Black participants who went to public schools in the south have less academically advanced resources.

7. All of us are Christians and have some foundational beliefs about educating young Black boys and girls through that lens. However, based on my spirituality, I assume I am more liberal than all three ladies.

     I interviewed all three participants on three separate occasions via zoom. A letter

code denotes each interview session. The first interviews for each participant are

interview A, the second interviews are interview B, and the final interviews are interview

C. For each participant, interview A covered general introductory information, and I

shared with each participant how the semi-structured flow of the discussion would look

and feel. I shared the research questions with participants before each session. In

interviews B and C, we discussed participant responses to the research questions in

greater detail. The following sections contain all three participant descriptions: a

summary and analysis of each round of interviews and a description of my relationship

with each participant. I describe participants individually, followed by detailed descriptions of each interview consecutively. All interviews and transcriptions were conducted and collected using Zoom virtual meetings. E is the first participant described, followed by Mrs. Y, and finally, Ms. T is the final participant described.

Ms. E

Ms. E and I have known each other for many years. When I initially worked for the charter school, she was a special education aid. On the day of my return interview, when I was waiting for HR to call me into the room where they would hold my interview panel, Ms. E came in and instantly recognized me. She was warm, kind, and affirming and welcomed me back with open arms. When I came back as the district culture coordinator, she was one of the most supportive teachers and always made sure to try out the initiatives that I put in place. When I observed her classroom, she was always ready to share her latest technique and demonstrate it with her students. In particular, when the time came for us to conduct restorative training, Ms. E soaked up the content. I noticed that she was always one of the first teachers to adopt the new practices.

I hosted a restorative training at her campus every week during my first year on staff, and when I went to her classroom that week, she was immediately implementing the practices. Ms. E's use of the restorative practices gave me a lot of confidence in her abilities as an instructional leader. Also, it alerted me to her sense of purpose as an educator. I remember sitting in Ms. E's classroom and observing as she led restorative community-building circles, a level 1 support that prevents many negative student behaviors that often lead to exclusion and punitive practices. Ms. E stands out at her campus, so I knew I wanted to know more about what was behind her teaching ethic, and

81

I also saw my interviews with her to get to know her better as a person and truly investigate her thought process. I was curious about whether she had a particular theory that informed her decision-making and had no idea what her experiences were with student behaviors. Before our first interview, I decided to jot down some thoughts in my research journal to describe my assumptions and knowledge before learning more from her.

I wrote:

I am about to interview Ms. E. I met her last year, she is a hard-working teacher; she always applies the skills and content I propose to the district Crew coordinator. We have a positive rapport, and she is always sharing her latest integration or idea with me. I feel I got to know her students well last year. I am curious about how her school year has been so far and her perception of the COVID -19 pandemic relative to her restorative experiences. She has also just moved campuses, so I wonder how she feels about her new classroom and our district's push for in-person learning. I wonder what practices she has implemented virtually and what her transition will face to face. My plan of action is to ask the overall research questions first and then ask some more questions along the way as they arise. I will document the questions I ask at the moment and record those as often as I can here.

Based on these initial beliefs and thoughts, I began the interview process with Ms. E. We met on three different occasions during the fall term. Ms. E was teaching both virtually and face to face during the times we met. She also has significant experience with restorative practices and employs them each day with her learners. The following sections detail each of her interviews, provide her own words and thoughts to the research questions and any thoughts and questions during our conversation. Interview A represents the first interview, interview B represents the second interview session, and C represents the third and final session.

For our first session, Ms. E and I scheduled to meet using ZOOM; however, I was having some technical issues before we could meet. So, we spent about ten minutes chatting on our cell phones. During that time, Ms. E candidly shared some concerns about some training she had received from the district. She communicated that she did not feel well-resourced by the training and was unsure where the concepts fit for her learners. I was already listening with my research in mind, and it meant a lot to me that Ms. E already demonstrated a comfort level in sharing her concerns.

At the beginning of our zoom call, Ms. E introduced herself and teaching as a calling. "I've been teaching for 20 plus years, and education is my purpose. I'll be honest; I went into education because of the weekend and summer holidays. But then I started developing a love for being an educator. This is my calling, and I put my heart into this." Ms. E's statement reminded me of Palmer's focus on teaching as a vocation (Palmer, 1983, 2007). According to the research, when teachers take ownership of their practice, they are more likely to develop and use equitable practices that consider individual learner needs (Freire & Macedo, 2018; hooks, 1994). Ms. E genuinely takes ownership of her relationship with her students and their families. She considers her students to be her children. We also discussed her relationship with her parents. Ms. E described her exchanges with her parents as if she were referring to family members. She often spoke about relationship building with parents and related it to her own experiences as a mother. Ms. E said,

> I think the biggest thing for me is that I have understanding for parents and
> my students, and it comes from my experience with my own eldest son.
> When I would get calls from the school talking about his behavior, it was
> like every day. If the phone rang at my job, I'd be like, "Lord, please don't

let that be for me. So, I developed this thing where, as I tell my parents, they don't have to worry if their child is taken care of from the time, they drop their children off.

Ms. E shared that this is her first-year teaching multiple grades, impacting how she approaches her relationship with parents and families. She is now teaching 1st and 2nd grade, so she made it a particular point to describe how connecting with parents from day one is her top priority. Ms., We talked about how she has zoom meetings with parents each week. "When I had the first meeting with them, initially I did not have a clue about what they were experiencing. Lack of communication was their number one concern, so many benefits came from that initial meeting. They want me to continue these meetings with them." In these meetings, she works on fortifying relationships with families and listening to their concerns as she attempts to serve both face-to-face and virtual learners.

One outstanding characteristic of Ms. E's is that she does not allow student situations and circumstances to hinder her from providing for students. She often takes an approach that I consider to be above and beyond in providing for her learners, whether the focus is mental health, their physical needs, on top of their academic needs. Ms. E described her way of gaining access to student needs,

> when it comes to my students, I'm a big stickler on them receiving the best education that they can. I don't allow their situations to define or limit how they should be educated. I'm going to give them 100%. I go out and solicit donations from stakeholders from within the community to meet their needs and their family needs.

Overall, our first interview mainly was me listening to Ms. E describe herself and her relationships with her students and their families. I appreciated the ways that Ms. E advocates for herself, her scholars and how she often reaches out to stakeholders and networks for herself and gathers items like school supplies to help support learner needs.

84

As a result of her advocacy, her learner's parents often nominate her for various awards. I was thankful for this first interview with Ms. E. I learned that she gave up her lunch break to speak to me, so I thanked her for sharing her stories with me before we parted ways.

Ms. E: Interview B

For interview B, Ms. E and I took a different direction since we spent interview A discussing more introductory information. During interview B, Ms. E described her teaching approach, and I realized she truly takes restorative practices to heart. Before speaking to Ms. E, I was not aware whether the practices were part of her core ethic or implemented to demonstrate compliance since restorative practices are part of the school's cultural model. When Ms. E said, "when I'm doing things, I'm not doing it for recognition, I am doing it because it is part of my passion," I knew she meant this from within herself and that she clearly understood precisely why she made certain classroom decisions. Ms. E's decision-making process reminded me of *Tikkun Olam* and that Ms. E views her teaching practice as her vocation (Rubel, 2005; Winer, 2008). Ms. E's moment of self-reflection indicated her commitment to serving her students well. When we continued to discuss the use of restorative practices, her investment in the process was predicated on her commitment to teaching as a vocation.

When I asked Ms. E about restorative practices, I connected my question back to her mention of community with parents and families. I wanted to know her thoughts on implementing discipline with them in mind. She shared, "when I implement restorative discipline practices, the number one thing I go back to is getting to know my students so I can determine what their needs are." Ms. E followed this statement up by directly

connecting and referring to her classroom management style and indicating that she integrates RP into her classroom management on behalf of student needs. Ms. E shared,

She also subscribes to a somewhat controversial concept in education known as the growth mindset (Denworth, 2019; Dweck, 2007; Travers et al., 2015). I have been concerned about the conflation of restorative practices with Dweck's growth mindset. I feel that the growth mindset concept often reinforces inequities that continue to marginalize Black and Latinx learners. However, Ms. We did not mention this, she only spoke positively about the concept, and I did not interrupt her line of thinking. My approach to Ms. E's discussion on growth mindset was because I trust Ms. E's overall teaching ethic. I figured Ms. E is a nuanced enough educator to distinguish when a way of thinking is no longer helpful.

It became evident that intersectionality is part of Ms. E's teaching ethic. She believes all students bring various assets and attributes to the learning environment, and she also understands her positionality as playing an important role in that equation. "I set the expectations early on, and they follow directions easily because we have established trust." Ms. E demonstrated that she responds to students as individuals based on their individual needs. Having observed her in action, I am aware that her teaching ethic acknowledges the research-based assertion that all people have various intersections in their identities, which helps to understand how people show up in various environments (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Hill-Collins, 2019). In Ms. E's case, she realizes that her students and their families all bring their whole selves to the learning space. She meets them accordingly and spoke very respectfully of her learners, their needs, and their

86

differences. When she described her classroom management style, it was always based on

students and what they bring to the learning space. She shared,

> Some things don't apply to everyone. Our classroom community is based
> on our crew agreements. I want them to take ownership, and if they have
> ownership, they're going to be more respectful of the rules. I don't have to
> correct many behaviors; I facilitate because they already understand the
> expectations.

I was able to relate closely with Ms. E during this second interview. I identified

myself as being well-aligned with E's philosophy of teaching. I noticed that she focused

on the importance of interdependence and continued to base her responses to behaviors

on her varied relationships with students (A. M. Brown, 2017; Freire & Macedo, 2018;

hooks, 1994). One poignant feature of Ms. E's interview B, was her relationship with her

mentors, and how she described translating that into her past leadership roles. She

described how her background and certification in special education made it possible for

her to work more closely with a strong campus leader. In her words,

> I had been with the school maybe three years after discovering that I had a
> special education certification. They told me they needed me to be a team
> leader, and that's how I got into servicing and doing special ed and
> working with student behavioral issues.

From there, I quickly realized this was a major experience that Ms. E brought with her: a

background in special education that perhaps led to more understanding of student

behavioral needs. I asked her to tell me more about her time working under her mentor

and school leader. She continued by saying,

> She grew me even more. One of the things I liked about her is that she was
> very fair to all her staff. Her decisions were based on assumptions overall,
> but she based many decisions on her knowledge of individual staff
> members.

This statement was the first of many where I realized the deeper significance of strong mentors and teachers' leadership. Even in more traditional top-down mentorship that may not be reciprocal, the participants who described having positive relationships with their students also described positive peer and mentor relationships. Ms. E shared that she has a similar style in her leadership roles and her classroom. She believes in kindness, fairness, and mutual respect. Ms. E also shared her willingness to receive critique from her peers, even in a team leadership role that she once held. In her words,

> No one knew I was team lead, other than those on my team. It's essential that though you have these titles, the title does not define who you are. It identifies your position, and therefore you should not let it go to your head. So, I would meet with my team, lift them, and let them know I was there to share information, but we all have input. And so, they were allowed to bring their suggestions, recommendations, that kind of thing. They felt a part of the process of everything that went on in the kindergarten department. So, I think that is very important, and I have gotten feedback from several of them, and it was a team of five. They said, 'oh, I wish you had stayed on as team lead,' it just validated the importance and purpose of treating people the way you want to be treated.

In this instance, I gained more clarity of Ms. E's teaching practice. I have seen her ask her students for feedback in restorative circles and use the practices to enhance her classroom culture. Her words carried sincere humility and a servant leadership style that aligns well with campus leadership expectations. She aptly said, "I hope to inspire others so that others can benefit from their learning." Ms. E understands the value of empowerment and also collaboration. As a member of ere administrative team, Ms. E also relates to me in the same way. She often seeks out advocacy in me and willingly offers solutions to concerns she feels impact student access to learning. This interview truly helped me concretize the foundation of Ms. E's beliefs about herself, her colleagues, and her learners.

Ms. E- Interview C

In our final session together, Ms. E and I got into each research question in depth. She took time and answered each one carefully according to her understanding. A large portion of her discussion centered around her definition of restorative practices. Based on her understanding of restorative practices, Ms. E focused on an ethic of care for her learners and their families. She also said mental, emotional; social factors play a role in how teachers respond to students, including the teacher's personality. Ms. E also described how she feels outside factors can impact a teacher's reactions to students.

For question one, I asked what the experiences of in-service educators in Houston, TX, implement discipline. Ms. E responded:

> Teachers here have practice with diverse student populations. We embrace policies and practices to meet student needs, such as small groups and learning centers or stations. WE also group by learning styles and not ability. We use project-based learning, incorporate technology and adaptive learning tools and provide alternative testing.

Based on this response, I could tell that Ms. E was connecting to her experiences as a special education teacher in Texas, where we were given the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness or STAAR test. The mention of alternate testing reminded me of the STAAR ALT test, which is usually given to students with academic needs.

For question two, I asked how educators describe their decision to implement either punitive or restorative discipline practices. Ms. E's response signified that she considers restorative practices to be the best option:

> Imposed punitive responses have the effect of shaming and stigmatizing students who have caused harm. The punitive discipline focuses on punishing the harm done and often adds to the problem that led to the heartful behavior. Punitive discipline doesn't focus on helping the person who was the victim either. Restorative processes offer students who have

caused harm to understand the source of their behavior and take
responsibility for the choices and learn and grow from the experience.
A large portion of her discussion centered on her definition of restorative

Practices. Based on Ms. E's understanding of restorative practices, Ms. E focused on an

ethic of care for her learners and their families. She added that mental, emotional, social

factors play a role in how teachers respond to students, including their personalities. Ms.

E also described how she feels outside factors can impact a teacher's reactions to

students.

On question three, I asked Ms. E for her thoughts on the catalysts for K-12

educator's disciplinary responses. Her response reflected a hope for the best possible

reasons, as opposed to negative catalysts. She spoke a lot about choosing to respond to

the best policies that help her reduce students' removal from her classroom. Ms. E

shared,

> Teachers should respond to the policies and practices that create positive
> classroom relationships and reduce exclusionary types of disciplinary
> practices. Also, keeping the students in the classroom and engaged in
> learning is very important for educational success. If students feel I care
> about them, I'm going to get a better response from them, and I feel
> they're empowered to make better decisions and choices. So, creating
> opportunities for students to be heard and for teachers to be supportive as
> we teach and influence students should be at the center of conversations
> about reducing exclusionary discipline.

This response reminded me of the importance of educators' critical awareness

(Bartolome, 2004; Kirkland & Gay, 2003; Nieto, 1999).

For question four, I asked about the cultural, social, and political aspects

impacting both teachers and learners that help define responses to behaviors. I wanted to

know what personal factors influence teacher's responses to their students. Ms. E's

response was "learning, and mental factors, emotional and social factors such as the

teacher's personality and their environment are all factors that I believe play a role." Ms.

E went into detail about teacher's lives outside of school and how their personal lives can

often subtly creep into classroom decision-making. She noted,

> Things are going on outside with individuals. And then they're sharing,
> and they say, ok this is why I wasn't 100% today. They are unable to
> separate what's going on mentally, so if you're not mentally there for the
> kids, then you're going to affect them mentally.

Ms. E's comments and responses to questioning four signified that she believes teachers

bring their whole selves into decision making, whether that sparks positive or negative

engagement.

Question five was about how national, district and administrative policies shape

educator decisions on learner's behaviors. To this question, Ms. E's response showed that

she values the collaborative efforts of the administration and school boards and

understands that they have the power to make a joint effort in responding to research in a

way that positively impacts the ways campus's function. She shared,

> Administrators and school boards help establish rules and procedures to
> function effectively and ensure everyone is connected. Schools are highly
> complex and create standards of quality for learning and safety and
> expectations and accountability. Policies and procedures are potent levers
> that help set the tone for behaviors in the school. The adults in charge
> must ensure that the policies they put in place reinforce their students'
> goals and reflect their beliefs about students in their learning. These
> beliefs should be supported by research, not just on personal feelings and
> experiences. If they are based on research, then I think that had a better
> outcome.

Ms. E thoroughly responded to each research question, and it was helpful to have

such straightforward responses. Her responses reflected her level of awareness of school

hierarchies and their impact on teacher decision-making. Ms. E is the kind of teacher that

likes to remain informed with research-based practices. What I gathered from

interviewing Ms. E was that since she is the kind of teacher and leader who follows this pattern in her classroom and amongst her colleagues, she is keener when she perceives other's practices and whether they include less preemptive and strategic efforts, the same, or more.

Mrs. Y is the next participant represented in this study. Like Ms. E, we met on three separate occasions. I will begin by describing Mrs. Y and our relationship and follow up with interviews A, B, and C consecutively. The following sections summarize each semi-structured interview.

Mrs. Y

Mrs. Y and I met in July 2019 when I first signed on as the district culture and climate specialist for the participating charter school. I was presenting at the annual staff retreat that we held that summer, and I was introducing my district goals that year. Mrs. Y presented herself as an outwardly stern yet fun and outgoing spirit who genuinely cared for her learners. I remember her braided hair in this very fashionable style that Beyonce made famous. Her cornrows were platted toward the side and hung over her shoulder and down her back. Her nails were long as well and brightly colored. These characteristics made Ms. Y stand out to me, and I loved her fashion sense. Even though my style differed from hers, I loved every bit of her style. As Black women, we tend to bond together over shared stories and how we style our hair, makeup, and clothing. So, this was my earliest memory of Ms. Y.

Based on her vibrant personality, I wanted to get to know her better. After that initial meeting, when we started school and I began to function in the role I was hired, I learned more about Ms. Y as an educator. I often visited her and her 5th-grade students,

and she was always happy to share her latest classroom culture strategies and demonstrate how she was using the practices that I required teachers to implement. By the time I invited Mrs. Y to join my study, at first, she was reluctant and even skeptical, but I was able to share my purpose and intentions with her. Based on our work together for the past two years, I believe she felt more comfortable agreeing to meet with me to discuss her experiences. In my initial journal entry before Mrs. Y's interviews, I wrote:

> I think highly of Mrs. Y. She's a genuine person who truly cares about her kiddos. I hope our interviews go well. I don't want to pressure her to provide me with the answers I want to hear from her. I genuinely want her to voice her own opinions, thoughts, ideas, experiences so that I can get a good idea of where we are as an organization. I trust Mrs. Y's judgment on many areas of our organizational structure, she is older than me, wiser in many ways, and I appreciate her kindness when I have to ask her to focus on our CREW content. In general, I am thankful she agreed to meet with me, and I will listen carefully to how we address each research question.

Mrs. Y- Interview A

In our first interview session, Mrs. Y and I discussed her background as a learner and educator, her attention to restorative practices as a classroom teacher, and her overall relationships with her learners. All three of these factors impact her interactions and responses to student behaviors. We focused on establishing a foundation for understanding how she came to be an educator and how her past experiences impact her as a classroom teacher.

First, I wanted to gather as much information about her educational background as possible. And Mrs. Y is a 24-year veteran educator and has spent 15 years in the classroom. She noted that she was once a principal at another Houston Charter School. Early on, I asked her about her philosophy of education, and her response was, "all kids

can learn, but they do not learn the same. There are different ways and strategies to teach kids. We have to reach all kids, and all kids can be reached." Mrs. Y's comment led to a conversation about her perception of what being a teacher would be like for her. In her words,

> when I first started teaching, I thought it would be like boom, and it's all good; the students grasp the learning. But through the years and years of teaching, I can say students try so hard to grasp things and that you have to keep breaking things down again and again.

> With this in mind, we continued discussing her reasons for choosing teaching as a

profession. She shared,

> I think the reason I chose teaching because I was looking at my elementary school teachers, my middle school teachers, and they were hard on me, and I was a knucklehead in school. I wasn't a perfect child; I gave them problems. I think this is something I want to do. I want to help somebody else because someone helped me. I had to because otherwise, they'd be left behind. So, for me, I went to college, and I went into education. At first, I was like, I don't know if I want to do this, but I'll try. When I started getting into classes, I started with elementary education, and I said, well, I want to teach little kids and middle schoolers, and I also want to teach college kids.

Early on in our conversation, we discussed students from years past, and Mrs. Y indicated that she still keeps in touch with parents and kids, families of former students. This impactful statement signified that community involvement matters to her. When we discussed her childhood and upbringing, Mrs. Y shared that she is from Mississippi, a very close-knit community. She spoke about how she values community and family and brings these values to her teaching practice. She also described how her upbringing in Mississippi largely shapes her teaching.

I asked Mrs. Brown about her own school experiences and how she came to understand what it meant to be a teacher; she shared that "it had to be learned" this

challenges the idea that some people are just meant to teach. Some skills for teachers have learned skills; according to Mrs. Y., Mrs. Y also discussed her personal growth over time and years of getting to know so many students and their families. She is invested in the growth of her learners. She described herself as wanting to "continue to help them grow."

Mrs. Y continued to share about her educational background and teaching career. She expressed pride in her teaching abilities and her learners. "When I ask students questions, and they give me the answers, it just makes me feel so good, and now I have been in the classroom for about 15 years." Mrs. Y's ability to self-reflect was also a very poignant aspect of interview A. Many instances like this reminded me of what bell hooks and Paulo Freire describe as critical consciousness that leads to social action and engagement with learners (Freire & Macedo, 2018; hooks, 1994).

In terms of considering restorative practices, we discussed RP's use in our workplace and her implementation of the practices with fidelity to the process. I asked Mrs. Y, "when you say your former teachers were hard on you, how do you think their disciplinary approaches affected you and how you train up your students?" In response to this, Mrs. Y described how she has very few disciplinary issues with her students. She attributed this to the relationships she has with her learners. Mrs. Y shared that she takes a maternal approach to education. She seems to have an intuitive maternal nature towards her learners.

> Say what you want, but I have no problem with my kid's discipline and behavior, no problem. No, you love these kids. When you love them, they love you back, and as long as you give them what they want, they're going to give it back. I am telling you they all come to me for anything. They will talk to me, and I will talk to them, just as if they were my child. Give

95

them the opinion that they needed and go from there. I have a motherly instinct.

In response, I said, "sounds like an ethic of love and almost like a family bond." To which Mrs. Y agreed. Here, Mrs. Y was speaking specifically about giving and showing maternal love. She also compared her own experience with school discipline to current practices.

> Back then, you know, teachers could get on you. They could paddle you, and nothing would happen. You know, nobody would say anything. But now it's different. Now, you can say something jokingly to a student, and they can go straight to their parents.

Throughout Interview A, I learned about Mrs. Y's upbringing and experiences with school discipline and how she lived experiences shape how she decides to teach and respond to her learners.

Mrs. Y: Interview B

During interview B, Mrs. Y and I discussed her personality type and her beliefs about social action and activism. These factors play a role in Mrs. Y's responses to student behaviors and guide her thinking around teaching and learning.

During this interview, she emphasized her demeanor and how she can often come across as mean. I shared with her that her stern and strong exterior mixed with her vibrant wardrobe were some of the features I first noticed about her when we first met. I could see how one aspect of her personality could lead to many different ways of going about her pedagogy and methods for responding to student behaviors. On the topic of her outward appearance, she shared,

> people think I am a mean person; the thing is, I walk around them, and I don't know that I am frowning all the time. They tell me, why are you

frowning? I say I'm so sorry, I apologize. I don't even know I'm
frowning. But I promise you; I am a very soft person. I'm a crybaby!

I agreed with Mrs. Y's self-assessment, and I commented that she has an exterior

demeanor that does not display her inner emotions. I also shared that the same is not valid

for me and that I tend to wear my heart on my sleeve. Mrs. Y knows me well, and she

agreed. She said, "I'm very sensitive." We spoke about the meaning of emotional

vulnerability and how this inner tenderness impacts her interactions with her students.

One unique way her personality affects her teaching practice is through her desire

to maintain student safety by encouraging them to keep quiet and away from social

activism conversations. Mrs. Y expressed, "My husband and I have a difference in that

all the time. I want to tell my people, just be quiet. Just be quiet." Mrs. Y expressed

reasons for having a reluctance to get involved in the Black Lives Matter movement. I

was shocked by this portion of our conversation. I was confident before this talk that Mrs.

Y would be more adamant, actively involved, and promoting the movement for Black

lives. Her concerns were to do with safety and wanting her students and her own family

to remain unharmed, as it turns out.

First, she said her husband is more of an activist. When Mrs. Y described the

differences between her husband's reactions to social injustices, I began to connect back

to how her personality type plays into what she chooses to do in her classroom. Ms. Y

explained that she witnessed an incident at a Houston mall, where "they had this Black

guy, and when I tell you this man was bleeding, bleeding, just bleeding everywhere." I

could sense that the trauma from that event caused Mrs. Y to feel protective over her

husband and her family. It made complete sense to me.

When I asked how this made her feel and how this connected with her classroom ethic, her responses indicated that that experience's trauma made her feel more protective of her learners. She wanted them to remain quiet and non-confrontational because of what she had witnessed at the mall. When we discussed the murder of George Floyd and all of the protests that took place, Mrs. Y said, "They all went downtown, but I couldn't do that." Mrs. Y shared her convictions with me about the protests in Downtown Houston, and she felt she could support her husband's involvement. Still, she felt her contribution to civic engagement lay elsewhere in terms of overt involvement. Consequently, she was not in favor of her husband, a Black man, or her students, predominately Black and Latinx, taking part in any Black Lives Matter or other social justice demonstrations.

Through interview B with Mrs. Y, I gathered that her personality plays a big part in how she relates to others and how she enacts particulate passages in her classroom. It was interesting to hear her perspectives on social action and BLM. After listening, I understood how lived traumas such as her experience at the mall could cause her to take a passive approach. However, it was still a shocking departure from my views on the subject. I left this interview enlightened as a researcher and eager to learn more about how these two factors impacted her willingness or reluctance to implement restorative practices.

Mrs. Y: Interview C

Interview C with Mrs. Y was brief yet informative. Mrs. Y and I discussed her use of restorative practices and experiences with the practices based on the training we attended together as a district, how COVID learning amplified the time constraints and

98

motivations that impact her use of restorative practices, and we wrapped up by discussing some of Mrs. Y's long term learning goals.

First, based on the information I gathered from interviews A and B, I wanted to make some more explicit connections to restorative practices based on the research questions. When I asked Mrs. Y whether she was able to effectively implement community-building tiered approaches to restorative that I taught teachers to use the previous year, Mrs. Y shared,

> My thing is, you know, once we started to do it, and do it the way we are supposed to do it every day, we will get used to it. The kids will get used to it, and you know it'll be added like a regular day. But when you don't do it, or if it has to be pushed for us to do it, it will not get done. When we first started, I'm gonna be honest with you, when we started, I was like, oh my God, here's something else we got to do.

Based on this response, Mrs. Y described her experiences with school discipline practices like restorative as inconsistent. Mrs. Y commented, "if it is not necessary or a must, I will be honest, I don't put it in my schedule, and I know it needs to be." At this stage in the year, in my role as the culture and climate specialist, I prescribed that teachers include practices for at least fifteen minutes of their school day, and the district asks that the time be spent in the first part of the day. Mrs. Y sharing that she is not including the practices is an admission that she chose to prioritize a schedule that she felt was essential due to COVID learning demands. One final point that Mrs. Y shared was that other teachers and student engagement motivated her to attempt and become more consistent with using RP. She commented,

> I can tell you this; I used CREW most last year because Ms. W was big on it. And she was my motivator. She was like, no, Mr. Y, we have to do this, girl. And that's what made me start doing it last year, but I just haven't gotten motivated this year. When the students enjoy it, I am more motivated, but that was more so last year.

Towards the end of our time, I circled back to Mrs. Y's educational leadership and teaching background and wanted to know some of her future goals. In Houston charted schools, teacher certification is encouraged but not required. I asked about her certification, hoping that her response might help me identify any correlation between formal certification and the application of various classroom practices, including RP. Mrs. Y shared some of her future goals with me. She expressed her desire to achieve certification in her content areas and go back to school to pursue her doctoral degree.

> I guess I don't know how to study Ashley; I'll put it like that. I want to be certified, have my certification finished, and then get my principal certification, followed by my doctoral program. I have a plan moving forward.

After our time together, I observed and learned that Mrs. Y responds to students in a more organic way and based on her personality and way of naturally related to students. She uses a maternal and loving ethic of care for her learners and prioritizes restorative practices based on student needs and district requirements. Mrs. Y describes her responses to student behaviors based on their individual needs for love and attention instead of a research-based model or professional development strategy. Consequently, Mrs. Y reported that she rarely issues discipline referrals for student removal from classes, if at all. Overall, Mrs. Y relies on her self-awareness and relationships with her learners to guide her decision-making and pedagogical methods.

Ms. T

My relationship with T began in early August 2019 when I observed her classroom as the district culture specialist. I would sit with her and her 6th graders at the time and conduct restorative community-building circles. That year, we hosted a student-

led symposium together on the meaning of CREW, and Ms. T also served on the committee for the College and Career fair that the district hosted each year. I was placed in charge of that event, and I invited Ms. T to join me on the committee before considering her for this research study. She was always so agreeable and warm. She was welcoming of my ideas and making sure our college and career event was a success. I noticed that she had a warm manner of relating to her students. That year, she had a particularly rowdy group of 6th graders, which helped her take more interest in the alternative methods available in restorative practices. Ms. T was also very good at asking clarifying questions. Whenever I hosted a training, she was always interested, investing, and curious. I was thankful that she agreed to be one of my research participants; she showed genuine care and interest throughout the process. Before my interviews with Ms. T, I wrote in my research journal:

> Ms. T and I are pretty close in age, and I feel like we will get along well. I know we will have a lot to discuss in terms of restorative practices because I spent a considerable amount of time with her and her homeroom class. I wonder what her perspectives on that time will be at this point, especially since we have not had the opportunities to do structured restorative circles since the pandemic began. I am curious about her responses to student behaviors without me helping facilitate and whether she continued to use the practices without me. I think we have a lot in common and will be able to speak freely and efficiently based on the research questions.

Based on this initial assessment of my thoughts and beliefs, I began the interview process with Ms. T. We spoke on three separate occasions via ZOOM. In interviews A, B, and C, I describe our discussions and provide her words in response to the interview and research questions.

For Interview A, Ms. T and I discussed her educational and professional background, her relationships with her learners and how she encouraged them to use the voices, and her experiences with her mentors. All of these factors were experiences that she shared as impacting her decision-making about student behaviors. Throughout interview A, Ms. T conveyed her care for her students and how her decision-making has primarily been based on a mixture of her background knowledge and her prior training in the field.

First, Mrs. T and I discussed her upbringing in the North Forest Independent school district. I mentioned that North Forest Independent School District (NFISD) is no longer in existence. I later read that NFISD was closed on July 1, 2013, and absorbed into the Houston Independent School District. "I later learned in college that that was the poorest district, and by the time I got to college, I felt illiterate." After learning that she grew up in a poor district, she felt low funding, fewer resources, predominately Black and Latinx.

> It took me until my junior year to get serious about school. I ended up transferring to Texas Southern because I just wanted to be with my friends. I lived with my grandmother, and they lived on campus. I got on academic probation, and while I was in school, I maintained a full-time job.

Ms. T described her work-study program in high school as a Co-Op, where she worked part-time and continued schooling; she began to understand the value of a balance between work and academics. She became a grant specialist in North Forest. Ms. T and I both graduated. From college in 2007. That was the year I started my career in teaching. "I remember I tried my best to stray away from teaching." Ms. T described how she never

wanted to be a classroom teacher. She enjoyed working with North Forest ISD right up until they consolidated with HISD. She described feeling good when other students would see her working.

Ms. T also discussed her time as a school tutor as an entry point into teaching Even then, she was reluctant. "I don't know how I ended up as a full-time teacher. I needed a job at the time, probably." I asked her if she was certified in Texas, and she said, "I'm not certified." When I asked, "do you want to get your certification," she said, "probably not." Here in Texas, at charter schools' teachers are not required to be certified. Consequently, in my observation, uncertified teachers tend to tolerate worse treatment from their employers to remain employed.

Ms. T describes her relationship with students now that she is in the classroom She said, "I believe I can relate to my students because of my background." She attributed many of her concerns to students by referring to their upbringing. She said students who come from families with two parents versus one parent act differently, and she has to choose her responses to those learners based on their varying needs. Therefore, how she responds to students has a lot to do with their home life. She also described students with and without manners. Her choices are impacted a lot by how well students behave in her classes.

Ms. T also mentioned a mentor that she had. He was a leadership consultant in our district, and I had also worked closely with him. Sadly, her former mentor no longer works with us, but Ms. T was able to name herself as a non-traditional teacher based on his guidance. It felt as if she was starting to get some strong mentorship that may have

helped her become a better teacher before he departed. That mentorship did not continue for her after he left.

Part of our discussion became emotional for Ms. T, particularly when she began to recall parts of her childhood that she felt helped her connect with students.

> I didn't grow up with my father in the house. You got these boys who have to feel like they have to protect their mom. It is what I went through. That's why I can relate to these kids. So, for me, education is about just giving them hope. Just because you are in a situation, you don't have to be your environment's product. Whatever you go through does not determine your destination.

Ms. T describes how she was able to get her 6th graders passionate about civic engagement. "I had these kids doing a protest, you hear me?" Ms. T described how the students lost permission to go on a field trip to the rodeo, but they protested the decision based on good behavior and their test scores. Ms. T shared that she told her students, "If you want to beat her, you're going to have to make a statement. But you can't make a statement verbally like that." She explained to her learners how to protest peacefully based on their beliefs and values.

> They had on a shirt that said sixth-grade lives matter; check our campus-based assessment scores. They walked around this building, and they didn't say a word. Now you know I had some of them that behavior issues, but they were trying to make a statement for the most part. I remember the principals were like; I know you had something to do with this. I was like; they wanted to do what they felt was right.

Ms. T expressed pride in her students and pride in herself for encouraging the students to use their voices. Interview A established Ms. T's educational background and teaching experiences, her relationships with her students, and her own beliefs and aspirations.

104

Ms. T: Interview B

For interview B, Ms. T and I discussed the research questions in-depth, including exploring a response to student behaviors with an example of an incident in her classroom. We then discussed her awareness of RP and how she utilizes resources from RP training provided.

When asked about her responses to student behaviors, Ms. T started by sharing, "most of my discipline issues come from male students. I've learned that there's a reason behind it, but it is more of' I like her, I want to get her attention." Ms. T described an incident with a young Black male student she taught in 6th grade. The student told her that he didn't like her and became very aggressive with her. Ms. T shared, "I'm like, okay, so what does that mean you're going to slash my tires, you're going to do some harm to me?" She then described the incident:

> He was upset because I took something from him. So, I told him, if you keep walking towards me, I'm going to scream. And he thought I was joking, so he ignored what I was saying, and he kept approaching me. And so, I got extremely loud to where I brought attention to the room.

We discussed what she felt might be the deeper meaning behind this for the student in discussion and the majority of Black male students she serves. Ms. T made a comment that fascinated me. She said, "a lot of young Black men get caught up in situations where a woman says 'no' but they continue to force themselves or do something that gets them in trouble. So, I feel it is important to teach that when a person says no, regardless of who it is, they need to fall back." Ms. T describer her decision to yell as one being about wanting him to correct himself, "that's how I had to handle it, I don't know if that was the right way to do it. Still, in my mind, I'm like he has to learn that when a person says no, regardless of what it is, you need to do it." When I asked her if she would make the

105

same decision again, she said no, she would not. "I don't know, yeah, I wouldn't. I didn't know what I didn't know at the time."

At this point, our conversation transitioned to a discussion on her awareness of restorative practices. I wanted to know more about that decision as it related to her prior knowledge of RP. She said,

> The only thing that I can say as far as the restorative piece is that I did allow students to voice their feelings and emotions. I did allow that. And in my homeroom, I was able to speak with them and put those restorative practices in place.

One aspect that Ms. T connected with restorative practices was the relationship she has with her learners. She described another male teacher on her team as a father figure and that the children see her as the team's mother figure. She said she felt some of the boys have "a complex against women." We never really unpacked that dilemma, but based on Ms. T's observations of her students, I trusted that she was sharing her perspective on certain student behaviors' motivations.

When I asked about some of the restorative training that we attended together as a staff, and of which Ms. T had been part of, she shared that she made sure to practice during the morning times allotted, but that the new daily schedule often prevented her from practicing as we had trained. Also, it is essential to note here that social distancing requirements prevented teachers from practicing restorative circles with fidelity. The pandemic forced teachers to either get creative or opt for the bare minimum to survive the year. Ms. T's comment on this was, "I think it can be done; we're just overwhelmed with everything." I feel that the most profound statement from Ms. T during this session was about fear. "I'm saying as a teacher to student, student to teacher; we're placing fear into

students if they don't get certain things done. And that is why I disagree with how we do education right now."

Interview B revealed more of Ms. T's understanding of her responses to students' behaviors and enactment of restorative practices. Throughout this interview, Ms. T demonstrated self-assessment and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Ms. T: Interview C

In our final interview session, Ms. T and I discussed her use of restorative and other modes of discipline responses, time constraints specific to our district, and limitations on teaching and learning due to policy-related constraints. Ms. T shared that "there is a difference when implementing the discipline practices with my students." Ms. T made a statement about how she thinks student behaviors and reactions have a lot to do with which teacher they are dealing with and which teacher they most identify with in terms of culture. She said her African American students responded best to her style of guidance and correction. "With the African American students, it was something they were accustomed to." Ms. T shared that, overall, she felt education is run more like a business, primarily at the participating charter school. "The amount of stress that we are all under, and yet I get it, at the end of the day, it is a business." I was puzzled by this choice of language, so I asked Ms. T what she meant for clarification. She felt as if our approach to learning was very task-oriented.

> No matter, I get that you have a list of things to do. Tons of things to do, but I still need you to do this, I'm still going to add to your to-do list, and I want it done immediately.

This description from Ms. T is not uncommon in the district. Many teachers express this. As the culture coordinator, I have noted where teachers are consistently communicating

that our task-oriented approach does little to promote actual learning and leads to teacher

burnout. Ms. T's comments were directly related to her ability or lack of ability to enact

restorative practices, even during the pandemic. Ms. T's response was coupled with her

frustrations with her appraisals of her progress as an educator. We discussed the punitive

nature of reactions towards teacher behaviors and how that can negatively impact how

teachers interact with students.

Teacher feelings can easily rub off on students. Ms. T shared that she wished her

progress as an educator were highlighted more than her shortcomings, "like you don't

even see how awesome I am everywhere else."

New Understandings

As part of the hermeneutic spiral, it was essential to come back to my initial

understandings and describe how my beliefs have changed due to how my participants

described their lived experiences. For each of my initial assumptions, I describe how that

particular belief has altered, if at all, and what my new understanding is based on

interviews with each participant. A research journal helped me tabulate this content as I

conducted the study. Based on my research journal, I organized my new understandings

in the order of my original assumptions. Table 4.2 provides the new understandings for

each of my initial beliefs and biases outlined previously in Chapter Four.

Table 4.2

Table of New Understandings

Initial Beliefs and Biases	New Understandings
1. Overall, because we all identify as Black women, I figured we would have a common language around our collective marginalization and individual experiences navigating racism and discrimination.	I learned that is not true. None of the participants mentioned their own identities as Black women or described their marginalization at all. It was not a topic of conversation during the interviews. Each participant focused more on their growth as educators and their relationships with learners.
2. Each of the participants is Black women educators; therefore, we will all mostly agree on the importance of education centers on Black and Latinx children.	For the most part, this belief was confirmed in all participants. There was an underlying assumption that we were always discussing Black and Latinx students based on the student population at the campuses we serve.
3. The older the participant, the more likely they agree with punitive discipline, including corporal punishment.	Based on my conversation with Mrs. Y, I still believe this may be true. Mrs. Y mentioned corporal punishment methods being acceptable for schools and learners when she was being raised, and she is the oldest of the three participating teachers.
4. As Black women, each participant would agree with the importance of socially active and democratic teaching.	Ms. E and Ms. T both decided to promote social and cultural awareness in their classrooms actively, and both have a core ethic of democratic teaching. Mrs. Y expressed reluctance to promote social action openly but instead encouraged students with warm reminders to comply and accept their environments.
5. Each participant had received some training the previous year in restorative practices, so I assume they remembered some of the languages of those practices and understood their importance.	I realize that all three of my participants remembered some language, but the practices were not reinforced throughout the learning community enough to feel invested in the processes.
6. Black participants who went to public schools in the south have less academically advanced resources.	Based on my conversations with each participant, the evidence did reveal that equitable access to sufficient resources and prioritization of time it takes to learn how to use those resources is still lacking. My prejudice here has changed because I am not sure this is based solely on geography.
7. All of us are Christians and have some foundational beliefs about educating young Black boys and girls through that lens. However, based on my spirituality, I assume I am more liberal than all three ladies.	I am more politically progressive and liberal than all three of my participants. I was careful to respect those boundaries and understandings based on my relationship with each teacher. I am most closely aligned with the underlying beliefs of Ms. E than I am with Mrs. Y and Ms. T. However, this did not come up in-depth during our sessions.

Thematic Explication

Based on all three interview rounds with each of the three research participants, I conducted a thematic explication based on the hermeneutic phenomenological research method. In this section, I discuss the themes that emerged across all three cases. There were eight emergent themes based on the research data. After outlining each theme, the themes are then broken down based on occurrences in interviews A, B, and C, followed by a discussion of the literature and connections to the theoretical framework. Table 4.3 highlights each of the recurring themes, and an "x" signifies which participants described that particular occurrence.

The first central theme is that the participants described their background knowledge of public school as a factor in their decision-making. Theme two was how the participants described time constraints as a catalyst for how they handle and make decisions about student behaviors. The third theme that emerged was the district and administrative policy changes that direct teachers' attention away from restorative practices and more compliance-based responses. Theme four is attention to social justice education, meaning the teacher has some form of personal investment in democratic teaching and learning that is informed by student voices, and the teacher not only engages learners in the form of social action curriculum but empowers learners to take actions in their ways as well (Picower, 2012). The fifth theme is motherhood. Each participant made connections between their classroom responses and their roles as mothers to their biological children. Theme six is the presence or mention of a mentor. At some point, each participant described an influential colleague or supervisor who impacted their learning and teaching. Theme seven is the known use of restorative practices.

Table 4.3

Table of Themes

Theme	Ms. E Interviews	Mrs. Y Interviews	Ms. T Interviews
1. Background Knowledge and experiences of Public school	A B C	A B C	A B
2. Time Constraints	C	B C	A B C
3. Policy changes	C	B	A C
4. Attention to social justice education	B C	A	A C
5. Motherhood	A	A B	A B
6. Presence or mention of mentorship	B	C	A
7. Known use of Restorative Practices	B C	A C	B C
8. Self-Reflection	B	C	B

The fifth theme is motherhood. Each participant made connections between their classroom responses and their roles as mothers to their biological children. Theme six is the presence or mention of a mentor. At some point, each participant described an influential colleague or supervisor who impacted their learning and teaching. Theme seven is the known use of restorative practices. This theme is directly linked to the research questions. Every participant has some familiarity with the three tiers of restorative practices as taught through the district's CREW cultural model. Theme eight is self-reflection, with each participant somehow describing their thoughts on their teaching methods and needs as an adult learner and educator. Table 4.3 lists each of them

and the occurrences of that theme in interviews A, B, and C. The following sections describe each theme in greater detail and connection with relevant literature.

Background Knowledge and Experiences in Public Schools

Each of the three participants described their background knowledge and experiences in K-12 public school environments. Ms. Y and Ms. T both shared the impact of their schooling experiences, while Ms. E focused mainly on her growth as an adult learner; she did not seem to bring her past schooling experiences into her teaching practice. Instead, she elected to focus on current learning and best practices based on her learning and experiences as an educator and parent.

Past and current literature points to the importance of attention to teacher's intersectional realities and how those realities play out in their classroom practices. Through the transformative aspect of the theoretical framework lens, the research establishes the importance of acknowledging teachers as adult learners with a rich set of lived experiences that impact learner experiences (Christie et al., 2015b; Dix, 2016). The interviews' outcomes suggest that the more self-aware the teachers are of their own lived experiences, the more apt they are to value using restorative practices that positively impact learners.

Time Constraints

Each participant was also impacted by COVID-19 and was responsible for both in-person and virtual instruction. Policy changes that led to teachers engaging in virtual and in-person instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic also impacted teachers'

abilities to enact culturally responsive and restorative strategies (Bottiani et al., 2018; Kirkland & Gay, 2003).

Each participant spoke about time playing a factor in their responses to student behaviors. When it comes to restorative practices, all three participants seemed to agree that they lack the time necessary to practice new skills learned in training. The current time constraints have to do with the COVID-19 pandemic; however, these constraints existed before the pandemic due to the school calendar, policies, overall prioritization, and over-reliance on standardized testing. Without the timing consideration, participant's responses to student behaviors tend to lean on the previously held punitive measures in place. Also, participants were less likely to express value in restorative practices if they did not receive a compliance mandate. The district and campus-level overreliance on compliance-based tactics forced the participants to lean on a similar focus in their classrooms.

Attention to Social Justice Education

Each of the three participants described their experiences implementing some form of social justice education. Picower (2012) focuses on six elements of social justice education, and all three participants in this study were well aligned with one or more of the various elements. Even if they were not consciously aware, both Ms. T and Ms. E expressed having some form of a social justice education embedded in their teaching practice. Both teachers expressed care for student civic engagement and cultural awareness. Ms. Y expressed wanting to nurture her learners and based her decisions on her experiences with motherhood. Her students' responses are likely to be more nurturing and supportive rather than focus on external factors or social inequities. However, even

this is in line with the first element of Picower's six, which focuses on teachers helping to cultivate student self-love (Picower, 2012). This theme often overlapped with motherhood because, without a direct and explicit form of research-based social justice education, the default responses had more to do with a maternalistic instinct than a culturally responsive and socially conscious framework.

Motherhood

Being a mother and maternal instincts came into the discussions with all three participants. This theme was unexpected. However, the research supports that career women who are mothers integrate this facet of their lives into their vocation (Laney et al., 2014). Every participant made some connections to their experience as mothers to their biological children and made comparisons to how they reacted to their students.

Motherhood seemed to become a default response of each woman toward their students. Each seemed to understand motherhood as a good point of reference when interacting with other people's children. Ms. E also shared her experiences with motherhood as indicators for how she responds to her learners. Ms. E described motherhood in the context of having a duty to serve her students as if they were her own.

Presence or Mention of Mentorship

All three participants mentioned the importance of good leadership and mentorship in some form. When participants mentioned their respective mentors, they expressed gratitude for their mentors and how they apply what they learned in their teaching practice. In the cases of Ms. E and Ms. T, they reported mentors who embraced their unique learning and teaching styles as adult learners and embraced unconventional

114

teaching methods. There seemed to be a special connection between their critical

consciousness and choices in social justice education, their responses to students, and

their relationships with their mentors.

Literature supports the correlation between critical consciousness and mentorship

relationships. Therefore, this research's major proposal is towards critical conscious

reciprocal mentorships (Talbert et al., 2020), thus providing teachers with more time and

opportunities for strategic consciousness-raising and overall pedagogical and professional

growth.

Known use of Restorative Practices

First, all three teachers had some prior knowledge of restorative practices and

described their competency levels with those practices (González, 2012; Jones &

Armour, 2013; Olstad & Miller, 2012). Ms. E makes explicit use of restorative practices

with the most fidelity, Mrs. Y only makes use of the practices as time allows, and Mrs. T

makes use of the practices as time allows. The CREW cultural model of the charter

school has RDP built-in, and new strategies come out for teachers to try in their

classrooms monthly.

As noted in the time constraints thematic explanation, one major problem is that

teachers spend considerable amounts of time in compliance-based endeavors, time that is

taken away from teachers attempting the new strategies. In short, teachers simply do not

have time to give to their reflection and inquiry cycles and implement the practices with

learners. However, all three participants described their ideas around RDP's importance

and shared their implementation strategies and hopes for increased use.

Self-Reflection

Each participant described engaging in some level of self-reflection. Ms. E described a personal duty and ethic of focusing on student needs and research-based practices. Mrs. Y expressed a traumatic moment that compelled her to decide to be more protective of her students and shield them from what she observed as dangerous environments that would impede their learning and future opportunities. Ms. T described her learning and felt that it was lacking, and she channeled that into encouragement for her learners.

For each participant, the teacher reflected on moments where they felt empowered or powerless and used that reflection to equip them for how they decide to encounter their learners. This is similar to what bell hooks describe as "engaged" education, and it is also an adult learning stage known as "disorienting dilemmas" (Christie et al., 2015a; hooks, 1994; Knowles, 1984; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Based on these moments of reflection, each participant made a decision that directly impacted their learner's ability to remain in their classrooms, receive quality instruction, and thrive as learners. The following section provides an overview of how the research questions were addressed.

Addressing the Research Questions

Each participant's interviews revealed varied answers to the research questions. Since the interviews were semi-structured, each participant was made aware of each question throughout the interview, but through conversation and new ideas and connections emerged, we would often take the conversation in the direction of those moments. Consequently, the research questions were loosely addressed according to the conversation's trajectory and the participant's levels of comfort with the inquiry.

Questions one and two asked, "what are the experiences of in-service educators who implement discipline practices to diverse student populations?" And, "How do in-service educators in Houston, TX, describe their decision to implement various discipline practices?" Participants answers questions one and two described their childhood experiences and early receiving chastisement as a child as their earliest disciplinary experiences. The participants also usually associated discipline with punitive responses to behavior, such as spanking, paddling, or taking away privileges from learners. Participants all shared how they each respond according to the amount of time and planning they have. Since there is very little time and planning to use restorative measures, two of three participants described themselves as defaulting to the school's punitive discipline measures such as office referrals and in-school suspensions.

For question three, the question was, "what are the catalysts for disciplinary responses among K-12 educators?" The catalysts for disciplinary actions for Ms. E included student and parent needs and requests and her intuition about a student's behaviors. She based her decisions on her restorative training and her ethics of care for her learners and their families. She also based her decisions on relationships with the children and their families. Mrs. Y described the catalysts being her awareness of motherhood and students needing a nurturing aspect of their education. Ms. T discussed her catalysts as being aligned more with administrative functioning. Policy changed prompted her to respond or not to respond. She also described her emotions as a catalyst, especially when facing students head-on in the heat of challenging encounters.

The sub-questions were, what is the catalysis for disciplinary responses among K-12 educators? And what are some of the cultural and sociopolitical aspects impacting

117

both teachers and learners the help define responses to behaviors? In their responses, the overarching factor for both the participating teachers and their learners is the continued dehumanization of education and learning present in these participants' everyday experiences. Participant experiences revealed a lack of attention to trauma-informed humanizing modes of learning, not for lack of wanting them, but purely for lack of access and sufficient training.

Discussion

This dissertation study illustrated a problem of practice that educators face in decision-making and student discipline. This research has three findings. First, it reveals that teacher experiences directly impact the ways they respond to student behaviors. Second, it shows the importance of understanding intersectional identities toward an intentional practice of restorative dialogue. And third, it reveals the need for intersectional learning communities and an emphasis on how strategically intersectional learning communities humanize educators and, in turn, lead to humanizing learners holistically. Based on these three findings, this section provides specific implications for building teaching critical consciousness that supports student access, equity, and academic success.

Finding One: Teacher Experiences Directly Impact Their Responses to Student Behaviors

Student behaviors require adequate teacher responses. Often, student behavior is linked to their achievement or lack thereof, and equally as often, teacher responses are cited as critical, but these two conversations rarely take place in conjunction. Each participant revealed specific and subtle isolation in education regarding student

achievement, school discipline, and teacher responses to behaviors. Student success is often discussed in isolation of the teacher's critical awareness that impacts their achievement and growth. However, teacher behaviors directly impact student outcomes.

Finding Two: The Importance of Critical Consciousness

The disproportionality that exists in US school discipline is primarily based on race and gender. This is mainly due to unconscious biases and a lack of attention to critical social consciousness. There is a disconnect between teacher critical consciousness, student behaviors, and student academic success. Based on this disparity, I developed a spiral of critical consciousness that schools and districts can use to support teacher consciousness-raising. The developmental spiral of critical consciousness is a tool that provides practical language and guidance through a process of teacher self-engagement, all the way to their planning cycles (Gibson, 2021). The DCSS can be used in conjunction with Picower's six social justice education elements as a starting point (Gibson, 2021; Picower, 2012). When teachers grow in their critical consciousness, they can plan more effectively for responses to student behaviors, for example, when to respond restoratively.

Finding Three: The Need for Intersectional Learning Communities

The third finding is the need for intersectional learning communities. The DCSS supports teachers through intersectional and transformative learning theories, emphasizing teacher growth that leads to student achievement (Gibson, 2021). When an emphasis on raising critical consciousness becomes a way of being for teachers, schools, and organizations, professional learning communities can become intersectional learning

communities that thrive based not only on assessing teachers according to standardized learning but on teachers equipping and empowering themselves so that they can do the same for their learners.

Implications

Based on the research findings, there are five implications of this research. First, a lack of adequate and authentic planning time impacts the use of restorative practices. Schools seeking to promote teacher's use of restorative practices need to realize that it is more than a program; it is a systematic paradigm shift that must be adopted philosophically and culturally for the adopting organization. To support this, teachers require explicit support in their planning times. The first approach to helping educators in the school environment and others is to provide teachers with adequate time to practice and implement new research-based discipline strategies (Jones & Armour, 2013; Riley, 2017). Adding time can provide more built-in opportunities to plan, engage in collaboration, and develop feedback loops that promote inquiry around lesson planning before setting compliance expectations for submitting lesson plans. For example, at this charter school, the expectation is to submit lessons on a specific day by a particular time. The addition of adequate time might look like shifting the focus from the day and time to demonstrating the use of that added time as proof of the occurrence of an effective lesson planning cycle. In short, the compliance-based tactic of a lesson planning deadline takes away from the quality and effectiveness of preempting effective discipline strategies, as teachers seek first to meet the deadline before genuinely improving the quality and critical engagement in their planning cycles.

Second, based on the literature on the importance of critical deconstruction for educators, and given each participant's responses in these interviews, more time needs to be given for this process to be fruitful for learners. Paulo Freire's works, bell hooks and Bettina Love, offer sound frameworks for cultivating critical social consciousness that leads to social action and intersectional learning communities (Freire & Macedo, 2018; hooks, 1994; Love, 2019). Schools that are seeking to promote teachers using restorative practices need to realize that it is more than a program; it is a systematic paradigm shift that must be adopted philosophically and culturally for the adopting organization; this shift takes time. Therefore, teachers need time to inquire, process, and practice new learning.

The third implication of this research is that consciousness-raising for educators is critical for enacting liberating pedagogies and humanizing practices (Bartolome, 1994, 2004; Freire & Macedo, 2018; Van Manen, 1990). According to the literature, political and ideological clarity are essential for emerging and veteran in-service teachers to establish critically conscious pedagogy (Blevins et al., 2020; Blevins & Talbert, 2015). This study complements previous work in the field in that it provides a focus on teacher best practices based on transformative adult learning (Christie et al., 2015a).

The fourth implication is based on this study's theoretical framework, including critical race and transformative learning theories (Christie et al., 2015b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). According to this framework, teachers can thrive in environments that provide transformative adult learning and acknowledge their racialized and intersectional identities. These aspects of the framework can lead to transformative practices when restorative dialogue is the primary form of communication and the school or

121

organization's cultural model. Restorative dialogue is an excellent container for culturally sustaining adult learning and pedagogies, transformative adult learning opportunities, and critically conscious reciprocal mentoring (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Mertens, 2007; Talbert et al., 2020; Yosso, 2005). In an intersectional learning community (ILC), schools can allow for more teacher collaboration, encourage teacher-led training through the reciprocal mentoring process, and enrich teacher autonomy. In an ILC, more time is spent on teachers reflecting and engaging in transformative adult learning experiences.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the cohesive relationships and overlap between culturally sustaining andragogy and pedagogy, transformative adult learning, and critically conscious reciprocal mentoring. All of these elements rest within a foundationally restorative-friendly environment.
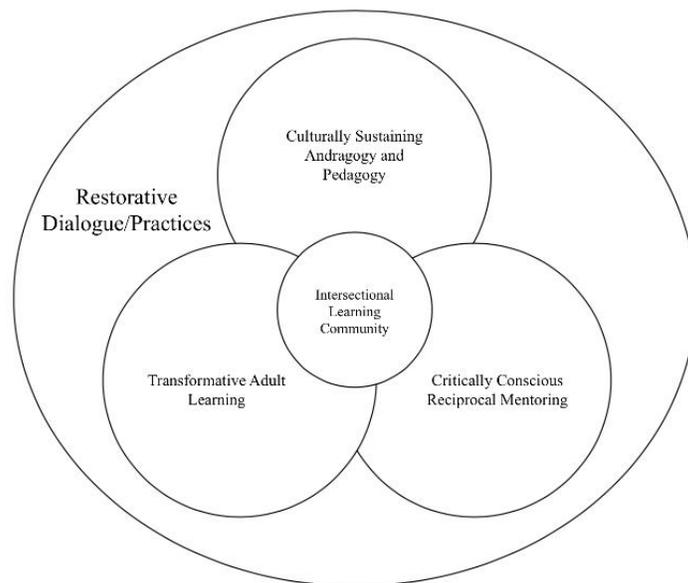

Figure 4.1. Elements of an intersectional learning community.

An intersectional learning community is, by definition, one that promotes humanizing educators to humanize learners (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Freire & Macedo, 2018; Hill-Collins, 2019). It allows for teachers to develop a consciousness that leads to student access, equity, and achievement.

Lastly, this district has some autonomy as a charter, and districts should use their autonomy to dismantle systemic injustices wherever they can while they can, instead of following extreme deficit patterns that assume teacher and student deficits. Notably, this charter attempted to thwart culture and climate disparities by hiring me as their culture specialist. However, they removed this position in 2020 due to the pandemic and low enrollment. I strongly encourage this district to reinstate the program and position eventually, regardless of my involvement. Suppose it were strategically revised to support Black and Latinx teachers and students. In that case, enrollment might improve given the rising popularity and growing need for more robust social justice programs in the United States.

Based on participants' responses and the ways they each addressed the research questions, there are several suggestions for future research. The outcome I hope for is liberatory, and the way I conduct the research will take into account the intersectional realities of marginalized educators and the learners entrusted to them. Ultimately intersectional learning communities lead to humanizing education that disrupts unjust systems and oppression toward institutionally underserved and marginalized populations. This study sets up the possibility for an intersectional learning community and a critically conscious container in restorative practices and reciprocal mentorship. In terms of limitations, this study only included three Black women teachers, so their perspectives

are limited. Future researchers may want to apply this study to a larger group of more diverse teachers for more expansive outcomes and findings.

Conclusion

Chapter Four presents the research findings and data analysis. I conducted the research using semi-structured interviews described in Chapter Three, using the hermeneutic spiral fitting for a hermeneutic phenomenology. This includes outlining initial beliefs and understandings, describing participants 'lived experiences, and then describing new understandings based on the findings. Throughout Chapter Four, I describe the lived experiences of three in-service educators at a small charter school. I located several significant themes and provided a thematic explication in which I described how those themes emerged across each interview session.

This hermeneutic phenomenological study revealed themes and patterns that can serve as a starting point for establishing an intersectional learning community that centers on teachers' and learners' humanization. In Chapter Five, this study will conclude with an executive summary and a recommendation for how this research can mitigate dehumanization and unjust systems that alienate learners across the K–12 public education community. Ultimately, this study has the power to shift the collective dialogue in public school education and appeals to collective interdependence born of intersectional frameworks.

CHAPTER FIVE

Distribution of Findings

Executive Summary

This problem of practice dissertation is a hermeneutic phenomenological study describing teachers' lived experiences with school discipline. First, the researcher introduces the study's overall focus and describes how social injustices lead to teachers relying on punitive measures for school and classroom discipline. The research questions are introduced and question how teachers respond to student discipline and what sociopolitical factors might influence their decision making. The purpose of this study is to show the growing need for establishing a more nuanced professional learning community known as an intersectional learning community (ILC).

An ILC is a learning community similar to a professional learning community or PLC (Dufour, 2004). While a PLC builds on the notion of centering student achievement as the main focus, an ILC brings teachers as adult learners, teacher well-being, and teacher critical-consciousness raising into focus. ILCs must be explicitly supported and integrated through the school or organization's culture and climate model. This research supports ILCs as incubators for humanizing teachers and the learners they serve. This study's theoretical framework includes Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Transformative Learning Theory (TLT). Figure 5.1 illustrates the foundational elements of an intersectional learning community derived from this study's outcomes.
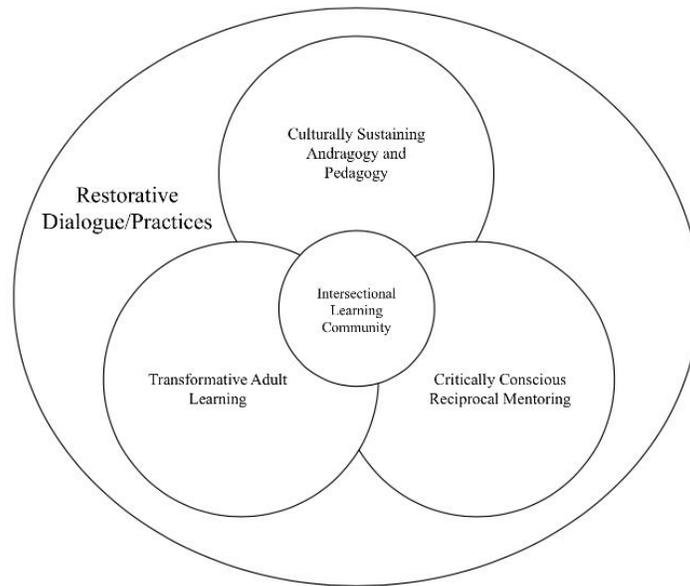
Figure 5.1. Elements of an intersectional learning community.

Next, a review of the literature describes how the literature supports the need for intersectional learning communities across the landscape of American public schooling. Following the literature review, the researcher describes the research methodology, the site location and participants, and how the research was conducted to answer the research questions and understand teacher lived experiences. This research aimed to ground the participants' essence of experiences to establish the factors that would support the overall humanization of teachers and ultimately what factors lead them to select various disciplinary responses. Lastly, the researcher explains the research findings and describes three participating teachers' lived experiences through a process of three consecutive semi-structured interviews. The following section will provide an overview of the data collection and analysis procedures.

The participating teachers scheduled interviews of 30–60 minutes via zoom for the data collection process due to Covid-19 restrictions. Emerging questions and inquiry-based on a semi-structured protocol were conducted, and finally, findings were recorded and hand-coded in the hermeneutic spiral process. The researcher maintained a research journal of initial biases and new understandings outlined in the hermeneutic phenomenological process.

Throughout the explication process, the data analysis spiral is employed to avoid a linear approach to data collection and analysis. The researcher represents the data by describing the interviews, using textual descriptions, and explaining how each participant experienced the phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). To grasp the essential meaning of the phenomenon with clarity and concision, the analysis's write-up included connecting original assumptions with new understandings that emerged throughout the data collection process. Ethical considerations during the data collection and analysis process include protecting participant identities, the voluntary nature of all interviews, and the data explication.

Summary of Key Findings

This research study reveals eight significant themes. First, each participant mentioned the importance of their background knowledge and experiences with public schooling. The participants shared that they base many of their decisions on their desire to either replicate or improve upon their personal experiences as students—the second theme centers around time constraints. A lack of time to plan and implement restorative practices was a persistent theme for participants, causing them to rely heavily on less

127

research-based and punitive discipline habits. Theme three is policy changes that impact teachers and either helped or hindered them from critical engagement and restorative practices with learners. Due to state-level policies that eventually become campus-level decisions, participants reported compliance being their motivation rather than best practices. Attention to social justice education is the fourth theme, meaning each participant shared that they value diversity issues such as equitable practices for students, the importance of student voices and choice, and other student-centered practices that prevent student removal and promote community-based initiatives. Motherhood was theme five. With each participant being a mother to their children, they reported responding to their students in a maternal fashion instead of using a research-based practice from their previous training. Theme six is the presence or mention of mentorship. There was some significant peer or collegial relationship for each participant, which impacted that teacher's responses to students. The seventh theme that emerges is a known use of restorative practices. Participants all had formal restorative training and expressed either the importance of utilizing the skills or the impact of their students' practices. Finally, theme eight is self-reflection. Each participant took great care to share how they examine themselves and their teaching practices, whether in a positive or negative light.

Based on the eight themes, this study reveals three findings. First, teachers lived experiences have a direct impact on their responses to student behaviors. The second finding is the importance of teachers cultivating critical consciousness. The third finding is the need for intersectional learning communities. These findings support that there is a need for teachers to spend significant time indeed developing critical social

consciousness. The teacher participants felt that they were rushed to apply skills that they had little time to absorb and practice. There is little to no time spent on teacher wellness and cognitive function. Therefore, teachers are left feeling as if they are checking off a list because many tasks are tied to their appraisal and are based on a need for compliance over humanization. Each interview with the research participants revealed, at some level, how punitive systems impacted their decision-making at the classroom level. Therefore, in answer to the research questions, these data show that if teacher development is compliance and standards-based, and if it is not restorative or culturally sustaining, teachers will not retain a capacity for implementing the practices with their learners.

Informed Recommendations

The following are informed recommendations based on the research outcomes from this study. First, the school and district seeking to build teacher critical consciousness that leads to student access, equity, and achievement would benefit from trauma-informed education that is humanizing not only of students but also of educators (Freire & Macedo, 2018). Centering teachers' lived experiences is a time-consuming endeavor, but the more self-aware the educator, the more likely they are to employ humanizing practices. Therefore, a significant recommendation is to abolish all punitive systems, adopt a top-down approach to restorative practices as a "container" or safe space for developing critical consciousness-raising, and build an authentic intersectional learning community. Intersectional learning communities are a means to an end in humanizing education and disrupting negative cycles. However, this can go a long way in preempting future inequities and addressing harms head-on.

129

Secondly, this particular site would benefit from encouraging peer mentorship and formal teacher certification acquisition that empowers educators as professionals in practice. Overall, school communities that create a culture for holistic growth in restorative practices from the administrative level to the student and family level that center teacher well-being, autonomy, and critical consciousness-raising can help eliminate disciplinary practices and systems that disproportionately push out Black and Latinx learners. The developmental spiral of critical consciousness would help teachers provide strategic inquiry points for teachers to apply to their consciousness-raising; however, the district must still support using this by providing strategic planning time (Gibson, 2021). The DCSS was explicitly designed with transformative and intersectional theories in mind, which link teacher critical consciousness with their decision making. When teachers are provided with opportunities to engage in this level of thinking about their practice, they can begin to shift towards more strategic responses to student behaviors and thus more readily employ restorative practices.

Overall, this study supports integrating restorative practices, intersectional theory, and culturally sustaining pedagogies in a unique learning community. Many programs of this nature focus on students' impact; however, this study primarily focuses on the teacher as adult learners and building their capacity for transformative practices.

Findings Distribution Proposal

This research's target audiences are local school and district communities interested in investing in educational equity and access for underserved student populations, namely BIPOC teachers and BIPOC learners, through the use of restorative practices as a viable response to student behavior. Ultimately, this work centers on

teachers. The hope is to build a foundation for a teacher-centered service that provides consultations on building restorative incubators for transformative learning opportunities. Due to mentorship's prominence as a significant theme in the findings, this proposal also includes asserting that restorative dialogue in intersectional learning communities (ILCs) are viable modes for building critically conscious reciprocal mentorships within ILCs (Talbert et al., 2020).

Consequently, the dissemination plan for this study is to build an educational consulting firm called Interior Learning (IL), LLC. Interior Learning's mission is to promote a robust restorative framework that integrates RDP and CSP through an intersectional theoretical lens. The hope is that Interior Learning, LLC will grow into a viable hub of building teacher capacity for critical social consciousness and enactment of transformative learning models that humanize education through ILCs.

Next, as an emerging consulting service, Interior Learning is dedicated to training pre-service and in-service educators toward equitable teaching practices that target student success. IL centers the educator's intersectional identities and metacognitive skills. IL also employs a CCRM model that supports local schools, districts, and educational organizations intending to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in academic spaces.

Interior Learning, LLC promotes and helps foster intersectional learning communities through restorative dialogue, transformative adult learning, and culturally sustaining andragogy. This combination of teacher-centered learning models leads to teacher use of CSP, CCRM, and reinforces an intersectional culture of schooling. Interior learning, LLC utilizes the Developmental Spiral of Critical Consciousness (DSCC) to

131

address critical social and cultural consciousness among teachers (Gibson, 2021). The DCSS includes six competencies that contribute to the discourse community and promote restorative discipline practices through an intersectional lens. The DCSS is also a curriculum resource for schools and districts.

Lastly, Interior Learning, LLC provides a unique and multifaceted framework that offers a nuanced protocol for increased attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion training in the education industry and beyond. The researcher will also seek publication in appropriate peer-review journals such as the *Journal of Multicultural Education* and the *Contemporary Justice Review*.

Conclusion

This hermeneutic phenomenology fulfills its two-fold purpose. First, the study describes in-service educators' lived experiences as they pertain to diverse student populations and disciplinary practices. This study employs a qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological research design through a lens of critical race and transformative learning theories that integrate RDP and CSP as vehicles for building capacity for in-service educator's critical social consciousness. Second, the study examined the phenomenon of teacher awareness of what factors intersect and impact their decision-making about discipline and what practices might benefit an intersectional learning community. This research is valuable to school communities and educators looking for a progressive approach that will reach students and build educator's capacities for RDP and CSP. Ultimately, this research shows that increased learning and growth opportunities in critical social and cultural consciousness can help educators and school systems develop more transformative, culturally responsive, and sustaining school environments.

132

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Request to Conduct Research

Please submit the completed request form along with IRB Application/ Approval letter* or and data collection instrument (if applicable) to amiller@rhodesschool.org AND thutchinson@rhodesschool.org

Name of person making the request: Ashley Hill

School employee: YES   no:

Contact information: ashley_hill1@baylor.edu

Name of University or organization sponsoring your research: Baylor University

To consider your request, the following information is required:

What is the purpose of your research proposal?

  This hermeneutic phenomenology (interpretation of shared experiences) seeks to establish the need for a culturally sustaining learning community for educators that addresses teacher metacognitive strategies as they correlate to the successful integration of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and restorative dialogue and discipline (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

  This study explores the essence of the in-service educator's experiences and critical thinking processes. This study also focuses on the descriptions and lived experiences of teachers, as reflected in their responses to behavior challenges. The researcher questions the potential role that metacognitive thinking plays in a teacher's responses to learner behaviors and whether teachers' thoughts and feelings about themselves, their classrooms, and their school communities impact their decision making with learners of color (Clark et al., 2016; Donnor et al., 2018; Geiger, 2018; Martell & Stevens, 2017; Verdugo, 2002).

What data do you propose to collect at the participating school?

Observations of 3-5 teachers, approx. 2 per campus. The timeline will be from Late July 2020 to the spring semester of 2021.

How do you plan to collect this data?

Table A.1

The Timeline for Data Collection

Date	Procedure	Notes
Late July 2020/August 2020	Contact Principals and request consent to contact Participants Signed Consent form from principals and participants Share timeline and research intent and details Schedule and complete first interviews with participants	Upon Approval from the participating charter school
September 2020	Schedule and complete 2nd round of interviews with participants	Data analysis from the 1st interview will be conducted before 2nd interviews to determine themes and coding language
December 2020	Schedule and complete final interviews with participants	Data analysis from 2nd interviews will be conducted before 3rd interviews
Spring 2021	Interpretation of results and writing of findings	Chapters 4-5

Principal & Participant Consent Required: (Teacher names Omitted for confidentiality)

Channelview- Two Teachers

Living Word (Northwest) – Two Teachers

Humble- One Teacher

How do you plan to ensure the confidentiality of the identity of participants?

I will have detailed written consent forms for principal and participants to sign.

Have you received IRB approval from your university?

Yes, Baylor IRB has approved this research. I will provide the participating charter school with the approval documentation.

Please provide the name, contact information, and signature of your university supervisor, below.

Name of University Supervisor: Dr. Brooke. Earl Blevins

Contact information: brooke_blevins@baylor.edu

If approved, RPSA requests a copy of any report that utilizes the data from this agreement.

*IRB approval form/letter must be submitted to the participating charter school before the start of your data collection process.

Participating school APPROVAL STATUS:

Consent Granted: _X___

Consent contingent on further details:
WE are requesting:

Consent denied: ____

Admin Name: ____Ashley Miller_____

APPENDIX B

Participant Screening

Participants must:

1) Be an in-service teacher at the participating charter school in the past 1-2 years.
2) Have a working knowledge of Restorative Practices.
   - Attended and completed all RD training during the 2019-2020 school year.
3) Teach grade levels 2nd–8th.
4) Use the same language as the researcher (English).

APPENDIX C

Research Consent Form

Researcher's Name(s): Ashley Gibson

Project Title:

Toward an Intersectional Learning Community: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Exploring Describing K–12 Educator's Experiences with School Discipline

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This research is being

conducted to understand how a teacher's lived experiences inform their classroom

disciplinary models. When you are invited to participate in research, you have the right to

be informed about the study procedures so that you can decide whether you want to

consent to participation. This form may contain words that you do not know. Please ask

the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

You have the right to know what you will be asked to do so that you can decide

whether or not to be in the study. Your participation is <u>voluntary</u>. You do not have to be

in the study if you do not want to. You may refuse to be in the study, and nothing will

happen. If you do not want to continue to be in the study, you may stop at any time

without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research is to understand how teacher experiences impact classroom

decision making on student discipline, to help mitigate the number of students

disproportionately impacted by punitive discipline models.

How many participants are required for this study?

Approximately____3-5_____ people will take part in this study *at the participating*

charter school.

What am I being asked to do?

You will be asked to share your experiences with student behaviors, and how various

lived experiences and policies impact your role.

How long will I be in the study?

This study will take place from September 2020 to December 2020.

What are the benefits of being in the study?

Your participation will benefit the participating charter school directly, as well as inform

future foundational work on improving educational learning communities.

What are the risks of being in the study?

The risks included emotional discomfort associated with sharing vulnerabilities and

personal experiences in life and with students. A risk may exist that confidential

information may be disclosed by other group members in the participant group. This

study is not affiliated with any group and will not know that you are participating other

than the researcher and the campus principal.

What are the costs of being in the study?

There is no cost to you.

What other options are there?

Instead of being in this study, you may decline consent and participation.
You have the option of not participating in this study, and will not be penalized for your

decision.

Confidentiality

Information produced by this study will be stored in the investigator's file and

identified by a code number only. The code key connecting your name to specific

information about you will be kept in a separate, secure location. Information contained

in your records may not be given to anyone unaffiliated with the study in a form that

could identify you without your written consent, except as required by law.

Also, if photographs or recordings were taken during the study that could identify

you, then you must give special written permission for their use. In that case, you will be

allowed to view or listen, as applicable, to the photographs or recordings before you give

your permission for their use if you so request.

Will I be compensated for participating in the study?

You will receive no payment for taking part in this study.

What are my rights as a participant?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study.

You will also be informed of any new information discovered during this study that

might influence your health, welfare, or willingness to be in this study.

Who do I contact if I have questions, concerns, or complaints?

Please contact *Ashley Hill (Ashley_hill1@Baylor.edu)* if you have questions about the

research.

Who do I call if I have questions of problems?

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research and concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the research chair, Dr. Brooke E. Blevins at Brooke_Blevins@baylor.edu.

A copy of this Informed Consent form will be given to you before you participate in the research.

Signatures

I have read this consent form, and my questions have been answered. My signature below means that I do want to be in the study. I know that I can remove myself from the study at any time without any problems.

_____   _____

_____

Subject   Date

_____   _____

_____

Legal Guardian/Advocate/Witness (if required) *   Date

_____   _____

_____

Additional Signature (if required) (identify relationship to subject) *   Date

APPENDIX D

Semi Structured Interview Guide

After a brief introduction to this research study, the participants will be asked to describe their lived experiences as if to someone who had never taught their subject area and grade level.

The questions that frame the discussion will be the following:

1. What are the experiences of in-service educators at the participating charter school, who implement discipline practices to diverse student populations? And,
2. How do in-service educators in Houston, TX, describe their decision to implement various discipline practices?

The sub-question for this study includes:

3. What are the catalysts for disciplinary responses among K-12 educators?
4. What are some of the cultural and sociopolitical aspects impacting both teachers and learners, that help define responses to behaviors?
5. How do national, district, and administrative policies shape educator decisions on learner behaviors?

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