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Male Teacher Identity Development in Elementary School Settings

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Abstract

This study explored the perceptions of teachers who identify as male, including BIPOC male teachers, about the development of their identity as teachers in elementary settings working with young children. The percentage of male elementary school teachers is very low in a field overwhelmingly dominated by female teachers. Information about the teachers' attitudes were obtained via a questionnaire using a Likert scale and via small, focus group interviews. The study found that the participating male teachers' developed a teacher identity informed by what they felt were uniquely gendered characteristics as well as by what they felt were commonly held characteristics by teachers of young children regardless of gender. Male teachers integrated their male identity and intersectional identities and the associated perspectives and experiences into their teacher identities in ways that informed their role as a teacher of children in the primary grades. At the same time, the role gave the male teachers opportunities to express and integrate the nurture and care for young children as a central part of their identity as effective elementary school teachers. Overall, the study suggests that the development of male teacher identity in elementary settings is central to their sense of competence, confidence and satisfaction related to their work with young children.

Keywords: elementary education, male teachers, teacher diversity, teacher recruitment and retention

Introduction

This paper explores the perceptions of teachers who identify as male, including male of color teachers, about the development of their identity as teachers in elementary settings working with young children. How do they form an identity as an elementary school teacher? What characterizes that identity? The ubiquitous association of the female gender with a career as an elementary school teacher is reflected in the actual demographic data, showing that more than 80% of elementary teachers in the U.S. identify as female and White (BLS, 2020). Similar to nursing, teaching young children has traditionally been associated with the female gender in U.S. society. It is in this context, where it is assumed that the teacher is a White female, that males/male of color must develop their identities as elementary school teachers. By looking at how that identity develops and its characteristics, this paper highlights the integrated teaching identities of male/male of color and the resulting implications for job satisfaction teaching in elementary settings working with young children.

While the percentage of men who teach in primary settings is low, much can be learned by listening to the men who do teach young children. Due to the dearth of research in this area, this study sought out male/male of color elementary school teachers willing to share their thoughts and experiences. Listening to the males/male of color who currently teach young children increases knowledge and understanding of what it takes for men to develop an identity as a teacher of young children in this society.

More men in the workforce teaching young children could help to address the teacher shortage (Lambert, 2021; Sutcher, 2016). Nationwide, including California, there continues to be ongoing teacher shortages forcing states to consider opening pathways into the profession that knock down barriers (Gangone, 2021). Men/male of color could step into many of these jobs but one barrier appears to be a limited sense of

identity with being an elementary school teacher. In his series, *Making Sense*, for PBS Newshour, Paul Solman (2017) examined why men are staying away from careers in early childhood education, the preschool and primary grades, where the jobs are plentiful and increasing. Solman highlighted the stigma men may face when applying for and working at a job traditionally held by women as one of the key barriers to men pursuing teaching. He spoke with a former member of the Council of Economic Advisors, Betsey Stevenson, who made the point that even though the economy “gained nine million jobs in education and health services” many men would not consider taking a female-dominated job like being a home-health nurse or an elementary school teacher. She said, “We need to recognize that there are a lot of guys who feel stigmatized, when they take one of these jobs, like they're going in to do girls' work. And that feeling is a barrier for them.” This feeling was documented in the results of a survey of members of the National Association of the Education of Young Children (Nelson, 2002). In the survey, most (97.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that one of the main reasons men don't enter or stay in profession is the stereotypes they face; in particular, that teaching young children is women's work or that men are not caring. Men may also face suspicion for their motives (Crisp & King, 2017). Thus, overcoming these societal and cultural barriers is central to the work that the males/males of color engage in when considering a career teaching at the primary level. They must find a way to be able to see themselves in a job like this in order to choose to pursue it as a career.

In addition to addressing the teacher shortage, more men/men of color in the profession would help address needs for diversification of the workforce. In California, 64% of teachers in all grade levels are White while only about 25% of the student population is White non-Hispanic (CalEdFacts, 2020). Male students make up 51% of the total student population (EdData, 2018). These data reveal a persistent gap between the percentage of minority students and male students and the percentage of minority and male teachers in California. “We have a diversity problem across our teaching force, and we must do more to ensure that people of color can see themselves as teachers and are welcomed into the teaching profession” (Evans, 2019, p.1). The focus is on how to diversify the workforce to more closely match student demographics. National professional organizations are working to understand the causes of teacher shortages, in particular the barriers to recruiting teachers of color (AACTE, 2019). In addition to recruitment, researchers are working to understand the retention of minority teachers and reasons why higher numbers of minority teachers leave the field (Ingersoll & May, 2016). The primary goal of these efforts is “to diversify the teacher candidate pool and improve retention of those teachers we already have” (Proctor, 2018).

In order to diversify teacher demographics, it may be helpful to learn from males/males of color about their experiences in the realm of education and what they believe has led to their success. In his 2014 article, Wood states that more needs to be done to understand “gendered experiences of males historically underrepresented and underserved in education, particularly boys and men of color” (134). He stresses the “importance of having conversations with Black males about their educational experiences... to better understand the lived educational realities of Black male students” (785). Male/male of color educational experiences may impact their decision-making about pursuing a job in education. In an article by a Black male teacher, (Evans, 2019), the author argues that the educational experience of having Black male teachers in elementary school was instrumental to his willingness to consider a career in the teaching profession. “Seeing a diverse teaching force at the helm of the classroom showed me that teaching was a viable career for a Black student in Detroit, and they inspired me to follow my dream of becoming a teacher” (p. 1). Similarly, a study, which invited Latino teachers to talk about their experiences in the profession, found that being a role model was one of the main reasons that Latinos entered the field (Griffin, 2018). “[Latino] teachers noted that one of their key strengths was being a role model and showing students the possibilities life has to offer by highlighting their own success... serving as an example for students was actually the reason many teachers got into the field” (Griffin, 2018, p. 6). Listening to and learning from males/males of color who are elementary school teachers about their experiences and the factors influencing them as teachers may provide insights about what is needed to foster a more diverse workforce.

Growing as a male/male of color teacher at the primary level involves both developing pedagogical skillfulness as well as a professional teaching identity. Teachers develop their knowledge and skills through scholarship and practice in a process that is frequently described in stages, from novice teachers' beginning competence and tentative confidence to veteran teachers' skillful competence and firm confidence. Stages progress from "survival" to "consolidation" to "renewal" and, finally, to "maturity" (Katz, 1995; Sadker & Zittleman, 2018 p. 20). Teachers at each stage of development pay attention to different concerns. Where as novice teachers might initially be more focused on their own survival, they grow to become more concerned with their teaching and its impact and effectiveness to meet their students' learning needs (Fuller in Arduini-Van Hoose, 2021, p.1).

Many researchers have argued, that growing competence and confidence in knowledge and pedagogical skills is not the only aspect to teacher development. They assert that teachers' process of professional growth is at its core a process of identity development (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Friesen & Besley, 2013; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Rogers & Scott, 2008). "Learning to teach is an identity making process... [involving] teachers' overall conception of who they are as teachers, who they believe they are, and who they want to be as teachers" (Beijaard, 2019, p.1). Males/males of color must forge their identity in contrast to societal conceptions of teachers as female and White. In order to do this, they may use the developmental concepts of "ownership, sense-making and agency" (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017, p. 178). They start by understanding themselves and understanding what they bring with them into teaching. This includes their own personal male/male of color identity as well as their beliefs about what makes a good teacher. They continue by using a sense of agency to take control of their own development, "making sense of their practice by integrating what they know with their new experiences" (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017, p. 180).

Males/males of color bring their gendered intersectional identities and related educational experiences into their identity development as a teacher. Given that these identities are frequently not perceived as typical for teaching young children, it is particularly important to understand male/male of color elementary teachers own perceptions and attitudes about their role and experiences. Their insights can shed light on how they integrate their intersectional identities into their developing conceptions of themselves as elementary school teachers. Thus, this study focused on learning what it takes for males/males of color to develop an identity as a teacher of young children in this society and the implications for their job satisfaction as a career professional.

Methods

This mixed-methods study was conducted at a teacher credentialing program of a public university. Data for this study were collected over two years. Information about the male/male of color elementary school teachers' attitudes were obtained in two parts: a questionnaire using a Likert scale for quantitative data and small, focus group interviews for qualitative data.

Participants

Participants were males who graduated from one teacher credential program with a multiple subject teaching credential, authorizing them to teach elementary age students. 30 responded to the questionnaire. 2 identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 12 identified as Hispanic/Latino and 16 identified as White. Half of the participants had taught more than four years and half had taught 4 or less years (see Table 1). The 30 participants who responded to the questionnaire were invited to participate in the focus group interviews. 8 of these participants were interviewed. 3 identified as Hispanic/Latino and 5 identified as White. 6 had taught for more than 4 years and 2 had taught for 4 years or less (see Table 2).

Data Collection Method

All 30 participants completed the questionnaire, consisting of 7 items which focused on the participants' perceptions and experiences related being an elementary school teacher. The questionnaire used a 5-point scale which participants used to rate their level of agreement for each item with one of the response alternatives ranging from one to five: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. Responses to the questionnaire were analyzed for central tendency and range (see Table 3). Based on the results of the questionnaire, 5 open-ended interview questions were designed to obtain qualitative data that illustrated and further elaborated the quantitative findings. The open-ended responses

to the interview questions were reviewed and coded (see Table 4). The coded concepts within the responses were then used to describe 2 main themes.

Results

Data Analysis

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 7 items which focused on the participants' perceptions and experiences related being an elementary school teacher. The 30 respondents (N=30) rated their sense of career satisfaction, their teacher qualities, their role perceptions, their working relationships and their developing professional expertise. An analysis of this ordinal data was focused on "finding the central tendency (what most respondents believe) and the spread / dispersion of the responses (how strongly respondents agree with each other)" (Koustoulas, 2014). The central tendency was determined by finding the median for each item. The spread or range of the responses was determined by finding the Inter-Quartile Range (IQR) of each item (Koustoulas, 2014). The following table shows the median (Mdn) and the range (IQR) for each item (see Table 3).

Overall, the findings indicated a general consensus among male/male of color teachers' attitudes with regard to their careers as elementary school teachers. In a statement related to career satisfaction, respondents almost unanimously agreed (96.7%) that teaching elementary school is a fulfilling career for men/men of color. In response to statements related to the teacher qualities of males/males of color as elementary school teachers, respondents were in overwhelming agreement. 93.3% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed when asked if their own schooling experiences as male students influenced their thinking and actions for effective teaching. Also, 86.7% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that male/male of color teachers have distinct perspectives & life experiences than female teachers that are valuable for working with elementary age children. Finally, 86.7% strongly agreed or agreed that men possess the qualities needed to work with young children, such as being nurturing, patient & empathetic. In response to statements about role perceptions, responses were consistent. 86.7% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that male teachers have unique role expectations placed upon them (different from female teachers) for what they are expected to do as teachers. In statements related to working relationships, the vast majority of respondents (93.3%) were in agreement that communication and working relationships with other male teachers were beneficial to them. Finally, in statements related to developing professional expertise, respondents unanimously agreed (100%) that male/male of color elementary school teachers can design & implement effective learning activities for young children, both male & female, to support student learning & development.

Interviews

The interviews consisted of 5 open-ended questions related to the topics of career satisfaction, teacher qualities, role perceptions, working relationships, and professional expertise. They were designed to obtain qualitative data, in particular to obtain examples from participants own experience illustrating and further elaborating the quantitative findings from the questionnaire. Responses to the 5 open-ended questions were analyzed resulting in a total of 7 codes for all responses (see Table 4). Then, these were utilized to describe overarching themes.

The first three questions of the interview explored the male/male of color teachers' attitudes related to their career satisfaction, the value of their lived experience, both personal and professional, to their work as elementary school teachers, and their developing professional expertise. Questions One, Two and Three had 4 codes: (1) relationships, (2) role model, (3) identity match, and (7) nature of the profession. The top reasons given for their sense of career satisfaction included their relationships with students and their position as a role model. Participants reported they were very satisfied with the match between the experience they brought with them into teaching and the work of teaching. In addition, they were very satisfied with nature of the profession which allowed them developed their professional expertise in rewarding ways. When questioned about value of their life experience as males/males of color for their teaching qualities, all of them indicated its importance in understanding constructive relationships with their students and in determining how to be an effective role model. In addition, participants reported that the match between their male/male of color experience and their work as teachers was essential to their

sense of competence and confidence teaching young children. They reported that the very nature of the profession itself working with young children aligned with the preferences and interests that they brought with them into teaching. Finally, all participants indicated that their professional expertise and successes were most directly a result of the relationships that they had with their students and the positive influence they had on their lives as role models. They also described the multiple opportunities that they had to thrive as teachers given the match with their desire for autonomy and creativity in their work and the nature of profession itself allowing teachers to take self-initiative in multiple ways.

The remaining two questions of the interview explored the male/male of color teachers' attitudes related to their working relationships and the perceptions and expectations they experienced in the school context. Questions Four and Five had 4 codes: (1) relationships, (2) gendered perceptions/expectations, (3) identity match vrs mismatch, and (4) gendered communications. When asked about the unique experiences that men/men of color had in a field dominated by White women, participants indicated that relationships with their colleagues, students' parents and students was the primary source of their unique experiences. They explained that they constantly worked to understand how their colleagues, students' parents and students perceived them as male/male of color teachers differently and/or similarly to teacher of other genders. They reported learning the expectations that they frequently faced in the school setting resulted from the fact that they identified as male/male of color. Participants indicated that these unique perceptions and expectations sometimes matched and sometimes did not match their own sense of identity as a male/male of color and their sense of who they were as a teacher. Finally, when asked about their working relationships, most participants stated that their professional relationships regardless of gender were productive and rewarding. However, participants also noted an extra benefit of communicating with other male/male of color teachers. These gendered communications gave them opportunities to talk with one another about their unique experiences within the context of their professional work lives.

Themes. Overall, 2 themes captured the coded concepts expressed by the male/male of color teachers related to teacher identity. 1) the centrality of relationships to their teacher identity 2) the impact of gendered perceptions and expectations on their teacher identity.

Theme One described how relationships were at the core of their teacher identity. Participants' responses pointed out they considered their ability to build relationships central to their work as elementary school teachers. Their relationships with their students was a defining characteristic of their teacher identity. *"Being able to educate starts with relationships. I make connections with kids to build those relationships. I have had experiences in life that make it easier for children to relate to me and build those relationships."* These men/men of color chose teaching young children as a career because relationships would be central to their work. For all of the participants interviewed, teaching was a second career that they had chosen specifically because it gave them the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young people. *"I changed careers to go into teaching to leave a legacy in this world. I felt that doing something positive in this world is to help young children."*

Participants' responses also revealed that an inherent part of these relationships was being a male/male of color role model for their students. *"As a teacher, I am a male role model for my students, a consistent male role model who is with them throughout the day."* The men of color shared that their cultural funds of knowledge gave them the means to connect with their minority students. *"I have a variety of cultural experiences that I consider valuable. I grew up in a family that was very close. I can encourage that same closeness with my students. As a classroom you are a sort of family."* The participants interviewed believed that they were a positive influence in their students' lives, both male and female, particularly those children who lacked male role models in their personal lives. *"Many of the students I work with come from single parent home and I am a male role model for them."* They explained that they frequently drew on their own personal experiences as boys/boys of color in educational settings which gave them a nuanced understanding of their male students' emotions and needs. *"It's just understanding the mentality of a boy, crazy energy that is almost uncontrollable. We have to let the child experience the world in their own way. To be themselves."* In addition, the participants shared that they drew upon the "father figure" aspects of being a male role model to be nurturing, patient and empathetic caregivers for the young children in their classrooms. *"I see a lot of emotion pour out of the boys. They are*

communicating 'I am angry and I am going to be angry all day.' I really understand this and I can respond, 'Well you don't need to do that just come talk to me.' Overall, the participants expressed a deep sense of fulfillment in developing these relationships and serving as male/male of color role models for their young students at a critical time in their child development. *"It is amazing to see how the students I had in my classroom are still being successful even years later. To know that my positive influence on these students early on in their lives as a male role model, made a difference in their lives going forward."* They linked their expertise as teachers with their proficiency at developing meaningful connections with their students that supported their students' academic development and success in life.

Theme Two described how gendered perceptions and expectations impacted their teacher identity. Participants' responses pointed out they considered gendered perceptions and expectations a significant part of their experience as a teacher. These were placed on them due the fact that they were males/males of color in a position typically held by White women. They expressed that part of their development as teachers was learning how to deal with the mismatch of these perceptions to their own sense of self as males/males of color and as teachers. To begin with, the participants felt the need to push back on societal perceptions that teaching young children is "women's work." They expressed their own belief that it is an appropriate career choice for men/men of color. *"There is a place for males in this setting. The stereotypes that men can't be in that role has to be broken."* They also pushed back against perceptions that they lacked the ability to provide developmentally appropriate instruction for young children. For example, when he was first hired, one participant became aware that he was being perceived in this way and felt he had to prove himself to his female teacher colleagues. *"A perception was maybe my room setup wasn't going to be as pretty and decorated because I'm a man. When I realized that's what they thought, I worked to show them and on purpose I made a super cute poster."*

The participants shared that they were sometimes surprised by and did not always understand the perceptions and expectations that were placed on them by virtue of the fact that they were males in early childhood and elementary contexts. They explained that they had to work to understand them and figure out how to deal with them. One recurring example was the perception by many of their female teacher colleagues they they were natural disciplinarians. *"There is this expectation that 'oh, discipline will be easy for you since you are a man.' Not really. The students act out just as they would with anyone else and I have to figure out how to help them just the same."* All the participants had in common the experience of being expected to serve as disciplinarians for the behavior of males students in the school. *"There are oftentimes when people ask me, to speak with students because they perceive that students respond to me as a man differently. If kids in other classes are misbehaving they may be sent to my class because I am a male teacher."* Participants expressed that in general they felt that these perceptions and expectations did not match with their own conception of themselves as males/males of color nor as teachers. Most reported never having thought of themselves as disciplinarians before. In addition, many of them did not see this as part of their teacher identity. Rather, they saw dealing with the behavior of students, male or female, as part of their developing skill set of being teacher, just the same as their female colleagues. They expressed that they navigated these identity mismatches by coming to understanding them and by growing their skills to be effective with any student placed in their care.

Discussion

For males/males of color to consider teaching elementary school, they need to be able to see themselves in that role. The overwhelmingly female and White demographics of elementary school teachers can present challenges for men/men of color to see themselves as teachers of young children. Nevertheless, the teachers in this study show that they can. Listening to the males/males of color who currently teach young children highlighted what it takes for men to develop an identity as a teacher of young children in this society. Like all teachers, male/male of color teachers go through stages of professional growth and a central part of that process is the development of their teacher identity. This research shows that males/males of color can, and indeed have already shown that they can, develop an identity as a teacher of young children as part of their process of professional growth. This study provided information on the nature of that identity development from the men/men of color who shared their experiences as elementary school teachers.

The teachers in this study acted with a sense of agency to control their own identity development as teachers. They centered their relationships with their students as the defining characteristic of their teacher identity and found it to be the most satisfying and significant aspect of their work as teachers of young children. They worked to make sense of what they experienced as male/male of color teachers in order to grow as professionals toward who they wanted to be as teachers (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017). Learning to deal with the perceptions and expectations that were mismatches with their own sense of self helped them to clarify who they wanted to be as teachers who are male/male of color. They worked to develop a clearer sense of their teacher identity, of how they saw themselves in relation to their role, and how they wanted to define their role in the lives of the young students in the school setting.

Developing an identity as a teacher of young children at the elementary level, the participants in this study tapped their gendered experiences of being male/male of color and incorporated them into their teaching roles as a central part of the process of defining who they were teachers. The teachers in this study embraced uniquely gendered characteristics within their conception of themselves as teachers, drawing on their own lived experiences as males/males of color. They embraced the aspects of their male/male of color identities that deepened their understanding and effectiveness as teachers. For example, their relationships with their students were shaped by the integrating aspects of their male/male of color experience and funds of knowledge into their role as teacher, particularly by acting as a male role model. They believed that their own journeys through the education system served as helpful examples for their own male students of color, showing that they, too, could succeed in school and in life (Griffin, 2018). At the same time, the teachers in this study, learned to navigate the perceptions and expectations placed upon them due to being male/male of color in a setting demographically dominated by White females. Their teaching identities incorporated an understanding of themselves as male teachers that enabled them to respond to these pressures in productive ways.

Thus, through the development of a healthy teacher identity, they overcame societal and cultural barriers in order to redefine a career teaching young children as a job that included men/men of color, a job that they could see themselves doing and doing well. Overall, these male/male of color teachers learned to integrate their own intersectional identities into their identities as teachers. They took ownership of all that they brought with them into teaching, including their conceptions of themselves as men/men of color as well as their beliefs about what makes a good teacher. As a result, they had a sense of confidence in their own professional competence and agency to develop their professional expertise as elementary school teachers. This confidence, expressed in a positive identity with teaching in early childhood and primary settings, led to their sense of satisfaction with their career.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Given the problems related to the teacher shortages and lack of diversity of the teacher workforce, males/males of color can step into careers in teaching in early childhood education and the primary grades. Successful recruitment and retention of males/males of color hinges on understanding that males/males of color do not have to give up their intersectional and gendered identities in order to teach young children. In fact, integrating who they are as males/males of color into their teacher identity is central to their success as teachers. It is recommended that professional development programs across the stages of teacher development include a focus on facilitating teacher identity development that is sensitive to intersectional identities of males/males of color. Supporting men/men of color to find identity matches with teaching young children, such as being a male role model or father figure, and helping them understand and handle any identity mismatches can lead to a sense of confidence and satisfaction as a teacher. Ultimately, the process of teacher identity development is one of the most important factors leading to men/men of color experiencing a fulfilling, meaningful and satisfying career teaching young children.

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Table 1 *Questionnaire Participant Demographics*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% of participants</i>
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	6.6
Hispanic/Latino	12	40
White	16	53.3
Taught >4 yrs	15	50
Taught 4 or less yrs	15	50

Table 2 *Interview Participant Demographics*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% of participants</i>
Hispanic/Latino	3	37.5
White	5	62.5
Taught >4 yrs	6	75
Taught 4 or less yrs	2	25

Table 3 *Questionnaire Response Data*

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>IQR</i>
Teaching young children at the elementary school level is a fulfilling career for men/men of color.	5	1
My own positive & negative school experiences as a male student/ male student of color influence my thinking and actions for being an effective elementary teacher.	5	1
Male elementary school teachers have different perspectives & life experiences than female teachers that are valuable for working with elementary age children.	4.5	1
Men/men of color possess the qualities needed to work with young children, i.e., nurturing, patient & empathetic.	5	1
Male elementary school teachers have unique role expectations placed on them (different from female teachers) for what they are expected to do as teachers.	5	1
Male elementary school teachers benefit from having working relationships with other male elementary school teachers.	5	1
I can design & implement effective learning activities for young children, both male & female, to support my students' learning & development.	5	0

Table 4 *Interview Analysis Results*

<i>Question</i>	<i>Codes Assigned</i>
1 Career satisfaction	Relationships, Role model, Identity match, Nature of the profession
2 Teacher qualities	Relationships, Role model, Identity match, Nature of the profession
3 Developing expertise	Relationships, Role model, Identity match, Nature of the profession
4 Role perceptions & expectations	Relationships, Gendered perceptions/expectations Identity match vrs mismatch
5 Working relationships	Relationships, Gendered Communication

Supporting African American Men in Achieving Senior Level Administrative Leadership Positions at Post-Secondary Institutions

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Introduction

In this country, African American men struggle to gain recognition and opportunity when seeking noteworthy leadership positions in post-secondary institutions (Jackson, 2008). For centuries, Black males as students, professionals, and educators have been marginalized (Brockenbrough, 2015) and deemed undeserving when compared to their counterparts (Howard, 2013). Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, African Americans males' only opportunities in attaining senior administrative leadership positions in higher education were at HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) (Jackson & Daniels, 2007). In the 1960s, African American administrators at predominantly White institutions (PWI's) were appointed to positions relating to affirmative action programs, federally funded student service programs in particular those geared toward African Americans such as Upward Bound, Veterans' programs, and Trio programs, and as consultants for minority relations (Jackson et al., 2007). There has been systemic modifications to allow this dynamic to change but not to a significant degree. African American men leaders are presently at PWIs (Predominately White Institutions), HBCUs, and community colleges as either faculty or administrators. Even though African American men can hold leadership roles, they are often not afforded the opportunity on many campuses (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017).

In higher education, the data on Black male professionals at universities and colleges is hard to obtain outside of faculty rank (Turner et al., 2017). The literature and research relating to Black men in higher education appear to focus more on Black men as faculty and not administrators (Turner et al., 2017; Whitford, 2020). There are limited amounts of research available placing emphasis on the obstacles, pathways, and successes of African American men in upper-level administrative positions in higher education (Whitford, 2020).

Leadership Roles of African American Males in Higher Education

The American Council of Education (ACE, 2019) released the 2017-18 report from The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) on surveys of administrators, professionals, and staff in higher education. As anticipated, Whites represented the majority of administrative positions (top executive officers, senior officers, academic deans, head of divisions, and associate and assistant deans) in US higher education institutions. As for representation of college presidents, 83.2 % identified as White, (17% women and 83% men), 7.6% identified as Black women, and 9.0% identified as Black men. Rolle et al. (2000) noted in their study the possibility of Black [men] becoming presidents or vice presidents at post-secondary institutions is bleak due to the lack of Black [men] entering the higher education pipeline, especially in higher education administration. Ninety percent of academic administrative positions such as chairs, deans, and vice presidents are represented by White males; Black men represent 5%; and the remaining 5% represent another race (Jackson & Flowers, 2003). In the senior-administrative level at the community college, 16% of people of color identified as directors. Wright et al. (2006) indicated at HBCUs, more than half of administrator and staff positions are African Americans and 16% are White (Jackson, 2001). Research shows that despite Black men having the appropriate educational background, the presence of African American men in higher education remains stagnant (Whitford, 2020). Lewis (2007) also cited that African American men can receive

training for senior-level positions but often trying to gain access to these trainings is blocked (Lewis, 2007).

Marginalization of African American Males in Supervisory Positions

African American males are overrepresented in lower-level administrative positions. Too much of the time, they are relegated to and placed in departments (i.e., ethnic studies, humanities, social sciences, or federally-mandated programs) considered less prominent and prestigious in higher education (Awe, 2006). African American males are also given “unusual and prestigious-sounding titles” (Wright et al., 2006, p. 60) that have no power or authority in making management decisions (Jackson et al., 2007; Wright et al., 2006); thereby, creating a false perception of opportunities available to African Americans (Wright et al., 2006). Lewis (2007) discovered most African American male administrators in higher education are strategically placed in Student Affairs. According to Lewis (2007), Student Affairs is the only department within the institution where Black male administrators maintain authority. The chances of upward mobility to presidency are slim for Black men if they are not working in the academic or financial areas (Lewis, 2007). “In higher education administration, those working in academic affairs are usually considered for promotions to the executive level by climbing the ladder for advancement most often from professor to chairman, to dean, to vice president, to president (as cited by Moore & Sagaria, 1982) (Lewis, 2007, p. 27).

Experiences of African American Males as Senior Administrators in Higher Education

Cole (1986) refers to the decline of Black [male] educators as endangered species and are at risk of being eliminated from the education systems of this country. Often African American men who are pursuing senior-executive administrative positions are viewed as not being a fit, not qualified, or not fitting the profile of the institution (Gasman, Abiola & Travers, 2015). Moses (1993) contends African American male administrators are hired as tokens, feel isolated on campus, often feel their perspectives are challenged or ignored, and sense their authority and leadership challenged. Turner and Grauerholz’s (2007) study confirmed similar experiences of Black men as professionals in higher education along with cultural taxation and their credentials being questioned. In addition to these barriers, African American men in higher administrative positions also face racism (Turner et al, 2007), stereotypes, identity issues (Harper, 2004), extra duties (Awe, 2006), lack of support (Jackson et al, 2003), and lack of professional development (Turner et al, 2017).

Black men who are in senior-executive administrative positions are often considered the “exceptions or oddities” (Ladson-Billings, 2011, p. 9). Society proclaimed their exceptionality to everyone, especially their peers, and reiterate the notion of how these individuals are “special” (Ladson-Billings, 2011, p. 9). Ladson-Billings (2011) mentioned Black men are singled out as the exception or special. That alone causes alienation from other Blacks, being ignored by the rest of the Black population which in turn leaves them without support or social moorings. African American men being one of a kind in certain administrative positions along with having the responsibility as being a spokesperson for the underrepresented can cause a burden and stress for these professionals (Turner et al., 2017).

African American males are also known to work in unwelcoming, unaccommodating, and unsupportive environments (Awe, 2006; Jackson, 2008). They are over-worked, experience lack of respect, isolated, and endure disparate treatment because of their gender and race (Turner et al., 2017; Webster, 2019).

Despite the challenges and barriers faced by Black male administrators, some are overcoming obstacles and reaching senior-level administrative positions. However, the differential treatment, access, and power over African American men continue to limit opportunities for them in the United States (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000). In order for African American men to be successful administrators, it is encumbered on institutions to make a commitment to diversity, increase the pool of candidates through mentorship and professional organizations, and highlight the visibility of African American men in leadership positions at the institution (Cruse, 1994).

Lack of Administrative Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education

Administrative diversity is a term that is not often focused on in higher education. Jackson (2001) describes administrative diversity as administrators from an underrepresented racial and ethnic group who

occupy certain types of positions at a college or university. When the term *diversity* is used, it is often associated or identified with the student body at the institution. Mission statements in colleges, departments, and units include diversity and inclusion in describing the institution's intentions of promoting diversity and inclusion for students, staff, and faculty. While efforts are being made to increase diversity and inclusion for the student body, those same efforts are not present in senior administrative leadership. African American men feel institutions are reluctant to change (Jackson, 2011) and send mixed messages in promoting diversity and inclusion (Turner, 2017), thereby creating a hindrance for African American men to attain senior level administrative positions.

Although diversity and inclusiveness are many times considered paramount of the institution, "valuing diversity does not equate to a more ethnically diverse faculty [and staff]" (Fujii, 2014, p. 903). Institutions claiming to value diversity but do not engage in the practice or set forth an action plan to signify its commitment are known as having an "intellectual commitment" or "institutional diversity commitment" (Fujii, 2014, p. 911). Reese (2020) concluded the use of diversity and inclusion are often used by institutions to avoid responsibility in dismantling racism and systems of oppression. Miley, Chang, & Antonio (2005) explained PWIs have a history of exclusion rather than inclusion causing impacts on the racial dynamic on its campuses. Institutions recognize the need for diversity in upper-level positions in higher education. That need is not met because of the fear and resistance of organizational change and institutions "have not identified steps needed to develop a supportive climate for the task" (Jackson, 2011, p. 43).

It can be assumed that higher education is a product and a reflection of society's ideology and assumptions of racism (Fujii, 2014). Higher education in America is rooted in privilege and exclusion that are designed to promulgate the values, cultures, and ambitions of particular groups (Brown II, 2020). Pittman (2012) revealed racial oppression exists in institutional facets (i.e., workload, race-based service, and representation) within higher education. He indicated African American [men] are confined to race-specific roles and expectations, they are often marginalized and received inadequate mentoring.

A Disappointing Outlook for African American Male Administrators

There is little effort made by upper-level management to encourage African American males to pursue administrative leadership positions in US higher education (Webster, 2019). Ladson-Billings (2011) described society's relationship with Black men as a "love-hate relationship" (p. 9). The role and pathways of Black male administrators have been largely overlooked.

Higher education institutions may use caution in minimizing or downplaying tenets of diversity and inclusion within its administrative leadership decision-making. The lack of diversity and inclusion can resemble a form of desegregation and present issues that institutions faced in the past (Egerton, 1974). The representation of people of color characterizes success for all cultures and genders (Whitehead, 2017). Not only is it important for African American men to be represented in administrative leadership positions, but it is equally important they have the power and authority to make management decisions like their counterparts (Jackson et al, 2007; Wright et al, 2006).

Flowers et al. (2008) indicated a critical shortage of people of color in academic leadership positions in post-secondary institutions. Institutions have made progress to increase the presence of people of color in administrative positions (Flowers et al., 2008). However, a critical concern should be on creating a campus climate that is supportive of African American men in order to retain and increase quality African American administrators (Jackson et al., 2003). It is essential to understand, appreciate, and see the value with having a diverse higher education environment.

Conclusion

If higher education institutions are serious about making conscious modifications to diversify the administrative leadership staff by including more African American male administrators, the recommended pathway is to: "(1) develop a specialized curriculum at the undergraduate level that will prepare students for a career in higher education administration; (2) facilitate a career mentor program that grooms junior and senior management employees for higher level positions by offering trainings, a peer-to-peer mentoring network, and opportunities to gain additional professional certifications; (3) promote wage equity between minority administrators and their White male and female peers; and (4)

provide opportunities to attend leadership development programs outside of the administrator's institution (Wolfe et al., 2013, p. 4)". Scott (2016) also recommends post-secondary institutions to provide the same attention given to diversifying student and faculty to diversifying senior administration. One way to accomplish this recommendation is to incorporate efforts to increase diversity recruitment and retention into strategic plans which are used to help guide organizations in their future endeavors (Webb, 2017). Finally, encourage Black male faculty and graduate students to contemplate administrative careers and to seriously consider Black male administrators from HBCUs as viable candidates for administrative hiring.

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A CASE STUDY OF INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT DURING AND AFTER A TITLE VII LAWSUIT

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Introduction

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) prohibits employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, and religion. In general, Title VII applies to employers with fifteen or more employees, including federal, state, and local governments. When the act was amended in 1972, Title VII became applicable to employees of public universities or colleges (Equal Employment Opportunity Act, 1972).

Traditionally, courts in the United States have avoided intrusion into academic decisions of colleges and universities with scholars arguing that decisions affecting the rights of persons within academic institutions should be subject to minimal scrutiny by the courts (Pacholski, 1992). Law firms have reported an increase in academic clients claiming discrimination based on violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in the promotion and tenure processes (Case Law Firm, 2016). Even with the increase in cases alleging Title VII violations, academic employees still face an uphill battle in courts across the country. However, it is apparent that when the complexities of university promotion and tenure intersect with institutional policy and practices, often, the results are accusations of civil rights violations, controversy, and the high probability of conflict.

“Because the academic department is the foundational unit of U.S. universities, conflict in that setting is both theoretically and practically important” (Hearn & Anderson, 2002, p. 503). This study examined the experiences of a university department chair while leading his department through the aftermath of a promotion and tenure process gone awry and the lawsuit which followed. Research has “identified three major domains of organizational conflict: relationship-based, task-based, and process-based” (Hearn & Anderson, 2002, p. 504). The data collected will be analyzed through this theoretical lens.

The review of the experiences of departmental leaders (especially the department chair) during controversy-prone intersections related to allegations of discrimination would contribute to a better understanding of the issues and challenges (legal and institutional) that can be encountered during social-political change or unrest. This better understanding would provide a basis for recommendations for managing conflict, promoting improved policies or practices, and ultimately decreasing the probability of conflict, including lawsuits, in the future.

Factual Background

Rachel Tudor, Ph.D. was a tenure track assistant professor in the Department of English, Humanities and Languages at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Her professional interests included American and Native American Literature along with other related topics. When hired, Dr. Tudor lived and presented as a male. Three years later, Dr. Tudor informed the university director of human resources, that she would immediately begin presenting, dressing, and living as a woman. A short time later, Dr. Tudor sent a letter

to each faculty member in her department informing them of her transition, announcing her new first name, and requesting them to use her correct name with corresponding pronouns.

At the appropriate time, Tudor submitted credentials via portfolio for consideration in the tenure and promotion process. Her portfolio was reviewed and approved by a committee of her peers. The department chair, at that time, also approved and signed the portfolio.

Two days prior to signing the professional portfolio, the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences wrote two official memos. One memo, to the department chair, stated the dean's intention to recommend Tudor be denied promotion and tenure and recommended that she be given a one-year, terminal appointment for the following academic year. The second memo was sent to the vice president. This memo was also dated two days prior to signing the portfolio of Tudor. The dean outlined concerns regarding the lack of publications and a concern regarding the lack of recommendations from tenured faculty members in her department. The dean also cited the lack of justification for their recommendation for promotion and tenure from the department chair and the review committee.

A few weeks after reviewing the Tudor portfolio, the vice president provided a one sentence memo to Tudor informing her that he would not be recommending her for promotion or tenure. A courtesy copy of that memo was sent to the dean, the department chair, and the chair of the promotion and tenure review committee.

Shortly after receiving the memo from the university vice president, Tudor wrote a letter to the university president requesting a hearing before the faculty appellate committee. Tudor quoted policy in her memo and requested that reasons for denial of tenure or promotion should be communicated to the faculty. Further, she alleged no rationale had been provided to her. Ultimately, the faculty appellate committee did meet and recommended that Tudor be provided a detailed explanation of the factors that led to the recommendations for denial of tenure and promotion from the dean and vice president.

Later that semester, Tudor was informed of the recommendation from the faculty appellate committee, and that the president had instructed the vice president to provide the information requested by Tudor. After two weeks, the vice president wrote a letter to Tudor outlining perceived issues in the research/scholarship and service portions of the portfolio. However, this letter was not mailed until six weeks after it was written.

Prior to being provided a rationale for the recommendations to deny tenure and promotion, Tudor was summoned to the dean's office. At that time, the possible withdrawal of her application for tenure and promotion was discussed. The dean apparently wanted a decision regarding the withdrawal quickly. Tudor, not knowing about the decision of the faculty appellate committee, refused to withdraw the application without a rationale for the adverse recommendations.

Dr. Tudor filed a formal complaint alleging discrimination in the promotion and tenure process afforded to her. She filed the complaint with the affirmative action officer at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. On the same date, she filed a grievance with the president of the university alleging improprieties and due process violations during the tenure and promotion process. Tudor alleged the dean threatened her in an attempt to have her withdraw her application for tenure and promotion; that there was a calculated, hostile attitude demonstrated by a pattern of poor and unfair communication; and that the president and vice president lacked the expertise to judge the merits of her scholarly contributions outlined in her professional portfolio.

A week later, Tudor filed a complaint with the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The following month, the Office of Civil Rights informed Tudor that her complaint was being referred to the EEOC for investigation of her allegations of employment discrimination based on sex under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Review of Title VII Case Law

Title VII was enacted into law in 1964 as a part of the Civil Rights Act. By the early 1970s, challenges to interpretation were making their way into the federal courts. Early federal court decisions were not sympathetic to those in the LGBTQ community. The United States Supreme Court's decision in *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins* (1989) led to a shift in some federal courts' interpretation of Title VII protections.

Pre-Price Waterhouse Case Law

Case law prior to Price Waterhouse generally accepted a narrow interpretation of the phrase “because of . . . sex” when analyzing Title VII sex discrimination cases. (Mayers, Harvey, & Williams, 2021, p2). In *Voyles v. Ralph Davies Medical Center* (1975), Charles Voyles, a technician for the Ralph Davies Medical Center, told his supervisor of his intention to undergo sexual reassignment surgery. Voyles was terminated. Voyles admitted the possibility of adverse reactions because of his new gender and the Center admitted the reason for Voyles’s termination was due to the sexual reassignment. The court stated that in Title VII “neither legislative history nor case law “indicate that ‘sex’ discrimination was meant to embrace ‘transsexual’ discrimination” (Voyles v. Davies, 1975, p. 457). The court added, that “Situations involving transsexuals, homosexuals, or bi-sexuals were simply not considered, and from this void the Court is not permitted to fashion its own judicial interdictions” (Voyles v. Davies, p. 457).

Audra Sommers (formerly known as Timothy Cornish) was hired by Budget Marketing, Incorporated, in April of 1980 (Sommers v. Budget Marketing, Inc., 1982). Two days later, Sommers’ employment was terminated because Budget believed she misrepresented her gender (claiming to be female) during her interviews. The company claimed Sommers created disruptions in their business because some female employees threatened to quit if Sommers used the women’s restroom. The district court asserted, “because Congress has not shown an intention to protect transsexuals, we hold that discrimination based on one’s transsexualism does not fall within the protective purview of the [Civil Rights] Act” (Sommers v. Budget Marketing, 1982, p. 750).

Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins

In 1989, the Supreme Court’s holding in *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins* ushered in a change of judicial interpretation of “discrimination on the basis of sex”. Ann Hopkins was a manager with the firm of Price Waterhouse for five years when the partners proposed her for partnership. In 1982, Hopkins was the only woman proposed for partnership. Hopkin’s application for partnership was “held” for subsequent consideration the following year (Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins, 1989, p. 233).

In the record before the trial court, Hopkins was described as “an outstanding professional,” and a person of “strong character, independence and integrity.” Hopkins had secured a \$25 million dollar contract from the U.S. Department of State was described as performing “virtually at the partner level.” However, the record before the court included comments such as Hopkins “overcompensated for being a woman.” One partner advised her to “walk more femininely, talk more femininely, dress more femininely, wear make-up, have her hair styled, and wear jewelry” (Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins, 1989, pp. 230-235).

The Supreme Court focused on what standard of proof should be required of Price Waterhouse in order to avoid liability. Lower courts held that Price Waterhouse had to provide clear and convincing evidence that absent the influence of Hopkins’s gender, partners at Price Waterhouse would have reached the same decision regarding application for partnership (Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins, 1989, p. 230). The U.S. Supreme Court rejected the lower courts’ decision. The Supreme Court held that the appropriate standard for liability required Price Waterhouse to prove “by a preponderance of the evidence that it would have made the same decision in the absence of the discrimination” (Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins, 1989, p. 228).

The Supreme Court’s announcement of the appropriate burden of proof included a discussion of sexual stereotype. According to the Court, “. . . the placement by Price Waterhouse of “sex stereotyping” in quotation marks throughout its submitted brief seems to insinuate either that such stereotyping was not present in the case or that it lacked legal relevance. The court reject both possibilities and stated “. . . we are beyond the day when an employer could evaluate employees by assuming or insisting that they match the stereotype associated with their group.” (Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins, 1989, pp. 250-251).

Post-Price Waterhouse Case Law

A federal district court’s decision in *Schroer v. James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress* (2008) broadened the interpretation of Title VII’s protection. Schroer, a transsexual, sued the Library of

Congress claiming discrimination based on sex. Schroer applied for a job analyzing documents in an area in which he served with distinction in the armed forces.

After accepting the job, Schroer disclosed that she would be presenting completely as a female named Diane and not David. After being hired, a member of the hiring committee, Charlotte Preece, asked whether Schroer's name should be changed on her application materials and raised concerns about Schroer's ability to obtain security clearances necessary for the job. Schroer responded that this was not an issue as several of her transgendered friends had obtained security clearances. Schroer then shared pictures of herself dressed as a woman. Preece informed Schroer that she had given a lot to think about. (Schroer v. Billington, 2008, p. 295-297). The job offer was rescinded.

Schroer filed suit against the Library of Congress in federal district court, claiming discrimination on the basis of sex. The court upheld Schroer's claim on two points. First, the Library's employment decision discriminated against Schroer because of a stereotypical concept of a woman which triggered legal protection for Schroer as determined in the Supreme Court's decision in *Price Waterhouse*. Secondly, Schroer was discriminated against "literally because . . . of sex." (Schroer v. Billington, 2008, p. 300).

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to generate a rich description of the events at one university that resulted in a Title VII lawsuit in federal court and to formulate recommendations to assist faculty and administrators who are charged with the responsibility of carrying out the promotion and tenure process at other universities.

Case study research usually requires evidence to be derived from multiple data sources (Stake, 1995). A case study approach was utilized because the "action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs" naturally (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 5). To this end, the researchers in this case conducted three semi-structured interviews with the professor who was a colleague to Tudor at the time of her attempted application for promotion and tenure and who subsequently was named her department chair. The first interview focused on the history of the department prior to Dr. Tudor's application for tenure and promotion, the second focused on the promotion and tenure process for Dr. Tudor and events leading up to trial. The final interview focused on the trial and its aftermath.

A second source of data were documents filed during the case itself. From discovery through post-trial motions, over 340 documents were filed with the court. These documents included the original complaint, the defendants' responses, motions, responses to motions, jury instructions, and post-trial motions from each party. A third source of data was internally produced documents which included university promotion and tenure policies, and various memos, emails, and letters between Dr. Tudor and university officials.

Transcripts from the three interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative method. Court and internal documents were subjected to content analysis. Data from these sources were triangulated to assist in either providing further affirmation or disaffirmation within the data. From this analysis, four themes emerged.

Findings

In this study, the researchers analyzed dozens of university documents related to tenure and promotion as well as many documents produced during the legal proceedings that ensued. In addition, transcripts from three semi-structured interviews conducted with the department chair were analyzed. Using constant comparative analysis, several important themes emerged. These themes are the impact on the department chair and his work, impact on the climate of the department, the lack of standards for promotion and tenure decisions, and the tension in the relationship between the department and university administration.

Impact on Department Chair:

At the time Dr. Tudor first applied for promotion to the rank of associate professor and for the grant of tenure, another faculty member served the department as chair. The study's interviewee assumed the chair's position the following year, and thus had the responsibility of seeing the department through the

experience of the internal review and grievance processes as well as discovery and litigation. The interviewee who had served as a member of Dr. Tudor's promotion and tenure review committee, and now serving as department chair, found himself on the defensive when interviewed by attorneys from both sides. When interviewed by Dr. Tudor's legal counsel, the new department chair reported that seemingly irrelevant personal data was sought: "Oh, they wanted to know names and my son, my stepsons, who I was married to, all kinds of weird stuff."

Further, the quality and legitimacy of his own scholarly work was called into question, leading to an awkward moment during a discovery interview:

And at one point they were asking me about a proceedings article I had published about critical literacy and I was using Henry, Shakespeare's Henry VI, Part 2 which has a slight, a peasant revolt, led by Jack Cade and that's where you get that famous line, "the first thing we do is we kill all the lawyers." So, I'm sitting at a table with lawyers, right, a table with seven lawyers and I'm trying not to laugh at the irony of this.

Attorneys for Dr. Tudor also sought to compare the interviewee's scholarly work with Dr. Tudor's and seemed to question whether he deserved his promotions and his tenure. The chair reported the attorneys, "Asked about my scholarship and how I got promoted and tenured back in '94 or '95." The chair also believed the attorneys questioned his ability to make professional judgments about his colleague's work: "They asked me, as my specialty is poetry and, they asked me if I was a better specialist in poetry or in tenure and promotion. Kind of questioning my ability to make judgments."

In the interviewee's view, Dr. Tudor's attorneys continuously brought into question his ability to make the professional judgments a university department chair is asked to make. The interviewee believed this kind of scrutiny would put a chill on higher education faculty's willingness to make these judgments:

It's about discrimination, right. Well, our training is to discriminate. You read a paper, you discriminate whether it's an A paper, a B paper, a C paper, right? In other words, the word discrimination gets, gets it gets confused because if its gender or race or whatever discrimination obviously [it's] not that kind of discrimination, but we're asked to make judgments. And, otherwise, somebody could just rubber stamp, you just check a few boxes and, and, and go on from there. We, we discriminate. We make judgments in the tenure and promotion process and judgments in the classroom. That is part of what we do. And I think processes like this cause people to be afraid to make those judgment calls.

The interviewee believed the discovery process leading up to trial was unnecessarily intrusive in terms of content, particularly questions about his personal life, but also in terms of the time away from his duties and family. The interviewee told of one instance where he had to cancel important personal business in one part of the state because he had to travel to a different part of the state to meet with attorneys.

Impact on Department Climate

A second theme that emerged from the data was the effect on the climate of the department. From the data, it appears that Dr. Tudor's unsuccessful attempt to secure promotion and tenure had the effect of increasing tension within the department.

Prior to her application, the interviewee offered to provide editorial assistance with Dr. Tudor's manuscripts that were in preparation for submission for publication. In an email dated December 9, 2008, the interviewee wrote that he would "be glad to read whatever you [Dr. Tudor] send me" (Tudor, 2008a). That same semester, Dr. Tudor reached out to the senior faculty of her department requesting peer reviews of her teaching. In another email dated December 9, 2008, she lamented that, "there were no responses" (Tudor, 2008b) to her request.

After the lawsuit was filed, the interviewee sensed a split in the department concerning Dr. Tudor. Specifically, the interviewee stated:

Well, I think a good number of people supported Rachel and a few of course didn't. And because in the lead up to the trial Rachel published some blogs about how superior she was to existing faculty. Some faculty found them offensive.

Issues within the department were not always above the surface, but evidence of issues are in the record. According to one court document, Dr. Tudor reported she told the dean she would prefer if a specific

senior faculty member did not serve on her promotion and tenure committee because she believed that professor “treated her differently ever since she, Dr. Tudor, began presenting as a woman at work” (U.S.A. v. Southeastern, et al., 2016, para. 2, p. 2). As further evidence of a division in the department’s faculty, the interviewee reported the following:

That's, that's, that's my, that's my feeling from it. And proof is that when Rachel left, not one faculty member said, “you have to find a replacement for Rachel.” If any other faculty member left, it's like you have to find a children's' lit or Shakespeare or for whatever, whatever the discipline, every discipline. Not one faculty member said we have to replace Rachel.

At trial, the prosecution introduced an expert that ranked the relative merits of the tenured faculty in the department:

But, also at the trial, there was, they got some guy from Ohio who looked at, like, the last five tenure and promotion portfolios. And, somehow, decided that [this one] was the number one and Rachel's number two. Then there was [this one] and then [this one], you know, like ranking, ranking our faculty. In another telling comment, the interviewee added that, in regard other faculty's perception of whether Dr. Tudor should be reinstated, “About half were in her camp and about a quarter were opposed and a quarter really didn't care. They saw it as sort of a spectator sport, interested to see what happened, but not taking a position.”

Documentation Issues:

An additional category that emerged from the analysis of the data were issues with policy and documentation. According to university policy, the promotion and tenure committee “shall include all faculty in the department with the appropriate tenure/rank.” (Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 2011, 4.6.3). The interviewee reported, “we had more than five tenured faculty” though not all were allowed to serve. University policy also requires all faculty serving on promotion and tenure committee to critique “the portfolio and each performance criterion.” Yet, according to the department chair, at least one member of the promotion and tenure committee didn't examine Dr. Tudor's portfolio: “During the deliberation, the discussion... One faculty member wasn't aware of a letter [that had been included in the portfolio] which led me to suspect she did not read the portfolio.”

Another issue was the lack of any established departmental expectations or criteria for promotion and tenure at the time of Dr. Tudor's application. The interviewee reported there were no expectations or guidelines for the department in force when Dr. Tudor applied for promotion and tenure: we did have one [departmental P & T guidelines] in play before, but a former president put an end to written criteria in 2008.” This lack of clearly established guidelines led to disagreements about Dr. Tudor's accomplishments.

In a grievance filed against the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Tudor wrote, “I presently have eight articles accepted by peer-reviewed scholarly journals, three conference papers ...” (Tudor, 2010a, p. 2) This was contradicted by a letter from the dean who wrote, “... her record of scholarship, in my view, falls well short of the noteworthy achievement required for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. Since coming to Southeastern Oklahoma State, there appears to be only one peer-reviewed paper submitted for publication, but not yet published” (Scoufus, 2010).

Illustrating her lack of understanding of the requirements for promotion and tenure, Dr. Tudor wrote the following:

I asked three colleagues whom I most admire and respect at Southeastern Oklahoma State to write letters in support of my candidacy for tenure and promotion: our department's secretary; a full-time Spanish instructor; and a full-time history instructor [neither instructor was tenure-track faculty]. First, allow me to note that I do not merit tenure and promotion as much as they do. I find it uncharitable to apply for tenure while so many more worthy colleagues and employees do not have the same privilege. The fact that they enthusiastically wrote letters for me testifies that they are more deserving of tenure and promotion than I am. (Tudor, 2009).

The interviewee, who served on Dr Tudor's promotion and tenure committee and was later named department chair, described Dr. Tudor's letter by stating, “That's writing, and writing is for audience and

purpose. Why would you address people with doctorates and tenure and say, these people [without doctorates] qualify for tenure?"

Tension between Department and Administration:

During the years in which Dr. Tudor applied for promotion and tenure, the relationship between the faculty and administration suffered. The interviewee reported, "the climate of the university was such that the faculty and administration were at odds. Negativity was rampant across the university. The administration was hostile to faculty and staff." This mistrust was further evidenced when the interviewee stated, "They [the administration] didn't put anything, they were reticent to put anything into writing."

A fractured relationship between the faculty and administration was also noted in the promotion and tenure process. The interviewee reported, "University policy required all tenured faculty in the department to serve on the promotion and tenure committees. We had more than five tenured faculty, but only five on the committee." In a letter from Dr. Tudor to the university president she wrote:

I was recommended for tenure and promotion by my department's Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee in the Fall. Subsequently, the dean and the vice president for Academic Affairs denied my application for tenure and promotion. The dean steadfastly refused to disclose her reasons for not supporting the recommendation of the department's tenure and promotion committee. The V.P. of Academic Affairs (VPAA) not only refused to disclose his reasons, but he also refused to even meet with me. I appealed to the Faculty Appellate Committee to review their behavior as inconsistent with the university's policy and practice. The Faculty Appellate Committee supported my point of view and issued a recommendation that the dean and VPAA explain the rationales for their decisions. However, instead of respecting the common-sense approach recommended by the Faculty Appellate Committee and honoring their wisdom, they contacted legal counsel and requested legalistic legerdemain to avoid extending to me the same spirit of cooperation and collegiality that was recently freely extended to another candidate for tenure and promotion in my department. (Tudor, 2010b, pp. 1-2)

University policy provides that faculty candidates, after the VPAA's review, "have the opportunity to withdraw the tenure/promotion application without prejudice toward future applications" (Academic Policy and Procedures Manual, 2011, § 4.6.3). The same policy further states, "The applicant must file the withdrawal with the VPAA by January 30." Yet, the dean, in a letter written two weeks earlier wrote, "My recommendation is that she, Dr. Tudor, be given a one-year, terminal appointment for the next academic year" (Scoufus, 2010). In a letter the following year to Dr. Tudor, the president made the following statement in contradiction to the policy quoted earlier in this paragraph: "The ... above policy and **University precedent** are consistent regarding faculty members (sic) ability to make application for tenure only **one time** following the fifth, sixth, or seventh year of service to the university" (Minks, 2011, emphasis in the original).

More confusion comes from the content of a letter in which the VPAA claimed Dr. Tudor had received the following offer:

You will recall that during the review of your current academic year application you were extended an offer which would have allowed you an additional year to strengthen your portfolio and hopefully obtain tenure and promotion. Pursuant to policy, this academic year is your seventh year of tenure probation and therefore your terminal year at the university... You were offered the opportunity to teach at the university during the two previous academic years and then reapply for tenure and promotion during the current academic year if you would withdraw your current application... to my astonishment, you declined this offer. (McMillan, 2010)

The letter concludes,

It is my opinion that allowing you to reapply will be disruptive to the School of Arts and Sciences, create unnecessary work for both your department and the administration, and will potentially inflame the relationship between faculty and administration. It is my decision as acting chief academic officer that your application/request and portfolio will not be accepted for review for the current academic year. (McMillan, 2010)

Conclusion

Subsequent to the filing of a formal discrimination complaint against the university and with the EEOC, a series of investigations, records requests, subpoenas, public information requests, depositions, court hearings, and employee relations activities consumed the time of university leaders including the department chair. This study has analyzed the experiences and observations of the department chair who was faced with providing administrative leadership during the time-consuming activities involved in remedying the outlined complaints as well as the restructuring of policy and procedure aimed at avoiding similar issues in the future.

The sequence of events that eventually found its way into a federal courtroom was, at a minimum, related to poorly written policy, failure to follow the policy that did exist, and a general lack of trust between faculty and administration. As a result, the department chair burned hours that could have been spent delivering instruction, conducting research, and mending a fractured department. Instead, time was expended in internal hearings and meetings, not to mention interviews before and testimony during trial in federal court. The chair faced having his personal life dissected by attorneys and having family plans rescheduled at the last moment. Relationships between faculty and administration were strained and the department had to work to eradicate divisions within its faculty that resulted from these events. The chair also identified the negative impact questionable administrative behavior and decision making had on the culture and climate of the department and university faculty. These behaviors and decisions ultimately opened a door to individual interpretation and allegations of discrimination.

Prior to this incident, university policy did not require those evaluating promotion and tenure portfolios to provide any reason for the decisions made. As a result, short form letters were delivered to those applying that simply provided a decision, stated the decision was only a recommendation, and that the final decision was made by the president. The letter concluded by saying that if the candidate was ultimately turned down, the president or his designee would share with the applicant the reasons for the denial. Often, this was not done. Even when confronted by faculty, administrators were often less than transparent with their reasoning. During the period in which Dr. Tudor sought promotion and tenure, faculty trust in administrators was in a decline.

An example of poor administrative practice prior to Dr. Tudor's application for promotion and tenure is the lack of departmentally specific guidelines for promotion and tenure. This left junior faculty with no expectations to guide their work. Similarly, senior faculty had no guidelines for assessing their junior colleague's work. The effect of this practice can be seen in the confusion surrounding Dr. Tudor's record. The promotion and tenure committee from her department supported her application. She was also supported by her department chair. However, neither the dean nor the vice president for academic affairs believed her record strong enough to support her application. Clear, departmentally specific guidelines and open and honest communications may have prevented the controversy and allegations of discrimination.

Another example of poor administrative practice is the lack of communication between the dean and the vice president for academic affairs. This is demonstrated by the existence of contemporaneous, conflicting recommendations, one suggesting a one-year terminal appointment and the other a two-year appointment. If the vice president truly reviewed all materials provided with Dr. Tudor's application, he should have seen the dean's memo. On the other hand, if the dean failed to submit the memo, the vice president would be working in the dark. Either way, Dr. Tudor could not expect a fair assessment of her work.

This sequence of events led to many conflicts, allegations, rumors, and adverse publicity, especially through social media. Within a short time period, a new president of the university was tasked with assembling a team to rebuild internal and external confidence in the university, manage a lawsuit, and rewrite policy to ensure a level of accountability that would build relationships and establish a culture of trust.

Ultimately, an adverse court decision against Southeastern Oklahoma State University awarded Dr. Tudor damages. While university attorneys argued that laws regarding the employment rights of transgendered citizens were ambiguous, the court ruled otherwise. Questionable administrative decisions, poor policy,

and faulty communication systems were costly to the university in many ways. Recently, the United States Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Bostock v. Clayton County Board of Commissioners* (2020) in which the Court concluded Title VII's prohibition against employment discrimination based on sex included discrimination based on sexual orientation and sexual identity. Certainly, had this ruling been in existence sooner, Southeastern Oklahoma State University could not have claimed ambiguity in the law to defend its conduct. However, the lack of a clear pronouncement of the law from the United States Supreme Court does not, in any way, explain or excuse the poor administrative practice that permeated this professor's attempts to secure promotion and tenure.

In September of 2021, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Southeastern Oklahoma State University to reinstate Dr. Rachel Tudor and to grant her promotion and tenure (*Tudor v. Southeastern Oklahoma State University*, 2021). This is yet another chapter of institutional challenges stemming from organizational decisions made over a decade ago. Researchers conclude that the above-mentioned systemic changes at Southeastern Oklahoma State University have successfully created a structure capable of professionally handling this decision and avoiding future conflicts related to promotion and tenure.

Recommendations

Accountability and transparency are critical to the promotion and tenure process. Without them, corruption is nearly evitable. In the words of Justice Louis Brandeis, "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants; electric light the most efficient policeman" (Brandeis, 1913, p. 10). As a result of this study, we offer the following recommendations. First, and perhaps most obvious, persons who are found to have violated federal law should be separated from the university. Sources of potential legal liability cannot be tolerated without placing the long-term viability of the university at risk.

Second, a qualified, trusted overseer of compliance issues as required by federal law, must be in place. This person should have adequate training in the law to plan training for employees, write and review necessary policy, and to create processes to ensure those policies are followed.

Third, promotion and tenure are intended to be collaborative processes involving both faculty and administration. Well-written collaborative policy that is followed can help prevent misunderstanding, ambiguity, and allegations of wrongdoing. Policy will also prevent abuses of the system including discrimination.

Finally, administrators and faculty alike, must be willing to respect and be guided by decisions made in the appropriate grievance processes. Otherwise, grievance processes lose meaning, and can even be damaging to the organization due to layers of conflict generated by distrust.

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Voices from the Frontline: Teacher Perceptions on COVID-19 Classroom Impacts

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Abstract

On a global scale, the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly shifted preK-12 education from the traditional, in-person setting to virtual/hybrid methods of instruction in the Spring and Fall of 2020. With intentions to slow community spread of the deadly virus, teachers were expected to adjust instruction as dictated by school leaders and, despite challenges, ultimately meet the unprecedented demands. To better understand this phenomenon, this study explored teacher perceptions during the beginning of the pandemic in the Spring of 2020 and into the Fall of 2020 as the virus raged on. This study identified teacher dissonance existing between the expectations of the teachers and the best implementation methods of classroom instruction over the year of 2020 with the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, the findings reveal a need for more teacher input during times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, and on a larger scale, use of a systematic action plan to include teachers in decisions honoring the professionals they are.

Key words: teacher voices, cognitive dissonance, teacher dissonance, professional educators, COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic rapidly spread in Spring 2020 impacting education across the globe (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). In the early stages of the pandemic, school systems, including classroom teachers, had limited time and resources needed to fully understand the situation and appropriately adjust daily classroom instruction. With increasing concerns of possible community spread, many school systems serving preK-12 students shifted typical in-person instruction to alternative methods, including remote/online instruction (Kaden, 2020). When the 2020-2021 academic year began, school systems implemented various approaches to support students academically, while also ensuring their health and safety according to recommended guidelines (Coronavirus and School Closures, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). However, school systems have struggled with basic components needed for virtual or hybrid classroom gatherings to continue instruction during this time of rapid change and uncertainty (Shamir-Inbal & Blau, 2021). Although the pandemic has been on-going for two years, there does not appear to be an agreed upon set of “best practices” for educating our nation’s children during such an unprecedented time.

Since teachers are on the frontlines of education, learning about their experiences and perspectives of teaching during the pandemic is one way to better understand educational impacts of COVID-19. Therefore, it is critical we ask and seek to understand teacher perspectives in general, and especially in times of emergency. The purpose of this study was to capture teacher experiences and better understand their perspectives on teaching during the pandemic in Spring and Fall 2020. Through this research, it became evident that participant experiences varied and that some were grappling with the inconsistencies they were experiencing. This study challenges us to seek teacher perspectives, especially during times of abrupt change that have potential to impact daily instruction, as teachers are at the forefront of classroom success. Furthermore, said perspectives need to be systematically examined to identify and implement best approaches to support teachers and the students they serve.

Review of Literature

Long periods of cognitive dissonance for classroom educators can negatively impact classroom success (Skaalvik&Skaalvik, 2017). Cognitive dissonance is characterized by a disconnect between what one assumes or expects and what actually takes place or is true (Festinger, 1957). An example might be a novice teacher believing that a “no tolerance” policy is the best way to promote positive student behavior. However, through observation, they experience instances in which “no tolerance” policies lead to negative outcomes, such as poor academic performance. In this instance, the teacher expected this policy to be beneficial, but begins to see it is not and must grapple with this dissonance. As Festinger (1957) explained, dissonance can be eliminated by changing one of the two elements identified as factors in the dissonance. Using the example above, the novice teacher can eliminate dissonance by implementing a new behavior policy that recognizes student effort while acknowledging that instances of misbehavior may still occur. By shifting this belief, the teacher is reconciling their own dissonance and adjusting to align these previously opposing ideas. In the realm of education, identifying and resolving dissonance for teachers can improve their beliefs and practice (Guerra & Wubbena, 2017). Relatedly, Zheng (2009) said “because of the blurring differentiation between [teacher] knowledge and beliefs, there is a trend not to treat these two concepts separately” (p. 74). As such, it is important to understand the relationship between these factors to examine how they influence teachers’ “thought processes, instructional practices, and change...” (p. 74). One area where dissonance exists within education broadly, is the belief that teachers are professionals, yet at the same time, decisions about what and how they teach (to name a few) are continually made without their input and constant examples exist highlighting de-professionalization of the field.

Often teachers are asked to adapt their classroom instruction. According to Berjaoui and Karima-Akkary (2020), teachers are not always included in conversations and the strategic planning that leads to final decisions. Teachers must then adapt without a voice or clear direction of next steps and end goals (Ingersoll et al., 2018). In times of change, if teachers were included in the systematic process of sharing ideas and formulating a plan, the goal to guide these changes using best practices could be improved (Parsons et al., 2018). As such, there is a need to gain teacher support and provide for specific needs when transitioning. With teacher voices and beliefs not being included, challenges exist (Torres, 2019). This article highlights the need to treat teachers as the professionals they are by listening to them and responding in an appropriate way benefitting the pedagogical process. For many teachers, the instructional shift that occurred because of the pandemic was a challenge. Not only were teachers experiencing personal challenges related to COVID-19, but they were also tasked with maintaining daily instruction for their students. Privileging teacher voices positions them as the professionals they are, while also recognizing the first-hand knowledge classroom teachers have had on the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on daily instruction.

Methods

The goal of this study was to learn how preK-12th grade public educators within one state in the southern United States perceived the impacts of COVID-19 on instruction generally and literacy instruction specifically. By focusing on experiences of teachers during a time of much uncertainty and inconsistency in education, this research was intended to explore notable instructional impacts according to this group of individuals. Furthermore, the researchers sought to examine what differences or changes, if any, were experienced between Spring 2020 once the pandemic began and Fall 2020.

Spring 2020

Once IRB approval was obtained, a recruitment email was sent to public school administrators across the state in April-May 2020 requesting they forward this email (with survey link) to teachers within their school. In total, 282 eligible participants completed the survey, spanning all districts within the state. The survey was administered via SurveyMonkey and consisted of 30 items and included a mix of closed- and open-ended responses designed to acquire data on participant teaching assignment, technology and literacy instruction prior to the pandemic, and perceived instructional impacts caused by the pandemic. Once collected, survey data was examined for broad patterns and categorized into research themes. Through data analysis, it became evident that broad instructional factors, such as instructional approaches and technology access, were at the forefront of participants’ focus rather than specific instructional

impacts on literacy, which was the initial study focus. Given this finding, the researchers resumed data collection the following semester to continue exploring teacher experiences and perceptions as the pandemic wore on.

Fall 2020

In November-December 2020, the same participant recruitment and data collection processes as described previously were followed when researchers distributed a second survey. The survey was modified to reflect the passage of time and gather data that would allow eligible participants to make comparisons between experiences teaching during Spring and Fall 2020. For instance, some items included the phrase “during the Fall 2020 semester,” so responses from the follow-up survey would be specific to this time. Some language was made broader to include greater variety in instructional approaches (e.g., “instruction whether in-person or online” replaced “classroom instruction” in several items) and other items were re-framed so participants could make comparisons between their experiences during Spring and Fall 2020 (“When comparing the Fall 2020 semester to the Spring 2020 semester (during the COVID-19 pandemic), I have felt...”). Interestingly, 1,524 eligible participants completed the survey in Fall 2020, which was more than five times the number of participants the previous semester. Once data was collected, data analysis followed a similar process as aforementioned; however, researchers also examined data from both surveys to identify patterns or trends over time. Research findings are detailed in the following section.

Findings

Impacts on Instruction

When examining participant responses regarding COVID-19 impacts on instruction, 99.05% of respondents indicated “yes,” their instruction had been impacted during Spring 2020 by the pandemic. The follow-up survey administered in Fall 2020 indicated 93.24% of respondents’ instruction was impacted by COVID-19. When asked about the amount of instructional impact caused by the pandemic, it did appear there was not as much of an impact during Fall 2020 as compared to the prior semester and evidenced in Table 1. For instance, 88.10% of respondents indicated their instruction was impacted “a great deal” in Spring 2020 as compared to only 52.13% in Fall 2020.

Related to instructional impacts are the expectations that have been placed on educators since the beginning of the pandemic. When comparing survey data from Spring to Fall 2020, there was a noticeable difference in educator expectations according to participants. Once the pandemic began (Spring 2020), 32.38% of participants indicated they had none of the same expectations regarding teaching and assessing their students compared to only 2.18% of participants in Fall 2020. While only 3.81% of participants indicated they had all the same expectations regarding teaching and assessing their students in Spring 2020, this increased considerably in Fall 2020 to 35.22%. Also noteworthy, is that nearly 13% of participants in Spring 2020 were unsure of expectations being asked of them and in Fall 2020 this dropped to less than 2%.

While instruction in Fall 2020 was clearly impacted, the lesser degree of impact suggests by Fall 2020 there were attempts for a “return to normalcy.” This is further supported by increased percentages of teachers who indicated they had all the same teaching expectations in Fall 2020 that they had prior to the pandemic. It is important to note that while data suggests less instructional impact in Fall 2020, the number of eligible participants who completed the survey in Fall 2020 was considerably more than Spring 2020.

Approaches to Instruction

Through this research, it is evident instructional impacts occurred because of COVID-19. Two specific areas that were impacted in response to the pandemic included teaching assignments and the role of technology, both described in this section.

During Spring 2020, much instruction went “remote” or was cancelled/postponed to limit exposure to others and reduce spread of the virus. In Fall 2020, when asked about teaching assignments at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, 29.34% of participants indicated they were engaging in “in-person instruction (e.g., traditional).” Most participants (61.31%) identified that they were engaging in a “Combination of online and in-person instruction (e.g., hybrid/hyflex)” at the start of Fall 2020. At the

time of the study (November-December 2020) there did appear to be some changes to teaching assignments and approaches to delivering instruction. While few participants indicated cancelled/postponed instruction, a small group of participants indicated “other” to describe their teaching assignment because the available options did not fully capture their specific experience. It was observed that several participants who selected “other” explained that students were taught virtually if they had to quarantine or if they/their parent(s) opted them out of in-person instruction, though most instruction was in-person. Also, several indicated they were teaching students in-person and virtually simultaneously. Examples of participant responses are included in Table 2 and are representative responses of those who indicated “other” to describe their Fall 2020 teaching assignment.

When comparing survey data, there was a clear change in approaches to instruction between Spring and Fall 2020. In the spring, much instruction was cancelled/postponed with varying degrees of online or remote instruction implemented. By the following semester, most instruction was a combination of online and in-person. However, those who taught in-person in Fall 2020 explained some students were still being taught remotely and noted various schedule changes and inconsistencies in instructional approaches (e.g., teaching 2-3 students over Zoom while the rest were in-person; needing all materials available online in case students were quarantined). Despite the apparent effort for a “return to normalcy,” the pandemic resulted in frequent changes regarding how instruction was implemented in Fall 2020.

Given the abrupt shift from in-person to remote instruction that occurred in Spring 2020, it is unsurprising technology has played a large part in education since the start of the pandemic. When participants in Spring 2020 were asked what percentage of their students they believed had access to a device to engage in online/remote instruction, the average was 58%. Regarding internet access, participant responses averaged 55% of students. This means in Spring 2020, according to participant beliefs, nearly half of all students whose instruction transitioned to remote learning were not able to access resources they needed to continue instruction. By Fall 2020, there was a noticeable increase in average percent of students teachers believed had access to a device (85% of students) and internet (77% of students). These numbers demonstrate a positive change in teacher beliefs regarding accessibility of remote instruction for students, such as greater frequency of 1:1 technology and availability of district-provided personal hotspots. However, survey data also demonstrated this was not consistent everywhere and even when technology appeared to be a non-issue, there were still challenges associated with online/remote instruction. Table 3 highlights perceived impacts of technology access on instruction in Fall 2020, including ways in which issues of access have been or might be addressed. In particular, the data demonstrates while schools and school districts have worked to provide options to increase access to remote instruction, issues with remote learning still exist (e.g., younger students not having skills to engage appropriately; students who are unmotivated or lack supervision to participate fully; internet accessibility in rural areas). Overall, this data highlights that technology has had a sizable impact on instruction since the onset of the pandemic, and even with positive strides made toward accessibility, there are still challenges being faced by students and teachers when it comes to remote instruction.

Impacts on Teachers

Impacts on and approaches to instruction certainly influence teachers implementing said instruction. Teachers have reported increased levels of concern for their students’ academic and social/emotional needs, as well as increased job-related stress. Table 4 demonstrates most participants were more concerned about their students and more stressed about their jobs during Fall 2020 as compared to Spring 2020 once the pandemic began. It might be surprising that teachers reported being more concerned in Fall 2020 given more was known about the virus and various protocols to ensure health and safety guidelines were followed. However, even though less was known about COVID-19 in Spring 2020, the return to more “normal” expectations in Fall 2020 could be related to increased reports of concern for students and job-related stress. Changing teaching assignments, challenges with technology, and implementing safety precautions while still being expected to adhere to many or all the same expectations and outcomes prior to the pandemic could be factors impacting teacher emotions when comparing Spring and Fall 2020. In Spring 2020, there were countless “unknowns” but there was also a shift in expectations for teachers and

students to account for the uncertainty. Despite the desire to “return to normal,” pandemic-related hurdles were still being addressed in Fall 2020, suggesting that instruction was likely anything but normal.

Discussion

By conducting this study, the researchers privileged teacher voices to better understand experiences and perspectives as they taught during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since classroom teachers were put in the position of witnessing impacts of the pandemic on daily classroom instruction, collecting data regarding said experiences is one approach to more clearly recognizing the impacts of COVID-19 on education.

Implications

Although most school systems began the 2020-2021 academic year with a COVID-19 plan in place, adjustments needed to be made as challenges were identified and realities of continuing to teach during a pandemic became evident. Recognizing when instructional approaches were not occurring as planned aligns to the first major implication of this work. Teachers are at the frontlines of classrooms and were therefore in a unique position to recognize when instances of difficulty or tension arose between what was planned and what took place. As such, it is essential to acknowledge instances of cognitive dissonance within educational settings by identifying said dissonance and its impacts. Regarding COVID-19, one might ask “How, or in what ways, is instruction being impacted by the pandemic?” Because teachers are likely to experience this dissonance first-hand, it is essential they be consulted on what is happening in the classroom, including what instructional approaches prove effective and which might be improved.

Once dissonance is recognized, it can be addressed through the creation of an action plan. According to Johnson (2009), when teachers create cognitive dissonance for students, this can be a catalyst for action. Once dissonance becomes evident, students are encouraged to grapple with their thinking and “buck you [the teacher] for causing the dissonance” (Johnson, 2009, para 15). Similarly, classroom teachers experiencing dissonance when teaching during the pandemic should have an opportunity to “buck the dissonance.” One might do this by asking teachers, “If these are areas of tension and challenge happening as part of your instruction, how can improvements be made?”

This leads to the second major implication, which is the need to reinstate the notion that teachers are professionals who need to be listened to and trusted when it comes to teaching. Since teachers are delivering instruction daily, whether in-person, remote, or both, they need to be treated as the professionals they are and trusted to make instructional decisions that will be most beneficial for students within their classroom context. As evidenced in study findings, participant experiences were varied, and so a blanket approach to “pandemic-era teaching” will not work for everyone and teachers need autonomy to make these instructional decisions. Acknowledging teachers as professionals by listening to their needs can help address the dissonance being experienced.

Recommendations

The first recommendation based on this work is the need for a platform in which teachers can gather (virtually or in-person) to voice concerns they have and the tensions and challenges they have experienced while teaching during the pandemic. Teacher forums, professional learning communities (PLCs), and other professional meetings such as conferences are all opportunities for teachers to share their experiences and engage in discussion about ways to best support their students. In addition to an outlet for conversation, it is critical for those in a position to enact more wide-spread change (e.g., school administrators, district leaders, educational policymakers) to participate in these gatherings as observers to learn of teacher experiences. Then, after hearing the areas of concern and instances of dissonance being experienced, action can be taken to combat said challenges.

While this article is focused on educational impacts of COVID-19, teachers’ cognitive dissonance existed before the pandemic in ways unrelated to this global event. As such, a recommendation intended to address this dissonance in a broader way is the need for greater alignment between teacher preparation programs and classroom practice. If future educators’ professional preparation does not align to their actual experiences once teaching, it is likely some dissonance will be experienced. While this is not always a negative, it would be beneficial for their professional preparation to mimic future practice. As such, developing close partnerships between teacher preparation programs and nearby school districts is

recommended so that pre-service teachers can engage in authentic experiences closely aligned to their future teaching expectations.

Future Research

To continue expanding this work, one area of future research is to collect data regarding teachers' pandemic experiences during the 2021-2022 academic year. With the introduction of available vaccines along with different strains of the virus, it is inevitable educational institutions will continue to be impacted by COVID-19 for another academic year. Additionally, future research could be conducted in a different region of the country to see to what extent, if any, these findings are being experienced by other educators outside of the geographic region examined within this study. Lastly, research aimed at collecting data from classroom teachers regarding teaching experiences, beliefs, and ideas about classroom instruction generally, and literacy instruction specifically, is an area of future exploration.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, the low response rate, especially in Spring 2020, is a limitation of the study. Participant responses represent a small group of educators within one state but are not necessarily representative of all educators within the state. Another drawback of this research is that, given approaches to data collection, there was no way to match participant survey data from Spring to Fall 2020 for those who completed both surveys. While data could be examined holistically, direct comparisons between individual participant experiences could not be determined.

Conclusion

As a third academic year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it is essential that instances of disconnect between instructional plans and what occurs in the classroom be acknowledged and addressed. Regardless of their particular pandemic teaching experiences, teachers are well-positioned to recognize tensions while they educate students under unique and extreme circumstances. As such, they are a vital resource for learning about what is taking place in the realm of education during the pandemic, as well as for providing insight into ways to provide high-quality instruction for their students. Privileging teacher voices is vital during the pandemic and further sheds light on the need to reinstate the professionalization and autonomy of teachers within their day-to-day instruction so that they may best support their students.

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Table 1

Amount of impact on normal instruction/routines caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

	Spring 2020 Responses	Fall 2020 Responses
A great deal	185 (88.10%)	478 (52.13%)
A lot	19 (9.05%)	281 (30.64%)
A moderate amount	6 (2.86%)	120 (13.09%)
A little	0 (0.00%)	25 (2.72%)
None at all	0 (0.00%)	13 (1.42%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>210 (100%)</i>	<i>917 (100%)</i>

Table 2

Description of Teaching Assignments for Those Who Indicated "Other"

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year

- "Most students in class, with some students virtual."
- "One full time in-person class, one full time virtual class."
- "I had three A/B hybrid classes."
- "In-person instruction with synchronous online instruction."
- "Was online, then in-person, now online due to quarantine."
- "I have to teach virtual kids at the same time as the face-to-face students. I teach with a computer in front of me."

At the time of the follow-up survey (November-December 2020)

- "Mostly in-person, only online if a student has to quarantine."
- "Our in-person students have changed from an A/B schedule (1/2 of students on campus daily) to a coming to campus daily schedule."
- "All in-person aside from four virtual students who stream the in-person instruction."
- "We were doing combination for the majority but decided to switch to 100% virtual teaching due to exposure and not enough substitutes to cover teacher absences."
- "In-person, abiding COVID restrictions and guidelines the best we can."
- "I am currently having to quarantine so my students are at school, and I am teaching them from my home."

Table 3

Technology Access and Perceived Impacts on Instruction and Learning, Fall 2020

Survey Question: To what extent, if any, do you believe access to a technology device and reliable internet is influencing your students' ability to access remote instruction?

- “It is a major issue with the younger students. Because they cannot read, we are having to rely on the parents to make sure directions are being followed and correct sites are being accessed.”
- “It is not the internet/technology device that is influencing my students. It is the willingness to learn and do their best.”
- “My school district provides each student with a technology device. The majority of my students have access to reliable internet, and the students that do not have access are provided a hotspot by the school district.”
- “I believe almost all of my students have access to what they need to do online instruction, although not all of them choose to do online instruction.”
- “It is highly impacting my students' ability to access online/remote instruction. Access is one thing, accomplishing the online/remote assignments is another.”
- “We have a lot of students who are home without parental supervision because their parents work. Most of those students are not responsible enough to virtually attend their classes.”

Survey Question: How might (or how have) issues of access to technology devices and internet be addressed so there is more equitable access to online learning for your students?

- “Our district provided each student with a one-to-one device. Also, students who have no internet connection were given hotspots so that they can have access to online learning.”
- “We have the 1:1 but the lowest academic performing students are the ones that do NOT have reliable access to internet....”
- “Everyone has access, but not everyone is successful with online learning. They are often left behind because of the rate that we must progress.”
- “Internet companies have to bring Wi-Fi to rural areas. I am a teacher and I do not have access to Wi-Fi at my home. It is not offered in my area.”
- “Our district got hotspots for students who do not have internet at home. But it’s a learning process and more are needed.”
- “We need to address the knowledge of how to use the technology within our communities. Train families to use the technology that is provided, with in-person, one-on-one training.”

Table 4

Teacher emotions Compared between Fall 2020 and Spring 2020

When comparing the Fall 2020 semester to the Spring 2020 semester (during the COVID-19 pandemic), I have felt...

	Concerned about Students' Academically	Concerned about Students' Social, Emotional Needs	Stressed Regarding My Job
A lot more	577 (64.61%)	464 (51.96%)	567 (63.49%)
A little more	128 (14.33%)	183 (20.49%)	138 (15.45%)
The same amount	123 (13.77%)	167 (18.70%)	90 (10.08%)

A little less	33 (3.70%)	32 (3.58%)	46 (5.15%)
A lot less	5 (0.56%)	16 (1.79%)	19 (2.13%)
Not at all	5 (0.56%)	10 (1.12%)	15 (1.68%)
Not teaching inSpring 2020 ¹	22 (2.46%)	21 (2.35%)	18 (2.02%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>893 (100%)</i>	<i>893 (100%)</i>	<i>893 (100%)</i>

¹ Number of participants who responded “not teaching in Spring 2020” are slightly different for the above questions but what is reported here accurately reflects survey data.

The Power of Problems

Dr. Pat Wentz
University of West Florida

Turning non-emergency problems into positive experiences in the five levels of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory is the basis of this discussion.

Got a problem? Maybe more than one? Would you believe it if you found that problems can lead to power? Not power over others but power over yourself. If that's true then you would assume that you would be the most powerful person maybe in the world! Let's get you on the road to that power.

Did you ever lift weights or do a particular exercise to increase your strength or your lung capacity? And if you stuck with it, did it work? Well that was power over your physical body. Today, let's look at a different kind of exercise that may help you develop power over your mind.

The power of problems resides in the ability to turn the problems into positive choices that may appeal to anyone: young children, school-aged students, or adults at any level of development based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Problems are not all "In our face." We need to determine our distance from the problem and the stages in Bronfenbrenner's Systems Theory. It's a different way to think about problems and shows us the distance we have some problems and the closeness we have with other problems.

As various muscles in the body become more flexible and useful through exercise, so does the mind in dealing positively with problems; the more practice one has in successfully dealing with problems, the more likely that additional problems will be resolved successfully. Once an individual gets a taste of the power and self-confidence available through the successful management of problems, the world for that individual will change.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains the five increasing levels of development from childhood to adulthood. This paper looks at how the increasing levels of development (extensions into the world) of an individual can be affected by a positive attitude toward problems.

Let's look at what a problem is; it may save you time in the long run and you may find that helping students define their problems will help to resolve some of your problems.

There are at least two parts of any problem: the problem itself and its effect on us. Problems are advancing on us until we put up our shield and say "No" to them. Do we act on our problems or do we re-act to them? Think about it.

This is not to say that there is nothing to the belief that problems can overwhelm; they can. They can be like the camel with his nose pushing in under the tent wall. Working from outside the tent, we must manage to pull the camel's head from under the edge of the tent from the outside and aim him in a different direction. If we wait until his long neck is in the tent, we've lost the tent. So, before we lose the tent (the problem), let's consider how we can translate a problem into something useful and productive: power.

If we analyze a problem, take it apart and work on one piece of the problem at the time, we can handle the components of the problem one at a time. Consider a problem as a circle drawn on a sheet of paper and divide it into four parts; we can deal with part 1 and see what choices are available and come to

some resolution as to which choice to make; that gives us self confidence in working with part 2 and that self-confidence accrues as we work on each of the other two components of the problem. The self confidence that develops from making choices over the span of all four parts of this circle (problem) changes before our eyes into power: power in analyzing the next problem and power in dissection and resolving the next problem, all the time accruing more self-confidence (and power).

If we can determine in which system of our life the problem resides, we can make a better attempt to face and solve it. The closer to the person the problem is, the more critical it is to us. But that depends; some problems in the macro system (our culture and values) may seem closer than some in the mesosystem.

Let's take a look at the possibilities of the power of problems. From the management of problem power by the use of choices, decisions, and reflective thinking, even the very young child can be led to make choices among decisions that are all positive, and then later to make decisions among choices that are mixed positive and negative.

As early as possible, a child should be offered the chance to make choices among good things. As the child gets older, the number of positive things for a child to choose among can increase. When it's apparent that the child is comfortable making a choice (decision), then add one slightly negative item to the positive choices. If the child makes the negative choice, this is then an opportunity to let him learn about the choices he had available and think about what the choice he didn't make would have meant to him; he is beginning to reflect. The negative choice could be simply a heavy sweater on a warm day. The child doesn't need to see this choice as a negative one, just one that could have been better. Now he has a problem: the sweater is too warm and he needs to plan how to overcome that problem. Children usually do not articulate this problem or the solution; they just take the sweater off. They have made a negative choice and determined a suitable (to them) response.

Frequently, our problems do not come to us as a matter of our own choice. If you visualize our choices as trees, then as we make one choice such as resolving a problem, that leads to another like limbs on a tree branch off each other.

Theorist Urie Bronfenbrenner (Exploring Your Mind, 2020; Thomas, 2000) developed an Ecological Systems Theory wherein he suggested the child's development was affected by the child's five increasing layers or levels of the environment that he referred to as: first of all, the individual child himself; secondly, the microsystem (those elements closest to the child such as the home and the family, the school and peer group; third, the mesosystem including the neighborhood in which different parts of the microsystem interact with each other); fourth, the exosystem (involving the social setting that is indirectly a part of the child's life such as the parents' workplace, older sister's network of companions, and the school board, for example); fifth, the macrosystem (involving the child's culture and values), and last, the chronosystem (involving time and its cause of change or lack of change).

Although Bronfenbrenner used these categories as places to study children's development, I want to use them as categories for the person to look toward the outside of self.

The progression of problem solving and the growth and development of a child's problem-solving capabilities can best and most easily start at home within the family. An individual can be taught how to look at problems as opportunities that give power to the resolver at any this age; this skill of reflection can be learned early and benefit the child throughout a lifetime.

Each stage of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory can have multiple levels of development in utilizing problems as power. The development is housed in the tolerance of choice by the individual. Beginning with the child in a crib, choice can be offered by holding up two baby toys (two positive choices) [positive choice = when either choice is good and can make the child happy]. When the child is used to having two choices and is comfortable making a choice, three positive choices can be offered, even up to four. The child will develop a strong comfort level by making choices that are satisfying and empowering to him; this is the crux of the idea that problems (such as making a choice) can be pleasurable and empowering. A history of making empowering choices will give the child self-confidence at whatever age.

As the child gets older, problems present themselves with more negative choices and the child learns to discriminate between the positive and negative, sometimes combining the two for a compromise, but always suffering or benefitting from the actual choice. A major benefit of these choices, whether negative or positive, is the process of thought that the child is learning through. Thus, problems, when approached as a choice situation, encourage the child to think through the results of the choice. Thus, the reflection.

Afraid of making a mistake? Consider the advice from counterculture documentarian Ralph Steadman (Crawford, 2020) who said “There’s no such thing as a mistake. A mistake is an opportunity to do something else.”

The child’s developing mind can operationally benefit on at least two levels: the positive confidence benefits of learning from self-selection and the intellectual development of thinking more deeply and with reflection. This intellectual development can be spurred on by activities that lead to insight. By pursuing different answers to problems (or making a variety of choices), the child can learn by trial and error. These concepts were developed by German-American psychologist Wolfgang Kohler (*Psychology Facts*, May 18, 2018) and insight learning is sometimes called the Gestalt Theory of Learning.

As the young child can learn from making choices, sometimes the choice can lead to a negative effect. There’s the challenge. When in the negative effect, the individual may or may not choose to react to that negative effect. If the child chooses to react and determine another effect, that effect may lead to a positive resolution or another negative effect. Thus, the problem continues to offer challenges and opportunities. Sometimes, people feel that their choices lead to a negative spiral and they tend to give less attention or to give up completely on this particular line of problem resolution.

The pattern here can be replicated at any age level and in any of Bronfenbrenner’s stages: the child, the home, the interaction of elements within the home, the social setting, the culture and values, and the time element causing or failing to cause changes. Instead of being a child, the individual may be at any age and the description would be the individual, the home, the interaction of elements within the home, the social setting, the culture and values and the time element affecting the change.

Thus, an individual of any age may approach a problem with an aggressive stance instead of walking away from it. First is the analysis of the problem. Second, consider what choices are available. Consider a priority list of which choices are most desirable. Then isolate the most desirable choice of action and make a plan of attack with the acceptance that the choice may not work, but if it does not work, there is a list of other choices. This is your reflectivity in action. With young children, they can be guided through this process by a parent. With older children or adults, it is beneficial to make a chart, such as:

Step 1. My (shows ownership) problem is: _____

Step 2. Possible solutions in priority order:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Step 3. First solution tried: _____

Step 4. How did it work: _____

Step 5. If the solution was satisfactory, the goal is achieved. If the solution was unsatisfactory, cycle through beginning at Step 1 again.

As an individual moves through the steps of determining problem solutions, considerable thought processes are developed and skills of prioritizing, synergizing, and reflection are developed and refined.

An adult can try this process on a small problem first so that when moving to a larger problem there will be increased confidence with the steps that follow. As an individual’s (child or adult) confidence increases, they will begin to think more positively about problems and see them as a part of life that offers challenge, excitement, a new venture, and possible benefits. It costs nothing to try. It is like a bird about to stretch wings and fly; there may be some concern for failure (probably not), but there is a greater opportunity for success. Individuals of all ages are encouraged to stretch their wings and develop the power and self confidence that solutions to problem can offer.

The power of problems resides in the ability to turn the problems into positive choices that may appeal to people, young children, school age students, or adults at any level of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Once an individual gets a taste of the power and self-confidence available through the successful management of problems the world for that individual will change.

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U.S. Homelessness, Race and Ethnicity: A Sociological Analysis of the Continual Process of the Impact of Capitalism and Enslavement on Housing

Dr. Stephanie White
L.A.C.C.D.

“NEITHER SLAVERY NOR INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE, EXCEPT AS PUNISHMENT FOR CRIME WHEREOF THE PARTY SHALL HAVE BEEN DULY CONVICTED, SHALL EXIST WITHIN THE UNITED STATES, OR ANY PLACE SUBJECT TO THEIR JURISDICTION” – AMENDMENT XIII – SLAVERY ABOLISHED 1865

The objectives of this article shall be the following: The observation of the measures, methods and scope that pertain to the sociological analysis of why homelessness exists in America; and that there is a continual process of entry and re-entry of persons who become homeless, a form of entrapment or “enslavement,” due to the impact of capitalism.

The following are the objectives of this study: 1: Operational definitions and prioritization (measures, methods, & scope); 2: Transformation: historical, societal, political, and economic; 3: Crony capitalism: etiology: (measures, methods & scope); 4: Quantitative analysis issues; 5: Disproportionally: the ever-occurring model of Blacks (measure, methods & scope); 6: Systemic; Institutionalism – another definition of despotism involved in statistics and the Black population; 7: Judgement, displacement (methods & scope); 8: Pedagogy: Critical race theory; 9: Transparency and a “working model”, and 10: Resources: the overall goal – “harm reduction” – diplomacy.

THE BEGINNING OF THE QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

The dilemma of homelessness begins with the operational definitional of homelessness as a precipus to what eludes disproportionalities of the population, the hegemonic distribution of resources and economies and the continuation of the systemic institutionalization of race in terms of the what and how the government chooses to deal with this pandemic, as well as the continual cycle of despotism and suffering, judgement, displacement (a psychological/public health and mental term) i.e. PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, and PTSD used synonymously as Post Traumatic “Slave disorder”, in this instance, the continual “enslavement” and the impact of homelessness and Capitalism.

INTRODUCTION

Before the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Blacks were residing in residentially segregated communities, faced with a myriad of social, economic, environmental, and political factors negatively affecting the lives of their communities, and their quality-of-life was diminished. There was also diminished educational attainment, as well as disparaging health outcomes, limited employment opportunities, and stifled political participation for low-income Blacks. This can be calculated as an introduction to the method & scope of structural inequality. Native Americans habituated LA County in 1769, later Spaniards named it “El Pueblo de la Reyna de Los Angeles”. Los Angeles was a business thriving in service sectors. (primarily the second periphery of economics); in business and professional management services, health services, research, and finance, as well as trade and tourism. Southern Los Angeles was the epicenter for Black people and has been ravaged by housing crises since the 1950s, about 50% due to the racist practice of redlining certain areas as “undesirable” for real estate investments. In the 1950s and 1960s many Black

households were in restricted neighborhoods like Crenshaw, Watts, & South Park, due to the aforementioned racist practices. Redlining was banned by the Fair Homes Act of 1968, but racial discrimination in the city's real estate market continues, with black homeownership falling to 36% from 44% over the last 50 years. There is a direct correlation between the 10,000 Black people left homeless after the Tulsa, OK race riots that impoverished the most thriving part of Black Wall Street in the 1930s. This history of demography (as in much of the US) tells the story, alludes to the structural measure, methods, and scope of the institutionalism of Capitalism.

SLAVERY/ENSLAVEMENT DU JOUR AKA DISPLACEMENT OF A PEOPLE: STILTED

“We will work to shatter those ceilings once held before to maintain the status quo and defeat the white supremacy of 400 years”: Our current U.S. President, Biden, stated in his inaugural address (2021). Homelessness is not how man is supposed to live. It is an “unnatural” system. The Intergenerational effects of racial inequities are problematic for individuals, families, and communities. It is continually maintained due to the inability or unwillingness of government officers to thoroughly consider and implement reliable strategies to reverse legacies of adverse policy outcomes, withstanding longstanding legitimacies and divergent realities for Blacks to fight “battle fatigue/PTSD and, to maintain statuses for normal types of living.

OBJECTIVE 1: THE ECONOMIC SIDE OF PRIORIZATION; A SUBSIDY OF CAPITALISM; THE OPERATIONAL DEFINITION - PRIORIZATION

Services are provided based upon zip codes in affluent areas; Structural racism, institutional racism (employment) i.e., Redlining, DWB, police profiling, the criminal justice system, mental & health care services, as well as where the homeless are sheltered or unsheltered; displacement and modern-day housing discrimination determine how Blacks are to be viewed and resourced. In 2013 there were more than 60,000 Black Angelenos who experienced homelessness due to these factions (BlackHealthTrust.org).

OBJECTIVE 1: INTRODUCTION - One operational definition - Allocation of utilization of services – REQUIREMENTS - (Method & Scope).

The determining factor of how utilization of services is met is based upon requirements that must be met by every “homeless” individual to determine if the “need base” is met. There are several definitions (requirements) as well as the wealth and dearth of resources available; however, qualifications must be operationally defined, as individuals are put into this “category”, thus labeled deviant. SAMSHA/SOAR requirements for services are as follows:

-
- ❖ Individuals/family who lack fixed, adequate nighttime residence, living in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or places not meant for habitation.
 - ❖ Individuals/family who will immanently lose primary nighttime residence (within 14 days) provided that no subsequent housing has been identified and the traditional family lacks support networks or resources needed to obtain housing.
 - ❖ Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age or family with children and youth who qualify under the Federal status such as the Runaway & Homeless Youth Act, have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit over the last 60 or more days and have lived in 2 or more homes in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to have unstable housing because of disability or multiple barriers to employment.
 - ❖ individual/family who is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, has no other residence and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Alkadry & Blesbelt (2010) state that, during the time of urban development in the mid 20th Century, millions of dollars flowed in and out of communities; however, stakeholders with the most political & public discourse, public & private institutions (local development & housing, resources, tax abatements or incentives subsidized by federal & state government) significantly aided in the perpetuation of race and class inequality (Wilson, 2007).

OBJECTIVE 2: ETIOLOGY VS EPISTEMOLOGY

In understanding the etiology of homelessness, we must first understand Blacks in their primordial habitat: a people disparaged by current health conditions, the highest number of cardiovascular, coronary heart, diabetes, and the like, in this country, and other substandard living conditions. The true etiology is that Blacks once thrived from a wealth of substance in 54 countries in Africa (and in many tribes and in other places throughout the world) until neocolonialism, colonialism, and capitalism came to be. Later, social inequality, less income, less access to higher education, inadequate access to healthcare, and health disparities became the median for the current standard. (These episteme statistics: normally described in statistical frequencies of statistically significant numbers (a divertissement count of numbers) distinguishes belief from opinion. In sociological analysis, the synonymy of demographics is also observed in the statistics-demographic segmentation. The question was determined by which dependent variables factors to target, a measure when analyzing social determinants, the independent from the dependent variables etc. The epistemology of homelessness, for Blacks; anti-pro-slavery observes that it is the systemic and structural racism of Jim Crow & segregation that has a significant impact on homelessness for Blacks. As well, as the definition to qualify economics and continually compete in the overall obsession of the global marketplace as was done during “slavery” (manpower) with the irony where Blacks were not even considered a human ($\frac{3}{5}^{\text{th}}$ of a man), blood – e.g., normalcy. (In turn, resulted in the malfeasance of inappropriate systems and resources; displacements of Blacks out of their homes, employment etc.). More recent and current survival techniques for socio-analytical and socio-psychological systems are as follows: Darwinian Survival of the Fittest & Malthusian theories on Institutional Racism; COVID Prioritization zip code accessibility (Black Health Trust.org) as well as “Emergency use authorization” (a few days creation – Pfizer, Moderna placebo)” “Gain of Function research”, to make viral vaccines to test on Blacks and other disenfranchised people, first (Chapel Hill and tested/experimented on those impoverished as well (Blacktrustorg.com). Another creation of the Impact of capitalism on homelessness and Blacks is that the desire to want and possess is ever so strong. Blacks are not given the tools to survive higher unemployment and colorlessness (due to placed judgement, despotism based upon their skin color in lower neighboring communities; substandard living and health crisis so the criminal elements provide a more lucrative base to satisfy one’s needs. The Criminal Justice System, as well, contributed to the cycle of Black homelessness – 6% of black pop, 30% of prison population in 2020 which make it more difficult for individuals to find jobs & housing after their release from jail. However, blacks are the number #1 consumers in the retail market base.

MAJOR ECONOMICAL TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY – CAPITALISM. ONE MAJOR SUBSTANTIATED PROBLEM - (Another aspect of Measure, Method & Scope)

To determine what impact the economy has on homelessness, we must first understand the current economic transformation of society that attributes to “why” homelessness is so rampant in our society. It is an emerging faction of our economy, and rampant in most concentric circles in every city and every state. CAPITALISM - Free market and free enterprise, which allows for free competition. The pure definition is not the problem; it is the abuse of Capitalism; crony-capitalism (1%ers {billionaires who own 99% of the wealth of the country}). How capitalism thrives and propels and spirals out of control: Middle management and ownership obtain close mutual advantageous relationships between business leaders and governments. These relationships price out markets, causing small business owners to lose out; community empowerment in the small inner cities gets overlooked and undervalued. These economic social determinants are key to dealing with Blacks, as well as spiraling out of control to affect everyone. People become unemployed because they lack the education, cannot afford housing, etc. “Cost-burdened” – For everyone, 32% of our salary pays for average rental income. A renter can experience a more rapid increase in homelessness. Income growth has not kept up with rent. Areas most vulnerable to rising rents, unaffordability & poverty consist of 15% of the US population and 47% of people experiencing homelessness and, PRIORIZATION as previously explained.

OBJECTIVE 3 DEFINITION: DEMOGRAPHICS SERVING AS STATISTICS: A MORE DELIBERATE ASPECT OF MEASURES, METHODS & SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

In order to give reliable and valid measures on accountability of resources for persons suffering from homelessness, we must utilize the definitions (those chosen to be observed in the study). As explained previously, it has come to the attention of the researcher that in her qualitative study on homelessness, demographic NUMBER COUNTING, those calculated in numbers of, and percentages (statistics) counted as defining numbers of those in dealing with criminal justice, environmental impact, social cost, pose synonymously (same meaning) as demographics. A question posed is, is there a duality to some of these numbers? (Some answered twice). Homeless population statistically, numerically counted and defined as Point-in-time (PIT) in Census calculations. In this study, do demographics serve as quantitative statistical definitions to be used/analyzed or are they merely demographics?

DEMOGRAPHICS OR STATISTICS OPERATIONALLY DEFINED – (Measures, Methods & Scope)

US Census – Blacks 6.5 of CA population, however 40% of stated homeless populations.

- ✓ Reporting measures not accounted for – Sept 2020 report – Institutional Racism – large role in extreme over-representation of homelessness of all Black homeless population (Cimini, 2020).
- ✓ Homeless census – As previously stated on statistical calculations, Robinson (2020) states that “The failure to suggest the impact of an imperfect snapshot is used by deflating”. This calculation “Carries out the dark???” of a population that does not want to be seen”. As well, many volunteers guess at race & ethnicity so as not to wake and frighten them the interviewers (therefore, the statistical growth population climbs by 22%).
- ✓ 1000s of people released from prison in CA since 2008 by - state pursued appearance policies to release due to overcrowding & handle punishment/rehabilitation outside prison walls.

PEW Study states the significant percentages of Blacks sentenced to prison decreased but is still proportionally high (April 2020).

WHAT ARE THE COSTS/DILEMMA IN SOLVING THE CRISIS? ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL – (Methods & Scope)

Jan 2020 – THE ECONOMIC DILEMMA

Santa Clara - \$520 million - \$83,000 per chronically homeless (Home Not Found: Cost of Homeless in Silicon Valley), San Francisco Chronicle – spends upwards of \$40,000 annually on people experiencing homeless.

Care Coordinated Program - Estimated \$19,767.00 annual cost reduction of \$42,706 who remain housed. Health care costs account for 53% expenditures for people experiencing homeless average annual of \$5,148. Individual with costs on top of 5% account for 47% of all costs. Average cost over \$100,000 per year. In measure of the economic cost, what is the downfall, impact, or influence on individuals, both the non-homeless and the homeless?

ENVIRONMENTAL-Human waste, public restrooms, basic protection from access to restrooms, public health hazards:

- 2014 Santa Clara – City of San Jose \$275,542 removed 2,011 yds of debris from homeless encampments along creeks and rivers. Officially removed 1,500 lbs. of human waste.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE – “against loitering, sleep in cars and begging” University of Texas 2 year. Survey of homeless individuals – taxpayers spent \$14,480 per individual for overnight jail, typical bed in state/fed prison - \$20,000 year.

SOCIAL COST – detrimental to community, disempowers those experiencing it to affect quality of city life & accessibility to public space.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ON HOMELESSNESS- Psychiatric services and mental health serve as weighing heavily on assisting subpopulations of individuals experiencing homelessness, pregnant women, and survivors of domestic violence. These variables also correlate with decreased life expectancy. Structural racism spurs deep racial inequities with Blacks whose consequences have critical services as a result of diminished access to mental health, street outreach, meal centers, food pantries, police sweeps and harassment.

PEDAGOGY: CRITICAL RACE THEORY. (CRT)

Institutional structural racism-must understand changing context and dynamic of urban life. – CRT shows the analytical examination of the relationship between history, race, and language (Zamudio et al. 2011). Furthermore, CRT acknowledges race & racism is hardwired into the social and economic landscape of American life. Stereotypes are ubiquitous in society and limits the opportunities of Blacks (Carbado & Roithmayor, 2014). This not only is Capitalism, but structural and institutional racism. CRT recognizes the traditional scholarship and public discourse about the plight of urban communities which rests that operates about individual merit, not an institutional practice that created disadvantage. Additional “knowledge” produced with social systems implicates the intersection of systems of oppression within matrices of domination, hegemonic beliefs about knowledge as others as deviants from the “norm” which is defined as a white, heterosexual, bourgeois male (2011 pg. 1576).

COVID-19 AND THE HOMELESS: Dr. Anthony Cardillo, (2020), ER Specialist & CEO Merd Urgent Council questioned whether regions of the homeless population are tested to have confidence at a 2% rate – “If you test a million people, you get 10% recurrence infection” (used as statistically significant rate); however, “If you only test a smaller number of homeless people, then those numbers are “artificially depressed” ->similar to (definition of disproportionate numbers) which is normally surrounding rates for Blacks and Latinos in a myriad of studies. The COVID-19 crisis led to an insurmountable task. to keep people on the streets alive.-KABC Health & Fair Associated Press LA County’s homeless POLITICS, POLICIES, OR DIPLOMACY In determining the measures, methods and scope on requirement and utilization of allocation of resources “You must qualify” – This is in opposition of solidarity (form of enslavement: forever keeping people in bondage if they don’t qualify!)

So, you ask, what is the answer? If agencies and programs can have assurance of having “NO” judgement while providing resources that meet homeless people “where they are at” this represents a diplomatic front and prevents/intervenes on the different. ways of institutionalization and systemic of the federal government. Policies must be provided for all American citizens “PEOPLE FIRST” ...This is diplomacy. Is it where the NEED is? – Governor Gavin Newsom stated a California bill will spend \$600 million to convert hotels and apartment buildings into permanent supporting housing for homeless residents. Governor Newsom – Placed the focus of the state to address 20 years of homelessness in San Francisco; “Care not cash” a progressive stronghold program guaranteed to base for a single room occupancy hotel. As well as MEASURE H of \$355 million Homeless initiative (2018) for 10 years.

Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti – Stated “No 2 people living on Skid Row or in Sepulveda basin ended up on these streets for the same reason worked on similar initiatives..

PROJECTS, AGENCIES of DIRECT CONTACT THAT PROMOTE TO MEET PEOPLE AT THEIR NEED - The end of this paper has to posit a resolve. A resolve that goes directly into solving that operationally defined “NEED BASE SERVICES”.

” Harm reduction” is an organization in the United States that works “without judgement.” One such as Homeless Health Care of Los Angeles provides needle exchange, naloxone for overdose reversal/a safe place for those who use drugs, hygiene services: showers/restroom and animal care, outreach, housing, training & education, medical and behavioral health services. “Mutual Aid” services as well, is another plausible solution; communities like the Big door Brigade, - key towards ending enslavement; care of systems in place (Like the abolitionists work in the underground railroad) and, what has been a great example during the COVID-19 pandemic of food and market and housing initiatives and community giveaways. They work for the prisons industrial system as well – writing jail support letters, community bail funds, national bail out, support in court, ride systems. These are transparent and working orders on accountability to end continual enslavement.

2020 Statistics – USA Homeless

30% women	1 in every 588 American
70% men	194,467 on streets (HUD)
33% family with kids	10 highest states: CA,NY,FL,TX,WA
67% individuals	MA,OR,PA, IL, CO
40% African American	18% chronic homeless
50% White	7% unaccompanied youth under 25
6% Multi-racial	7% Vets
3% American Indian	
1% Asian	(Backpack bed.org)

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The teacher is taught: Lessons from student testimonials

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Introduction

Teaching is one of the most exacting, essential, personally fulfilling, and rewarding professions that an individual could engage in (Johnson, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 2018). The researcher of this study (henceforth referred to as the researcher) believes that teaching is even more exacting, especially today, with all the extremely fast-paced technological advances, the current global pandemic (Coronavirus-19/COVID-19), and the highly charged global politico-socio-economic dynamics. As a result of the nature of the profession and the variability of the factors that impact the profession, those who are engaged in the profession (teachers/educators) have to put into consideration and bring to bear all the pieces of the dynamics that constitute teaching.

Literature Review and Statement of the Problem

The extant literature is replete with studies on teachers and teaching strategies. Effective teaching strategies include visualization, cooperative learning, inquiry-based instruction, differentiation, learning communities, field trips, research projects, collaborative assignments and projects, etc. In reviewing the literature on teachers and teaching strategies, the researcher noted that much of the literature focused more on effective teaching strategies developed from studies conducted with teachers and other educators as participants (Barberos, Gozalo, & Padayogdog, 2021; Ferlazzo, 2021; Rice, 2003; & Sawchuk, 2015). Very few studies however focused on students as participants (Cox & Vann, 2012; Lawler, Chen and Venso, 2007; Yang, 2017).

According to Johnson et al. (2018), society has great expectations for its teachers due to the plethora of roles and responsibilities associated with teaching. In view of these critical mandates for teachers and the relatively few studies on teachers and teaching strategies that include students as participants (Cox and Vann, 2012; Dallimore, Hertenstein & Platt, 2017; Lawler, Chen & Venso, 2007; Yang, 2017), the researcher, who is a teacher in a University, takes these mandates seriously and has chosen to include students in the decisions she makes regarding meeting the mandates of being a teacher. Thus the researcher set out to learn lessons from her students through student testimonials and allowed her students to teach her ways that she could better engage as an effective teacher. Hence the problem of this study, “The teacher is taught: Lessons from student testimonials”.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was for the researcher to learn lessons about teaching strategies from her students at an urban University, and to contribute to the literature on effective teaching strategies. The qualitative research approach was utilized in this study (Flick, 2018/2019; Patton, 2014; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020) because the essence of the study lent itself to qualitative research methods. The research questions posed for this study were: What are students' perceptions of the strategies used in the delivery of instruction in courses? What lessons could be learned from students about delivery of instruction, especially diversifying instructional strategies? To answer the research questions and obtain qualitative data for this study, a Student Testimonials Questionnaire Instrument was designed by the researcher. Seven open-ended questions were posed in the questionnaire that was administered in one semester of the 2020 – 2021 Academic Year to undergraduate students who enrolled in the researcher's courses. Twenty-two (22) undergraduate students from one urban University responded to the questionnaire and thus participated in the study. The details of the data collection and data analysis methods for this study are described in the data collection and data analysis sections of this study. The findings from the study and the lessons learned from the participants in the study are reported and discussed in the findings and discussions section. Recommendations for further study are included in the conclusions.

Limitation of the Study

The findings reported in this study are limited to the data that was collected in one urban University and cannot be generalized. The data was collected in one semester and from two courses only. However, the findings provide a perspective on lessons a teacher could learn from his or her students utilizing the Student Testimonials Questionnaire Instrument.

Data Collection

It has been noted in the introduction section that the qualitative research approach was utilized in this study (Flick, 2018/2019; Patton, 2014; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020) because the essence of the study lent itself to qualitative research methods. The research questions that were posed for this study were: What are students' perceptions of the strategies used in the delivery of instruction in courses? What lessons could be learned from students about delivery of instruction, especially diversifying instructional strategies? To answer the research questions, collect and obtain qualitative data for this study, a Student Testimonials Questionnaire Instrument was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was made up of seven open-ended question prompts and three demographic information prompts to gather participants' background information (demographic data) including their major, classification, and gender. The following open-ended questions were posed: What experiences and activities in this course have been most meaningful and beneficial to you? What experiences and activities in this course have been least meaningful and beneficial to you? What are your comments (thoughts, feelings, views, and opinions) on the instruction you have received from this course, particularly the strategies that were utilized by the Instructor? What are some effective strategies you would use to teach this course if you were the Instructor of the course? How has the content of this course and your experiences in the course prepared you for your future career? What are your comments (thoughts, feelings, views, and opinions) on the knowledge, skills and dispositions/values you have gained from this course? What further comments do you have?

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher to undergraduate students in an urban University here in the United States of America. The population for the study was intentionally selected by the researcher because the researcher conducted the study in order to learn from her students. The questionnaire was administered to students who were enrolled in the researcher's fully asynchronous online courses in the Fall semester of the 2020 – 2021 Academic Year. The courses were conducted online due to the restrictive mandates of the global pandemic of Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19). As a result, the researcher did not have any physical contact with the participants. Participants were assured of

confidentiality and were informed that their names and other identifying indicators they provided would not be included in the report from the study; that their responses would be utilized in a presentation at a conference; and that the findings from their responses would be published in an article.

Twenty-two (41.5%) out of the fifty-three (53) students enrolled in the courses in which the questionnaire was administered responded to the questionnaire. The low rate of return of the questionnaire could be due to the students not being required to complete the questionnaire. Also, the questionnaire was administered online amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The presence of COVID-19 and its resultant uncertainties could also explain the low rate of return for the questionnaire. The data that was analyzed was based only on the responses of the twenty-two (22) students (participants) who completed the questionnaire online and returned them to the researcher.

Data Analysis

To make sense of the data the researcher collected, she read, categorized, and organized the participants' responses based on the open-ended questions stated above. The themes that emerged from the participants' responses were categorized. This article is a report of the findings from the data. The limitations of the study have been stated above. The themes that emerged from the analysis of data were: most meaningful experiences and activities, least meaningful experiences and activities, perspectives on instructional strategies in the course, participants' own versions of effective instructional strategies, effectiveness of strategies and content in preparation for future careers, and perspectives on knowledge, skills and dispositions/values gained from the course. These themes and the lessons gleaned from them by the researcher are discussed in the next section.

Findings, Lessons Learned, Discussions

The findings from the data collected and analysis of the data and the lessons learned by the researcher from the participants (her students) are discussed in this section. As noted in the previous section, the themes that emerged from the analysis of data were: most meaningful experiences and activities, least meaningful experiences and activities, perspectives on instructional strategies in the course, participants' own versions of effective instructional strategies, effectiveness of strategies and content in preparation for future careers, and perspectives on knowledge, skills and dispositions/values gained from the course. Before delving into discussions of the themes, the following is the demographic information from the data.

Demographic Information:

Twenty-two students responded to the Student Testimonials Questionnaire Instrument and became participants in the study. The major areas of study for the participants were: Interdisciplinary Studies, Psychology, and Elementary Education (7 participants), Criminal Justice, Social Science Education, Early Childcare and Family Education (2 participants), History, Special Education (2 participants), Physical Education (3 participants), and Music Education (2 participants). Based on this data, majority of the participants were Elementary Education majors. An explanation could be that the courses from which the researcher collected data were required for Elementary Education majors. The varied major areas of study stemmed from the fact that one of the courses was required for many major areas of study across the University where the data was collected.

In terms of classification, majority of the participants (13 out of 22 or 59%) were seniors. Eight (36.4%) participants were juniors, one participant (4.6%) did not indicate his or her classification, and there were no freshmen and sophomores who participated in the study. The researcher found it interesting that even though one of the courses was required for many areas of study across the University, there were no freshmen or sophomores who participated in the study. Perhaps the other areas of study required their students to take the course in the junior or senior year. Thus the lack of freshmen and sophomore participants as respondents in the study. Majority of the participants (16 out of 22 or 72.7%) were female,

5 (22.7%) were male, and one (4.6%) did not indicate his or her gender. The large number of female participants was perhaps due to the current trend of a preponderant presence of females in higher education, especially at the undergraduate level, and to the fact that the courses were required for Educator Preparation majors, a field which is dominated by women. It has been noted that some of the participants did not indicate their major, or classification, or gender so the researcher could not report demographic information for those participants.

Most Meaningful and Beneficial Experiences and Activities:

The theme most meaningful and beneficial experiences and activities is reported and discussed here. As an Instructor, the researcher is happy to report that 21 (95.4%) out of the 22 participants indicated that the course was meaningful and beneficial to them. Only one (4.6%) participant did not respond to that question so the researcher is unable to determine if the experiences and activities of the course were meaningful or not meaningful to that participant.

The most meaningful and beneficial experiences and activities listed by participants in the study included: reading the history of schools in the United States of America, sharing thoughts and feelings with other students, being able to get feedback from other students, being able to share personal connections to the discussions, discussions assignments, and learning about the history and roles of schools. Other most meaningful experiences and activities were: reading and creating a PowerPoint presentation on the content of a chapter, creating an inquiry design, videotaping oral presentations, posing and responding to questions during an oral presentation, engagement in technologically grounded activities to build skills in use of technology in the classroom, and more. The participants also explained why those experiences and activities were most meaningful to them. Due to lack of space, the researcher will provide only a few excerpts of the participants' responses in this article. The following are excerpts from the participants' responses:

This class I took this semester...was especially interesting, meaningful, and beneficial to me. I enjoyed reading the history of schools in America because that information is not something that most people intentionally seek out. That has been most beneficial to me, and I fail to think of anything that has not been beneficial in some way regarding the class. Learning in general, no matter the topic, is always beneficial.

The most meaningful and beneficial experience in this course to me was being able to share my personal connections to the discussions that we had each week. Through that activity, I was able to share a piece of myself with my classmates as well as my Instructor. I was able to be myself without being judged. Additionally, I was able to hear from my peers their own personal accounts to the topics we discussed.

Reading, creating a PowerPoint presentation, and videotaping myself doing an oral presentation using a PowerPoint presentation were the most meaningful experiences and activities for me in this course. Doing the PowerPoint presentation helped me to better understand inclusion and diversity.

An activity that was most meaningful and beneficial to me was actually creating an inquiry design. This activity was beneficial to me because we had to come up with our own compelling questions and go through all the other steps the process of designing an inquiry comes with.

Least Meaningful Experiences and Activities:

The theme least meaningful experiences and activities is reported and discussed here. The least meaningful experiences and activities were: discussions segment of the assignments, writing papers on topics in the course, developing a PowerPoint and oral presentation, examinations, and reading the textbook. Excerpts from the participants' responses are as follows:

Unfortunately, the discussion boards were the least meaningful mainly because of how long they have to be. I understand that summarizing the chapter helps with comprehension so it wasn't completely terrible.

The activity that was least beneficial to me was the last assignment, which was the PowerPoint and oral presentation. Due to COVID-19, I did not have anyone to film for me. Therefore I was unable to complete the oral and video part of the presentation. My husband was unable to participate and assist me..., and since the number of COVID-19 cases went up, none of my family could come to my house to assist me, leaving me only to be able to complete the PowerPoint portion of the assignment, which furthermore led me to not submit the assignment at all. This assignment was not beneficial to me because I was unable to complete all parts of it on my own. So I feel that I did not get to benefit from the presentation.

The lesson from this is that whereas an experience or an activity is most meaningful and beneficial to one student, the same experience or activity could be least meaningful or beneficial to another student. Of course, research studies point to the variety of student learning styles which render one activity less meaningful or beneficial to one student, but more meaningful and beneficial to another student (Allen, Sheve & Nieter, 2010; Barnier, 2009; Prashnig, 2006; Reid, 2005). In view of this lesson, it is critical that the researcher, as a teacher, expose her students to a plethora of experiences and activities for her students to engage in so none of the students would leave her class without having at least more than one most meaningful and beneficial experience and/or activity.

Perspectives on Instructional Strategies in the Course and Participants' Own Versions of Effective Instructional Strategies:

The themes perspectives on instructional strategies in the course and participants' own versions of effective instructional strategies are reported and discussed here. The participants expressed a variety of perspectives on the instruction they received in the course. The participants' own versions of effective instructional strategies were also very varied. The researcher would postulate that perhaps this was based on the varied academic disciplines and major areas of study that the participants were pursuing when they participated in the study. Excerpts from the participants' responses include:

I thought the Instructor was informative, as we were given assignments with clarity. The work was always available in a timely manner. If I were the teacher of this course, I would handle the delegation of the assignments the same way. I might add a little more personal communication because I think some students need that extra step. The content has helped me to see life through a different lens, as in the racial divide in schools and the hate surrounding the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community. We are not always aware of our surroundings, and it is good to be reminded of the reality we live in as the instruction from this course did.

I feel that my Instructor in this course was excellent. As the Instructor, you have been very easy to contact, easy to communicate with, and you give excellent feedback to let us as students know where we need improvement to prepare for the next assignment. Not all teachers offer so much of their attention to the courses they instruct, but you go over and beyond to make sure your students receive the best instruction possible. You also share your experiences with us through the discussion board, which is always a plus. If I were the Instructor of this course, I would use all of the strategies that you incorporate. The only thing I would do differently is offer quizzes to allow students more room for grade improvement.

The instruction I received from my professor has been prolific, to say the least. Her instruction has helped me become a more confident writer. It has allowed me to deeply express my thoughts in all classes regardless of the outcome. If I were the Instructor of the course, I would get rid of

the textbook and have the students choose articles from the Internet related to what the class requires the Instructor to cover. I would then base all discussions and assignments on those.

Based on the responses, the researcher noted that most of the participants were generally satisfied with the strategies, experiences, and activities utilized by the researcher for delivery of content and general conduct of the courses, and would apply the same strategies, experiences, and activities in their own classrooms. However, not all participants were in accord with the Instructor's methods of content delivery and stated so. The following are excerpts which speak to that:

I feel that the instruction wasn't really helpful. I feel like we were rushing and we were being given work and no explanation. I would do the book work, but add more activities and not just the book work.

I think that if we had more video instruction with this class the instructional time would have been more insightful. Like I said in the question before, I think that I would have created videos for more clear instruction.

I liked the instruction, but I wish that there was a little more interaction between students and the Instructor. I also feel like some assignments could have had clearer instructions. If I were the Instructor of this course, I would make sure that all students understand what is being taught completely. Virtual learning can be a hassle and sometimes the Instructor can explain and expound upon what the book is trying to teach.

The themes effectiveness of strategies and content in preparation for future careers, and perspectives on knowledge, skills and dispositions/values gained from the course are reported and discussed here. Majority of the participants responded that the content and instruction they received from the course had adequately prepared them for their respective future careers. In this regard, the roles, functions and responsibilities of a teacher that had been enumerated by Johnson et al. (2018): teachers are responsible for guiding students' academic achievement; teachers are partially responsible for students' social and physical development; teachers are expected to prepare an educated citizenry that is informed about the innumerable issues essential to maintaining a democracy and to improving our world; teachers are required to help students work together; teachers must try to instill the values that are critical to a just and caring society; and teachers must prepare children and youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to work and function effectively in this highly advanced information age were accomplished in the courses to some extent. The following are excerpts of the participants' responses to this effect:

This course prepared me for my future because now I understand what I'm going to be facing. It seems stories are written about events occurring around the globe like it's the first time such a thing has happened. Unless multiple like-events happen over a short period of time or the event is of such magnitude that it gets our attention, we tend to overlook the likelihood of it occurring in our jurisdiction. The course helps me appreciate and know what to do next.

From this course I have learned that we are faced with the challenge of redefining a foundational education to keep up with the evolution of skills to solve problems, innovate and succeed. But as a society, we are failing to meet that challenge and consequently failing to adequately prepare the next generation for the future. The future of work may be uncertain, but there is one thing that is absolutely clear, our schools should teach the curriculum of the future, not just the curriculum of the past. I intend to teach the curriculum of the future.

I learned so much about the education system. Now that I took this course, it has prepared me for understanding how to run my classroom and the laws within education. I'm excited to use what I've learned to teach in my future classroom!!

This course has prepared me to not be the typical history teacher. I have been taught to think outside of the book to make class interesting. I feel that the course encourages teachers to be the students of their students. As in learning, I have learned what works and what does not work in teaching.

The content and experiences of this course have prepared me for my teaching career because now I know how to construct an inquiry design model that I can use to get students to think critically and problem-solve. I feel I will be more able to challenge the minds of students and allow them to research topics that are interesting to them with a compelling question, but also allow them to meet educational standards.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The researcher conducted this study to learn from her students about the effectiveness of the instructional strategies, the experiences, and activities she utilized to deliver instruction in her courses. The qualitative research methodology was utilized. Data was collected in an urban University from participants enrolled in the researcher's courses from an intentional/purposeful sample population using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed by the researcher reading, categorizing, and organizing the data into themes. The themes that emerged from the analysis of data have been reported and discussed above. The researcher learned several lessons from the participants' responses which are reiterated in the conclusions.

The following are the lessons and conclusions from the study: Many of the experiences and activities were most meaningful and beneficial to most of the participants. Whereas an experience or an activity was most meaningful and beneficial to one student, the same experience or activity could be least meaningful or beneficial to another student. It is thus critical that the researcher, as a teacher, provide her students with a plethora of experiences and activities to engage in. Participants expressed a variety of positive perspectives on the instruction they received in the course, affirming for the researcher her positive and effective engagement in the preparation of future educators and other professionals. The participants' versions of effective instructional strategies were very varied and ranged from adding more personal communication, to offering more quizzes, to including more interactive PowerPoint presentations in learning modules, to getting rid of the course textbook, to creating videos, and more. The content and instruction participants received from the course had adequately prepared them for their respective future careers. Thus, the roles, functions and responsibilities of a teacher that had been enumerated by Johnson et al. (2018) were accomplished in the courses to some extent. Finally, having set out in this study to learn from her students, and having learned many lessons from her students, the researcher intends to actively apply all the lessons she has learned from her students in her future courses. The researcher extends great gratitude to all the students who participated in this study in teaching the teacher through their testimonials. As one of the participants of this study put it, the researcher became a true student of her students in this research study.

The recommendations for further research are: The study could be conducted in graduate courses to determine if there are any significant differences in the lessons learned from undergraduate and graduate students. The study could be replicated in another urban public University, in a two-year college, and in a private University to compare the similarities and differences among the three types of institutions of higher learning. The study could be conducted in face-to-face courses to determine if there are any significant differences in the lessons learned from online courses and the lessons learned from face-to-face courses. The study could be conducted with a much larger population to determine if there are any significant differences between lessons learned from a small purposefully selected population compared to a larger population of participants.

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