

THE HEART OF TEACHING: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF A
WHITE TEACHER'S SOCIALIZATION TO CARE

A Dissertation

by

LAUREN ASHLEY WILLIAMS

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Chair of Committee,	Marlon James
Co-Chair of Committee,	Valerie Hill-Jackson
Committee Members,	Cheryl Craig
	Sara Castro-Olivo
Head of Department,	Michael de Miranda

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I explore my developmental journey as a White, female, multicultural educator. I explore how my formative and professional experiences inform, construct, and affect my capacity to provide care in my instruction and interaction with diverse learners. Through autoethnography, I develop an emergent framework entitled the *Socialization to Care*, which arose from a critical analysis of my formative and professional experiences. The *Socialization to Care* describes the lifelong process of developing social awareness, critical consciousness, and social advocacy to resist bigotry in one's personal and professional life. This ability to see everyone as equally human should be considered a requisite disposition for teachers because the *Socialization to Care* promotes the integration of care as a central praxis of teaching diverse learners. Through a series of interrelated autoethnographies, I explore the critical life and professional experiences that developed my ethic of care and how these life experiences evolved to impact my instructional practices as a culturally responsive teacher. Autoethnography incorporates the conception of ethnography to systematically build an understanding of cultural knowledge into a self-explorative process that results in the production of culturally relevant knowledge and empathy. The need for this research is supported by the need for preservice teachers to develop an ethic of care with a focus on empathy for the whole child which inspires students to develop an intrinsic motivation to learn and is at the heart of culturally relevant teaching.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all my former students in Killeen and Temple, Texas. You opened my eyes to the long-term effects a teacher's love, empathy, and care have on the life of their students. You gave me a space to learn about people, circumstances, and cultures outside of those in my own life and in the traditional academic curriculum. You taught me the importance of fighting and advocating for all students no matter what. Thank you!

I also dedicate this dissertation to my two beautiful living daughters: Maiya Faith and Ava Hope. I pray that you grow to be kind, passionate, and advocating women. "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31:8-9). Keep your focus on doing good and always place love on and have radical empathy for every person you encounter in life the way that Jesus has instructed you. "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12, NIV).

Do good. Be good. Show love.

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Contributors

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Dr. Marlon James as chair, Dr. Valerie Hill-Jackson as co-chair, and Dr. Cheryl Craig of the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture and Dr. Sara Castro-Olivo of the Department of Educational Psychology.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the research of Berlak (2004) and Winans (2010, 2012) teacher educators were found to struggle with helping preservice teachers develop empathy because of the uncomfortable emotions that are necessary in producing transformative empathetic experiences. “In multicultural teacher education, a major challenge is how to connect the experience of discomfort with the experience of empathy” (Zembylas & Papamichael, 2017, p. 4). Empathetic people in general are found to be highly skilled at inferring and decoding other’s feelings and behavior, ultimately improving learning (Swan & Riley, 2012). The capacity of empathy is usually considered as an innate ability to perceive another’s existence. Wispé (1987) explained his ability to empathize by stating, “Just as my sense tells me who *I* am, this capacity allows me to learn about the difference in the ‘foreign’ other; I know I am not he, because my experience of him is different from my experience of me” (p. 34). In order for empathy to be evident in teachers with culturally responsive knowledge, there has to be a deliberate/conscious awareness of their own funds of knowing (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), perceptions, and biases and how each of those impacts their teacher identity and relationships in the classroom. Bouton (2016) affirms that the socio-emotional trait of empathy is a necessary skill for all preservice teachers, a disposition that is not directly taught in teacher education programs, but rather is “a personal and emotional trait that occurs inside of a person’s mind and being” (p. 17). Yet, the *Socialization to Care* is conceptualized as the symbiotic relationship connecting intrapersonal self-reflection with interpersonal

experiences. In this way, the ongoing process of empathy is not just an internal phenomenon but a trans-relational process of external experiences interpreted through critical self-reflection yielding the actualization of care.

1.1. Justification of the Study

Multicultural Care Theory (Kang, 2006) considers empathy as a critical component of care. Haberman (1995) emphasized that a caring teacher-student relationship is not synonymous with a loving teacher-student relationship. Rather, a caring relationship is seen in the teacher's professionalism of maintaining positive beliefs of each students' ability to learn while encouraging academic and social growth and respect. It is in this professional, yet emotional, state that a culturally responsive teacher begins to transition from a position of sympathy (feeling *for* students) to a position of informed empathy (feeling *with* students) (Ladson-Billings, 2011). Additionally, Gay (2000) contends that teachers who embody care tend to have students who perform well holistically-- academically, socially, morally, and culturally-- therefore empathy education is a necessary element to include in teacher preparation classrooms.

McAllister and Irvine (2002) studied practicing teachers' beliefs regarding empathy as an important element in their effectiveness with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. They found that "teachers' beliefs about empathy and their resulting attitudes and behaviors point to the value of nurturing powerful beliefs, such as empathy, in teacher education programs" (McAllister & Irvine, 2002, p. 442). Developing more empathetic teachers to be sent into K-12 classrooms increases the potential for high achievement and greater student confidence in content learning among diverse learners.

More research is needed, particularly in the field of education, on the benefits of empathy as a professional and relational disposition. Because dispositions are acquired, supported, or weakened by environmental interactions (Da Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007), teacher educators must be sure to provide preservice teachers with classroom experiences that will support positive interactions for the relational disposition of empathy to be developed.

Culturally responsive teaching is an essential pedagogical practice for K-12 teachers of our diverse student populations to implement. It is necessary for elements of care, specifically the manifestation of empathy, to be studied by educational researchers to improve teacher preparation programs' ability to develop empathy of preservice teachers before leading a classroom of their own. Ladson-Billings (2009) recognized the school as "a central player in the nurturing of many children; the lucky ones end up in classes where culturally relevant teaching is practiced" (p. 202). Through this autoethnographic study of empathy as a relational disposition for teachers, I will explore how teachers can develop care as the heart of their teaching.

1.2. Research Design

For teachers to be culturally responsive in their classroom and with their students, they must possess an ability to critically assess themselves culturally, socially, and professionally. Autoethnography provides a safe, personal space for preservice teachers to excavate their own understanding of the world in relation to socio-cultural and political issues and policies that play a role in their classroom environment. Muncey (2010) asserts that autoethnography connects the personal to the cultural and develops a

self-narrative that critiques the self and others within the social contexts. Because social identities shape and impact the work of teachers (Brock, Borti, Frahm, Howe, Khasilova, & Venutre-Kalen, 2017), being aware and conscious of the ideologies we hold within ourselves as teachers, allows reflection to occur and an open mind to be developed. Autoethnography, through the lens of the *Socialization to Care*, presents preservice teachers with the opportunity to analyze their own experiences surrounding issues that block a true ethic of care for diverse students, providing teacher educators with a method of excavating culturally relevant knowledge that is care-centered and empathy-driven.

Devine, Fahie, & McGillicuddy (2013) stressed the importance of teachers' reflections on their beliefs and attitudes towards students as a way to define their educator identity and shape their understandings and definitions of others, especially students. Autoethnography provides a vehicle for educational research to do just that: create both a process of and a product for teacher reflection to occur and awareness to develop (Merriam, 2009). Through thick description, an understanding of multiple influences of culture and the contexts they accompany provide everything needed to perceive meaning in ethnographic findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When developing culturally responsive teachers, this type of research method proves to give realistic and relatable explanations of what is seen through "the lens of culture" (Merriam, 2009) by providing both emic and etic perspectives.

Culturally responsive teachers seek out knowledge about the cultures represented in their classrooms in order to modify the curriculum and instruction into a more inclusive learning experience (Farinde-Wu, Glover, & Williams, 2017; Gay, 2010;

Ladson-Billings, 2011, 2014). They understand that culturally responsive teaching “helps students learn more about their own and others’ cultures, as part of their personal development and preparation for community membership, civic engagement, and social transformation” (Gay, 2015). These teachers take responsibility in providing the best environment possible for their students, exhibiting persistence in developing relationships with all students, readily admitting fallibility when they are wrong, and applying practical theory to student learning that enhances the unique learning styles of all students (Haberman, 1995). Because they proudly take on the responsibility of covering curriculum requirements in a way that connects to real life contexts (Ladson-Billings, 2011), their students learn content-specific knowledge while also gaining important social skills and wisdom. A culturally competent teacher disposition communicates to students that their teacher cares. Craig (1995) cites Dewey’s (1917) claim that “communication enables knowledge to become a common possession of community members” (p. 152), so culturally responsive teacher dispositions help to shape the caring dispositions of their students in the classroom.

1.3. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation will utilize a format of three interconnected manuscripts. Duke and Beck (1999) advise that writing a dissertation as a series of articles allows the research “to be received by a wider audience” (p. 32). According to Krathwohl (1994) “the traditional five-chapter dissertation trains students in a writing structure they will probably never again use” (p. 30) and those faculty members who supervise them “are in a far better position to pass on [the capacity to write for publication] than at any other

time in the graduate experience” (p. 31). The current dissertation study will include an introductory chapter, three independent manuscript chapters with prospective journal submission selections, and a concluding chapter that actualizes the findings of each manuscript into a preservice teacher curriculum.

1.3.1. Chapter II (Manuscript 1) – The Heart of Teaching: An Autoethnographic Analysis of a Teacher’s Preparatory Experiences

This autoethnographic analysis is a critical examination of how my formative interpersonal relationships and intrapersonal development has shaped my ethic of care. As a White female multicultural educator, it is critical to explore how my beliefs and attitudes towards others shape my identity and my understanding of and empathetic capacity towards those outside my own cultural groups. My ongoing journey as an empathic educator began with my parents’ efforts develop within me a strong sense of care for others. Their parenting and commitment to equality provided a protective barrier from bigotry, bias, and prejudice maximizing my development of social and cultural awareness which later became the foundation for my commitment to culturally responsive education.

1.3.1.1. Research Questions

1. What experiences informed my earlier development of social and cultural awareness?
2. How did my family address issues of equity in my childhood to limit the development of bias, prejudice, and bigotry within me?

3. In what ways did the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge and limited exposure to prejudice and bigotry inform and construct my empathetic capacity?

1.3.1.2. Selected Journal for Submission

For this manuscript, I will submit to the *International Journal of Multicultural Education* (IJME), “a peer-reviewed open-access journals for scholars, practitioners, and students of multicultural education” (ijme-journal.org). The IJME is the successor of the Electronic Magazine of Multicultural Education established in 2007 (ijme-journal.org). The current manuscript’s emphasis on the development of social and cultural awareness through issues of equity in my childhood fits within the mission of the IJME: equity driven, cross-cultural understanding in all educational levels. The *International Journal of Multicultural Education* has an impact factor of .38. The acceptance rate for this journal is 13%.

1.3.2. Chapter III (Manuscript II) – The Heart of Teaching: Mirror Moment Reflections of Classroom Interactions

This autoethnographic analysis explores the ways in which my ethic of care was actualized in the classroom through my interactions with family, colleagues, and students. The *Socialization to Care* is conceptualized as the lifelong process of developing deeper levels and expressions of empathy and actualizing these dispositions within schools through care-centered interactions with colleagues and students. This article is part two of a three-part autoethnography that provides a channel for reflection of how my interactions with colleagues and students actualized my empathetic capacity in the classroom. The social and emotional environment of a classroom directly

influences the cognitive learning of students (Goleman, 2004). Therefore, it is important for teachers to be active in developing relationships while consciously internalizing those interactions to provide support, love, and care for their students. In my career as a classroom teacher, I came to believe that being an advocate for students is a necessary characteristic of effective teachers that is grounded in empathy and compassion for every single student that walked into my classroom.

1.3.2.1. Research Questions

1. In what ways did interactions with coworkers foster care-centered relationships and encourage student success in the classroom?
2. How did my interactions with students contribute to the development of my ethic of care and empathy in instructional practices?

1.3.2.2. Selected Journal for Submission

For this manuscript, I will submit to the *Journal for Teacher Education*. This journal serves in preparing pre-service teachers as well as continuing to support in-service teachers in having a voice in the educational system. The premise of the current manuscript is to use my own experiences to provide a channel for other teachers to feel free and safe to explore and reflect on their own experiences in the classroom. The *Journal of Teacher Education* has an impact factor of 2.984. The acceptance rate for this journal is 0-10%.

1.3.3. Chapter IV (Manuscript III) – The Heart of Teaching: Actualizing Care into the Instructional Practices of a White Female Teacher

This autoethnography analyzes how my ethic of care was actualized in the classroom through instructional practices. The *Socialization to Care* is defined as a lifelong process of developing deeper levels and expressions of empathy. This process develops and continues to modify a person’s ethic of care. This article is part three of a three part autoethnography that provides a channel for reflection of the caring relationships built with my students and how those relationships helped to develop relevant instructional practices in the classroom. Relational dispositions of a teacher stem from a relational ethic that is “dependent on a natural caring” (Noddings, 1988, p. 219). A teacher who displays the components of empathy as an element of care have the relational dispositions of being conversational, curious, and challenging. There are three ways in which care is demonstrated to students through the type of instruction used in the classroom and the way that the teacher presents the content of the curriculum: recognizing students’ communities, having high expectations for all students, celebrating success through the lenses of uniqueness and growth. Through autoethnography, I analyze the ways in which my empathetic capacity informed my instructional practices with my students.

1.3.3.1. Research Questions

1. What types of instructional practices were developed through my *Socialization to Care* as a classroom teacher?

2. How did the instructional practices utilized in my classroom affect the social and academic experiences of my students?

1.3.3.2. Selected Journal for Submission

For this manuscript, I will submit to *Teacher Education Quarterly*. This journal proclaims that its goal is to improve the education of both pre- and in-service teachers, specifically focussing on empirical studies that inform teacher professional development. The current manuscript centers on the instructional aspect of teaching and how empathy is foundational in that instruction. This pedagogical aspect of the theory of the *Socialization to Care* is not only important to develop in pre-service teachers, but also to maintain through continued professional developments of in-service teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly* has an impact factor of 7.02. The acceptance rate for this journal is 11-20%.

1.4. Conclusion

This dissertation concludes with a synthesis of discoveries developed from the three manuscripts that form the theory of the *Socialization to Care*. This theory supports the importance of excavating culturally relevant knowledge in preservice teachers to minimize the influence that biases and prejudices may have in classroom interactions and instructional practices. In addition, a four-week module session that actualizes in a preservice teacher program will be informed by these findings. Finally, recommendations will be offered for the field of education as it relates to improving the development and sustainment of teacher dispositions that are supportive for diverse learners in the classroom.

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2. THE HEART OF TEACHING: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF A WHITE TEACHER'S PREPARATORY EXPERIENCES

When I was in fourth grade, my parents put me into a smaller school district whose elementary school was right down the road from our home. With my dad being in the medical field and working close with many doctors at the local hospital, my parents had heard many great things about this school district. The school had smaller class sizes, was in a smaller community with no crime, and had high student test scores for the area. It was not until I was enrolled, however, that my parents became aware of the lack of diversity within the district. In fact, the majority of students were White and lived in middle-class families. Only one Black student attended the school, and he was in my class. His name was Markel, and he and I were friends.

Markel, like myself, was from a community outside of this school district. We were both in the *nerd* group, and we both really enjoyed the swings on the playground. One day while at the playground, a White boy in our class, Cody, began to pick on Markel's skin color, his glasses, and the fact that he hung out with girls and not boys. Markel didn't say a word back. In fact, he continued to swing in an attempt to ignore Cody's put downs. It wasn't long until Cody pushed Markel off the swing and began beating him up. Markel laid on the ground trying his best to keep his face covered and his glasses protected. The teachers on duty came over and stopped the fight, took the boys inside the school, and requested that the rest of us on the playground go about our play.

After recess, we returned to our classrooms. Cody was there; Markel was not. Worried, I asked my teacher if Markel was okay. She quickly snapped at me saying, “He is fine. He has been sent home. We do not condone fighting in this school.” Confused, I remained distracted by my own thoughts for the rest of the school day. I wrestled with recognizing the teachers and other leaders of the school as authority figures who should be doing what was just and right while understanding how Markel was treated in comparison with Cody was unfair and wrong.

My mom picked me up from school each day and always asked how my day was as soon as I got in the car, but this day she was not expecting her question to prompt the discussion it did. “Momma, Cody beat up Markel today, but Markel didn’t do anything and didn’t even hit Cody back. But Markel got in trouble and Cody didn’t. Why? I don’t understand.” My mother was in shock. In the rearview mirror, I could see her eyebrows rise and eyes widen. She did not blink and for a minute did not say anything as she started to breathe deeply. My gut feeling that the school’s disparate treatment of Markel was a problem was confirmed by my mother’s concerned and unsettled look. She explained to me that the school was wrong, that Cody should have been in trouble, and that Markel should have been protected and comforted.

From recess until my mom picked me up from school, I was bothered by what I saw and how I felt about the way things were handled by the school. I knew it was wrong that Markel was treated like he was by Cody. I knew it was wrong that Markel got in trouble, and Cody did not. And worst of all, I knew that the difference in treatment of the two boys was based on something more than the actions displayed on the

playground; they were treated different because they were different. Cody looked like our teachers and the other students; Markel did not. Cody's family was from this town; Markel's was not. Through reflection of what I had seen that day, this intrapersonal experience helped to begin shaping my understanding of the injustices and inequalities within the educational sphere of society.

The semester's ending was only a few weeks away, and my parents made the decision to transfer me back to my previous district. Moving me out of a school that promoted blatant racism was a necessity in their eyes to make sure that the values and morals of viewing and treating all people as humans with respect, love, and empathy was maintained in me.

2.1. Statement of the Problem

The conceptual framework of this article theorizes that the nature and quality of formative experiences constitutes what I call a type of preparatory care, which predisposes an individual to develop pedagogical care as a future educator. It is conceptualized as a symbiotic relationship between the intrapersonal self-reflections and the interpersonal experiences individuals have throughout their lives. This framework requires the meshing of White feminists' conceptions of care (Applebaum, 1998; Gilligan, 1982; Houston, 1998; Noddings, 1984, 2013; Ruddick, 1989) with Black feminists' conceptions of care (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Collins, 1993, 1995; Foster 1997; hooks, 1994, 2001; Thompson, 1998, 2004) (see Figure 1). Within this meshing, the common use of empathy as a core element of care becomes a foundation for developing a care-centered disposition. It has been argued that this empathetic capacity,

typically considered an innate ability, can actually be developed through a deliberate and conscious awareness of one's own funds of knowing, perceptions, and personal biases along with the recognition and validation of the experiences of others (Bouton, 2016; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Wispé, 1987). It is through this understanding that empathy is seen as an ongoing process that people must consciously pursue through critical self-reflection of their external experiences.

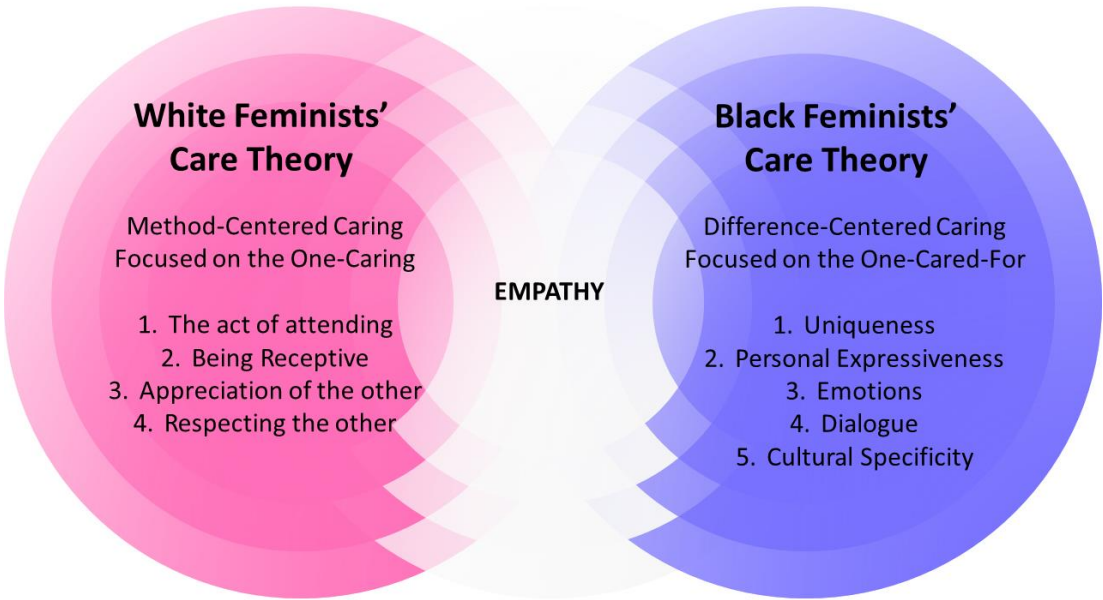


Figure 1: Comparison of Black and White Feminists' Characteristics of Care

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. The History of Empathy

Empathy is a term that has been reshaped, redefined, and reinterpreted throughout time. From psychology to education, the term has been recognized as an important concept to human experiences and a fundamental process of attempting to understand the emotional and mental states of another. For many years, empathy has been a topic of concern, specifically in its definition and components. Psychologists from the late 19th century, throughout the 20th century, and into the 21st century have constantly disputed whether empathy involved cognitive or affective reactions (Allport, 1937; Davis, 1983; Hackney, 1978; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Lipps, 1905; Rogers, 1959; Thornton & Thornton, 1995; Thwaites & Bennett-Levy, 2007; Titchener, 1909; Truax & Carkhuff, 1965; Vischer, 1873; Wispé, 1987). When the ethic of care was introduced by Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (1984) in the late twentieth century, the concept of behavioral reactions to display empathy emerged, and the theories in which the trifecta of cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions were viewed as necessary components to being empathetic (Carlozzi, Gaa, & Liberman, 1983; Ruby & Decety, 2004; Romm, 2007; Lam, Kolomitro, & Alamparambil, 2011).

Empathy is a very young word in the English language. It was translated by Titchener (1909) from the German word *Einfühlung* meaning “feeling into,” a concept of psychological aesthetics developed by Robert Vischer in 1873 (Swan & Riley, 2012; Wispé, 1987). “Vischer’s psychology of aesthetic appreciation involved a projection of the self into the object of beauty” (Wispé, 1987, p. 18). His definition of *Einfühlung* is

essentially the action of “inner imitation” (Jahoda, 2005) of what an object emotionally depicts, a projection of your own imagined feelings onto a piece of the world (e.g. experiencing the color blue as sad, or the sound of a chirping bird as happy). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, empathy was not a primary way to feel with others through *their* perspective, but rather to feel with others through a projection of *your own* feelings onto them.

In the early 1900s, Lipps (1905) reshaped the identity of *Einfühlung* as a connection of two spheres of knowledge: knowledge of self and knowledge of objects (Wispé, 1987). This connection, however, remained a very self-centered view of “feeling with” that used a “me” lens instead of a “them” lens. In 1905, Volkelt commented on the concept of *Einfühlung* as having no limit to the aesthetics of art, but rather that it is a daily occurrence of the human experience. Lipps (1905) supported this recognition and expressed the problem with the study of *Einfühlung* as failing to address “how we come to know other people’s minds” (Jahoda, 2005, p. 155).

Beginning in the 1930s, the concept of empathy became a focus of psychologists (Allport, 1937; Cartwright & Cottrell, 1948; Rogers, 1975) who studied human personalities. Allport (1937) pointed to the necessity of recognizing the consciousness of the other in order to actually possess empathy in the self, a primarily affective phenomenon of being able to experience the emotions of another person without requiring the same lived experiences. Not long after, Rosalind Dymond Cartwright and Leonard Cottrell (1948) rejected the earlier definition of empathy as imaginative projection and redefined the concept as an emphasis on interpersonal connections. It was

during the next few decades that the concepts of empathy and projection were then separated as two very different ways of feeling. Early in his career, Carl Rogers (1959) defined empathy as

[Perceiving] the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the “as if” condition. Thus it means to sense the hurt or the pleasure of another as he senses it and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them, but without ever losing the recognition that it is “as if” I were hurt or pleased and so forth. (p. 210-211)

This soon manifested into Rogers’ (1975) work and study in academic psychology where he adjusted his definition as a process that occurs moment-to-moment and requires the ability to lay aside views and values of the self in order to enter the other’s world without prejudice. The importance of the “as if” condition is still relevant because the self must always be secure enough to easily return to its own world.

While the term empathy is currently common in everyday conversation, the debate of its definition still continues (Davis, 1983; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Thornton & Thornton, 1995; Twaites & Bennett-Levy, 2007). Truax and Carkhuff (1965) offer a definition of empathy as extending from a solely cognitive and affective way of feeling to a more behavioral way of doing by claiming that the empathetic person must also be able to actively communicate with the one with whom they are feeling. By the early 1970s, the term empathy had 21 different active definitions in psychology

research (Hackney, 1978), providing other fields of study a plethora of ways to interpret empathy's impact on their own disciplines.

2.2.2. Empathy in Teacher Education

The history of empathy in field of education begins its story as an overshadowed component of the notion of care, pioneered as *care theory* by White feminists Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (1984, 2013). Care theory urges the importance of educators to model care through dialogue, practice, and confirmation based on the needs, responses, and relationships of and with their students. Later, other White feminists (Applebaum, 1998; Houston, 1998; Ruddick, 1989) joined the care conversation, ultimately defining the idea of method-centered caring or *how to care*: (1) the act of attending, (2) empathy, (3) being receptive, (4) appreciation of the other, and (5) respecting the other (Kang, 2006). Thus, the research of the study of care, from the *how to care* lens, continued to focus on how the one-caring can show care towards the one-cared-for, full attention being on the one-caring rather than the one-cared-for (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984, 2013; Ruddick, 1989; Applebaum, 1998; Houston, 1998).

Black feminists (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Collins, 1993, 1995; Foster, 1997; hooks, 1994, 2001; Thompson, 1998, 2004) began to define the concept of difference-centered caring or *who is the one-cared-for*: (1) uniqueness, (2) personal expressiveness, (3) emotions, (4) empathy, (5) dialogue, and (5) cultural specificity (Kang, 2006).

Recognizing diversity in the classroom in terms of care became an essential ability for teachers to develop (hooks, 1994, 2001), specifically in order to validate the worth of students' experiences and cultures as they are relevant to the learning process and the

school environment, a concept coined as culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Gay, 2000, 2015). Overall, the theme of the ethic of care among Black feminist researchers places the focus on the individual who is being cared-for in order that the care effectively and efficiently develops as a pedagogical practice within the teacher, the one-caring.

Arne Johan Vetlesen, a Norwegian professor of philosophy, developed a schema called “moral performance” (Verducci, 2000, p. 74). His process includes three stages of moral development. The first is a person’s ability to perceive a situation as moral along with herself/himself as a moral person. The second is the ability of that moral person in a moral situation to be able to make accurate judgments about each person within the situation. The third is the action taken by that moral person towards another. Vetlesen’s schema of moral performance frames empathy as a process where “perception yields judgment which yields action” (Verducci, 2000, p. 74). In teacher education, this idea is seen in the explanation of a culturally relevant teaching pedagogy. In order to be a culturally relevant *one-caring*, a teacher must first be able to identify and manage his/her perception of the *one-cared-for*, including any biases or prejudices she may harbor. From a clear and objective perception of the *one-cared-for*, the teacher can then make judgments on effective instructional methods needed to support the student holistically. This judgement develops actions of applying those methods in a caring manner.

Gay (2002) connected the concept of care with culturally relevant teaching and stressed the importance of creating classroom environments that support learning for diverse students by citing Foster (1997) and Kleinfeld’s (1974, 1975) notion that high

level of teacher care is demonstrated through high expectations of student success. This approach to caring provided a very different interpretation than the notion of care that previous researchers had characterized as gentle or nurturing (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984, 2013). Gay (2002) insisted that teacher care “is a moral imperative, a social responsibility, and a pedagogical necessity” (p. 109) that must be developed through a partnership between teacher and student that can only be created with a high level of care and a deep disposition of empathy.

While empathy has been a topic for researchers for over 150 years, it remains a complex term across multiple fields. Conceptions of empathy continue to be “used by different disciplines, for different ends, and with different object matters” (Verducci, 2000, p. 78). However, in education there still lacks significant and substantial research and findings for empathy’s effects in the classroom. What has been discovered is that through empathy as a component of care, student motivation, confidence, and academic achievement can thrive through culturally inclusive curriculum, culturally responsive instruction, and positive classroom environments where all students feel encouraged, respected, and worthy of an excellent education.

2.2.3. Socialization

Socialization is the term used by sociologists to refer to the lifelong process in which individuals inherit cultural and social norms, ideas, and customs. It is how people learn to function in society and is the most influential learning process experienced as it never ends and is always developing both awareness of self and consciousness of others. Charles Cooley’s (1902) theory of “the looking glass self” asserts that self-awareness is

developed first by the ways in which we perceive how others view us. This theory manifests in three steps:

1. “The imagination of our appearance to the other person;
2. The imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and
3. Some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification” (Cooley, 1902, p. 152).

This theory of socialization is thoroughly relational because the human self is developed out of social interactions (Downey, 2015) which eventually leads to a social consciousness. Cooley’s (1902) looking glass self supports the concept that “we have a tendency to become the person others say we are” (Hensley, 1996, p. 295). George Herbert Mead’s (1934) theory of the self, expands Cooley’s theory and also embodies three tenants:

1. The self develops through social interaction;
2. Social interaction is the exchange of symbols; and
3. Understanding the symbols requires the ability to take the role of another.

Mead’s theory of the self (1934) supports this article’s assertion that socialization can lead to the development and fostering of an empathetic capacity within the self. When we can move from simply seeing ourselves through Cooley’s looking glass to consciously taking those intrapersonal reflections and apply them to interpersonal interactions, socialization becomes an active experience of developing empathy towards others and a critical consciousness of our social world. This is how empathy becomes an ongoing process rather than an innate ability humans are simply born with or without.

Harro's (2004) cycle of socialization begins this process at birth, a time when one has a unique identity but no consciousness of the world around them. This cycle is often used as a pedagogical tool when teaching about the concepts of social justice. From that stage of no social consciousness, individuals move to the first stage of true socialization where his/her spheres of influence (parents, family members, community members, etc.) teach them the social roles and norms. These messages are not only delivered to individuals directly (i.e., a father tells his son to hold doors open for ladies), but also indirectly in how people treat or act towards those outside their identity groups (i.e., a mother holds her purse and her daughter's hand tighter when a Black man is near). After this first stage of socialization, institutional and cultural socialization is introduced. It is here that the institutions people encounter consistently (i.e., religious organizations, educational systems, governmental entities) begin to influence their socialization and identities to reflect the values of each institution. The cultural values, beliefs, and individual expectations these institutions embody and edify are used to constantly mold a prototype of people that match. As Harro's socialization cycle continues, the larger society begins to reinforce validity of the institutions' knowledge. This causes the individual to have to decide of whether to take on society's beliefs, values, and expectations as characteristics of their own identities or to resist and develop their own through self-reflection and critical consciousness.

2.2.4. Critical Consciousness

Gay and Kirkland (2003) suggest that "teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical, and analytical of one's own teaching beliefs and behaviors"

(p.181). When the teacher is awareness of who she is and what her prejudices and biases are in relation to her values and beliefs, she has the ability to see necessary changes that must be made within her own character. “Self-consciousness of self-change is a process and product of self-reflection” (Xu, 2018, p. 834), a necessary tool in contemplating the meaningful events that happen in people’s lives and the reactions they have towards them to better handle similar future encounters (Nagata, 2004). Through self-reflection, critical consciousness begins to develop over time (McKenzie et al, 2008) as people “achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities which shape [their] lives and discover [their] own capacities to recreate them” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 14). When a person critically examines what is immediately in their own realities, the individual provides himself opportunities to deeply examine the assumptions he makes based on sociocultural issues that connect with those realities. Critical consciousness develops through self-reflection and dialogue with others (Jacobs & Crowell, 2018), an important symbiotic relationship of intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences.

2.3. Research Questions

1. What experiences informed my earlier development of social and cultural awareness?
2. How did my family address issues of equity in my childhood to limit the development of bias, prejudice, and bigotry within me?
3. In what ways did the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge and limited exposure to prejudice and bigotry inform and construct my empathetic capacity?

2.4. Methodology

At the end of my first year of teaching, I felt a calling to take a deep examination of my experiences with prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination throughout my entire life. Being surrounded by so many students and coworkers from different races, belief systems, and social classes on a day-to-day basis made me conscious of issues in the educational system that I previously had not noticed. However, it was not until the end of my second year of teaching that I began journaling memories of my preparatory experiences that impacted the foundation of empathy on which my classroom pedagogy seemed to be built. These journal entries were later infused with reflections of old conversations I had with my mother and father about their preparatory experiences and how those impacted their own development and led to their socially aware and critically conscious parenting style. After my third year of teaching, I began pursuing my PhD. One of the first questions I was asked by a professor was, “What do you want to research?” My response was a broad and complex question, but it was something I felt passionate about finding the answer to and that I had been exploring through my own life experiences for two years prior: “How are some teachers able to build strong, positive relationships with their students from all different backgrounds so easily and others seem to struggle or not even care to do so?” It was then that autoethnography emerged as the methodological channel that I would use to navigate the complexities of this question because my story is bigger than myself. My story is a part of the social and cultural map in the larger society surrounding me, and it is important that I, and others

who become teachers, take moments to look in the mirror and critically reflect on our beliefs, values, and actions.

A mirror is a clever, little device. It allows us to see ourselves the way others see us. When I was a teenager on the dance team at my high school, our director had floor-to-ceiling mirrors lining the dance studio. As we practiced our choreography, I could see my movements and whether or not those my movements were complimentary of the other dancers. Those mirrors provided immediate feedback, so I could refine my choreography real time rather than waiting until the next practice to adjust my movements. It took many hours of practice watching my reflection and changing what I did in relation to those around me, but once I got the hang of it, I could adapt very quickly to the needs of my dance team. Likewise, my ability to critically reflect on my actions and their impact on others became second nature much like dancing in a mirror.

Autoethnography is defined as a research method that “seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 273). For me, however, this method is like considering my reflection in the mirrors of a dance studio, but instead of analyzing my dance movements, I consider the quality of my interactions, communication, and my pedagogical practices in my classroom. Autoethnography requires critical considerations of how the past ties to the present; I refer to these instances as mirror moments. We all have them, but rarely are still enough to consider how a past experience or movement determines in some ways our present realities and the implications they have on others. Autoethnography provides opportunities to analyze

our mirror moments allowing teachers and researchers to see events, interactions, and communication from new and informative perspectives. This reflection is accomplished in autoethnographies by using different theoretical mirrors, which, of course, will tie more closely to some life experiences and connect individual experience to wider social-cultural happenings (Chang, 2008).

Autoethnography provides a channel to explain the deep connections between the experiences I live and the larger society in which those experiences exist. The experiences described in the forthcoming autoethnography are positioned around the concept of care and empathy described in the theories of Black and White feminists (Applebaum, 1998; Collins, 1993, 1995; Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1994, 2001; Houston, 1998; Noddings, 1984, 2013; Ruddick, 1989; Thompson, 1998, 2004). These stories are my own mirror moments regarding how my capacity for empathy and care was cultivated and fostered in my preparatory years and how they informed my classroom pedagogy.

At the end of my second year of teaching, I began journaling memories of experiences that impacted my empathetic capacity that informed my classroom pedagogy. The original journal entry list of experiences comprised of six anecdotes. I narrowed this list down to three stories that were most impactful on my empathetic capacity and were specific to the way in which my parents socialized me in my formative years. Later, the original six journal entries were infused with reflections of conversations I had with my parents about their preparatory experiences and how those impacted their own development and led to their socially aware and critically conscious

parenting style. This gave me four stories (two separate stories from my father and two interconnected stories from my mother). The space of my marriage included significant experiences with my in-laws surrounding equity and bigotry. The original journal list of these experiences was comprised of five anecdotes which I narrowed down to two that stood out as cornerstone moments that impacted my empathetic capacity towards students.

The themes that emerged show the importance of socialization in developing empathy, resisting bigotry, and becoming critically conscious. Through autoethnographic research, I possess the freedom to self-reflect and analyze these experiences surrounding issues of prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination and how these experiences later developed culturally relevant knowledge within my teacher identity that is care-centered and empathy-driven. By analyzing each data source through a spiral (see Figure 2), I was able to methodically and thoughtfully choose the anecdotes that were highlighted by personal impact, clearly focused through the lenses of care, empathy and cultural relevance, and finally validated and supported by literature and research.

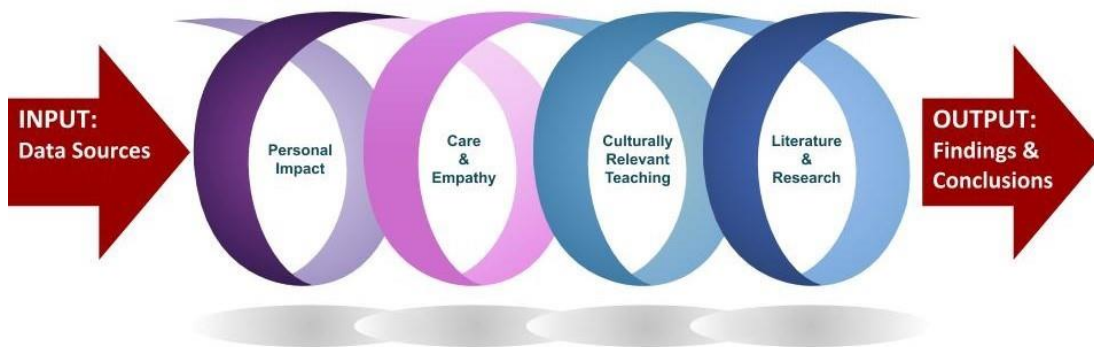


Figure 2: Analysis Process

2.5. Familial and Personal Experiences that Impacted My Socialization

We are not born with an understanding of the definition of every label that society has placed on someone. Those definitions are taught to us throughout our lives. Personality development is a lifelong journey of interacting with our environment (Ostlund, 1957). As children we absorb all of the information that we are given, so it follows that the way a parent speaks of others directly impacts how their children speak of others as well. As a child, I was left oblivious to the ideas that someone with a different skin color, gender, sexuality, or culture than me was considered by society to be different in other ways than my own as a White, middle class, heterosexual, Christian woman. My parents did not bring attention or focus to the differences between people. Instead, their energy was centered around teaching my sister and me how to be good and loving people. There were always different types of people in our home, and we never turned people away based on the labels that society put on them.

As I grew up, I realized there was something different about how I was being molded compared to others around me. How my mind analyzed, interpreted, and stored the experiences I had with my family and the experiences I had in my community always seemed different than others. From childhood to the present, I first notice the similarities between people before noticing the differences. This is not to say that I do not recognize differences; I can absolutely identify when someone is different from me or someone else, but those differences come second to the similarities that I see. Once I identify the similarities, the differences become less threatening, and I am able to put internalized biases and prejudices, that I recognize that I do possess, in check before allowing those

to affect relationships with someone who is different from me. This focus on similarities must be consciously learned in order to overcome the social stigmas that may later attempt to become ingrained in us throughout life. It is here that developing prejudice reduction (Stephan and White, 2004) and a true sense of care (Noddings, 2013) in the hearts and minds of teachers becomes essential.

Preparatory care begins with the experiences of a parent that developed their own morals and values ultimately passed down to their children. Formative experiences throughout childhood and into early adulthood help to determine the way you internalize and actualize care towards others, attributes that actively construct parenting styles. For three years my mother raised me on her own, until I was blessed with a stepfather who functioned as the only “Daddy” I have ever known. In fact, it is strange to even refer to him as a stepfather because of the close father-daughter bond we have had since he entered my life. Both of my parents’ childhood experiences played a major role in the upbringing they provided for me. Though they came from different backgrounds, the meshing of their experiences allowed for a solid foundation of care to be set in order to take active steps in minimizing my direct exposure to social bigotry and to see everyone as equally human.

The following preparatory experiences highlight critical moments that shaped my parents’ understanding of the world around them. These experiences shaped their parenting choices that provided their children with opportunities to develop an equitable and tolerant character.

2.5.1.1. Parental Experiences – Father

2.5.1.1.1. The Farm

Preparatory care is comprised of dual communication experiences, those that are intrapersonal and those that are interpersonal. The following anecdote is an example of an intrapersonal experience my father had as a very young child which ultimately trickled down as an important secondary source experience for me as his daughter. His reflections of the world around him and his care towards others ultimately paved his understanding of care and love for those individuals who are from a different racial group than himself. The reflection on the following experience provided my father a strong foundation on which he developed his parenting skills.

My father's family is from Florida. They owned a large farm on which they employed Black workers. The question of whether these Black workers were descendants of slaves that his family possibly owned has not been thoroughly researched. While no living family member has personal knowledge or any documents to prove such, there are several, including my father, who remember being told that in the times before my great-great-grandfather, the farm was worked by Black slaves before they were legally freed and began working for monetary pay. These workers are described by my grandmother and my father as being like a part of the family. They visited with the family. They ate with the family. They celebrated holidays with the family including the exchanging of gifts, and their children played with the family's children. The Black families were in the day-to-day life of my father's White family.

My father tells a story about an experience he had as a young boy while sitting on the front porch, shelling peas with one of the Black women who worked on the farm. A town car was seen driving up the long driveway and the Black woman named Nelly said, “Lord have mercy, I better get my Black ass to the back.” My father, an eight year old boy, being an ignorant to the social reasons behind this, stood up with her and said, “I better get my Black ass to the back, too.” Nelly turned and looked at him and said, “Child you are not Black. You stay up here with the other White folks.”

Though this exchange was logistically interpersonal, it was the intrapersonal reflection he had that was so pivotal in his recognition of the social difference between him and the Black family that he saw and interacted with daily. Mead’s (1934) theory of self and the development of self occurs through social interactions. My father moved from Cooley’s looking glass self (1902) to Mead’s ability to consciously reflect through the interaction he had with Nelly. He develop an empathy toward her because he understood that he genuinely loved her and saw her as equally human and equally family, even if society said that she was not.

2.5.1.1.2. Mr. DuPont

The communication and care that takes place between people is referred to as interpersonal care. In the next story, a significant interpersonal experience is outlined as my father, in his teenage years, learned the true nature of negative narratives and labels placed on disenfranchised groups in society.

My grandfather’s close family friend owned a ranch in central Texas. One of the ranch hands was a Black man with no more than a 3rd grade education. His name was

Leonard DuPont but all of the White adult men called him N*g, a name that Mr. DuPont responded to and called himself when in their presence. One day, when my father was 17 years old, he was standing with the White men and Mr. DuPont on the ranch. My father, following the example he had been given by the other men, addressed Mr. DuPont as they did: N*g. His father immediately pulled him to the side, away from the other men, and said, “You are never to call Mr. DuPont that word ever again, and you will apologize to him before we leave. I do not care what the other men say or how they address him, but you are to refer to him as Mr. DuPont and Mr. DuPont only, do you understand, boy?”

It was during this interpersonal conversation with my grandfather when my father realized that, while the other men referred to Mr. DuPont as N*g, his father never did. Harro’s (2004) cycle of socialization is seen in this interaction. A major sphere of influence in my father’s life, his father, delivered a direct message about how to treat and act towards others. This corrective conversation defined my grandfather as an open-minded man, consciously aware of the power of words and labels used to identify others, a marker that he resisted the social norms that caused harm towards others (Harro, 2004), something my father admired and cultivated into his own personal belief system.

2.5.1.2. Parental Experiences – Mother

2.5.1.2.1. Special Needs Brother

There is a symbiotic relationship between interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences. Though each are separate pieces of preparatory care, interpersonal experiences ultimately provide context and content for the intrapersonal experiences to

occur. Conversely, intrapersonal experiences provide reference points for interpersonal experiences that manifest in the future. The following is an explanation of the collaboration of interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences my mother had as a child that developed a strong empathy and care towards people with special needs and disabilities.

My mother grew up in a home with three other siblings: two older brothers and one younger sister. One of her brothers, Simon, was never given an official special needs diagnosis, but he was different than the other children his age in their community. Overall, he was behind in the mental maturity levels of his classmates, and instead of being understanding, his classmates would often put him down and bully him. My mother, whose maturity level exceeded that of many of her classmates, found herself in a protective role, sticking up for Simon's unique abilities and for his humanity. Because of how often these experiences happened, my mother has a hard time remembering just one particular situation. She explained that there were many times when she was hanging out with her friends in a large group setting, and Simon was doing his own thing off to the side. It was common that a group of boys would approach him and mock and tease him about his glasses, calling him four-eyes. They would make fun of his very large stature, referring to him as Moose. She described the ridicule as more than just mean, but truly demonic.

Simon was almost always oblivious to his status and seemed unaware that kids were laughing *at* him and not *with* him. For example, as someone who suffered from amblyopia (also known as lazy eye), the other kids would encourage him to emphasize

this condition by shouting things like, “Show us how you can cross your eyes, Simon!” They would then point and laugh. His kind heart was always completely unsuspecting of the true nature of these interactions which made my mother even more angry and frustrated. She would chastise those making fun of her brother, sometimes leading to physical fights which she says, proudly, she always won.

There was also a little girl who lived down the street from my mother’s family named Tessa. She was a student in the same special needs classes as Simon. The two were very close friends who had a true, loving friendship. In the middle of their high school careers, Tessa lost her battle with a heart condition and passed away. Simon was devastated. For my mother, the loss of Tessa was heartbreaking because her brother had lost a friend who was like him, who didn’t tease him, who enjoyed her brother’s company because of their similarities.

My mother’s ability to link the interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences led to her developing into a huge supporter of those with special needs. Furthermore, these experiences helped her to develop a true understanding of the importance of seeing others as yourself and loving others as yourself. Though my mother did not live the same experiences as her brother and Tessa, she was able to possess empathy in the manner that Allport (1937) described as being able to recognize the consciousness of someone else. Her moral compass is centered on a philosophy she learned from Simon and Tessa: recognizing the similarities that are shared between ourselves and others is essential in ensuring that care and love are always at the center of our treatment of another person. My mother worked hard to instill this characteristic into my sister and me.

2.5.1.3. My Preparatory Care

2.5.1.3.1. *Shawn, My Gay Brother*

When I was 3 years old, my mother married the man that I consider my father. Through this marriage, I not only gained my Daddy, but also two older brothers. One of my brothers revealed to the family that he identified as a gay man when I was 13 years old. As a young teenager, I was not sure how to process this information. Would my friends think differently of me? Would any boys ever want to date me knowing that my brother was gay? After a few days of confusion and selfishness considering this news and its effect on my life, I realized that these questions and these intrapersonal struggles I was having were totally self-centered. I realized that I was lacking empathy for my brother and the questions that he may have and the social struggles that he may face. Would he ever get to be married? Would he miss out on the opportunity to spend eternity in Heaven? Would he be treated unfairly and unjustly by society simply because of the individuals to whom he was physically and emotionally attracted? *These* were the questions that I began to focus on instead of the very selfish questions I had first allowed myself to consider.

At the end of Harro's (2004) socialization cycle, an individual either accepts or rejects the reinforcement of the larger society's values, beliefs, and expectations. This intrapersonal experience led to a change in heart and mindset of my own views of the LGBTQ community despite the institutional norms that had surrounded me. I realized that I had to make a conscious decision of how to reset and alter my understanding of the values and beliefs systems I embodied. As someone who identifies as a Jesus-follower, it

was important that I viewed this group of people through the same lens as Jesus, the one I claimed to follow. After all, He directly commands me, as His follower, to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love our neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39, NIV). This led me to make the very intrapersonal decision to just love everyone, no matter their differences from myself, and let God handle the judgment and sorting in His own time. That is not my job. Loving everyone as I love myself is my job. This was probably the biggest, and most important, intrapersonal experience I had that ultimately molded me into a caring, empathetic, and loving teacher of all students later in life. In using Harro’s (2004) socialization cycle, I was able to resist the larger society’s views, beliefs, values, and expectations to develop my own through critical consciousness and a deep self-reflection of my own understanding of the individual, Christian beliefs I held.

2.5.1.3.2. Cassie

In third grade my best friend was Cassie. Cassie’s family lived on the north side of town, and my family lived on the south side of town. The fact that we did not live close to each other did not stop us from hanging out at each other’s houses on the weekends and sometimes even on the weekdays as long as it was not a school night. We both were new students in the elementary school we were attending. We both wore glasses. We both had shoulder-length hair. We both really loved our moms. We both were obsessed with Lisa Frank school supplies, and we both really wanted to see the movie *Titanic* that was going to come out during Christmas break, even though neither

of our moms would allow us to see it. We were two peas in a pod, partners in crime, sisters separated at birth. Looking back, I think we may have genuinely thought we were twins.

Cassie and I loved to talk on the phone. Back then we did not have cellphones, so we had to use our house phones. Both our parents had recently purchased cordless phones: the coolest things ever to a third grader. We surely thought we were the coolest girls around because we could talk on the phone anywhere in our house instead of having to stand in the kitchen tethered to a curly cord connected to a wall. One day while we were on the phone, we decided we should have a sleepover because we had not had one since the week before. A week was a long time for an eight-year-old. I was so excited, but I knew I had to ask my mom and Cassie had to ask hers. We set our phones down to go ask for permission. I walked in the dining room where my mom, my paternal grandmother, and paternal step-grandfather sat drinking coffee at the table.

“Momma, can Cassie come over and spend the night tonight?” I asked in the sweetest voice possible, so she would just have to say yes.

“Sure, baby! Make sure she gets permission from her mom, and then let me know if we need to go pick her up or if her mom is going to bring her over,” my mom replied. Then my grandpa asked my mom something about Cassie that confused me.

“Is Cassie that little n***let girl?”

My step-grandpa said that word a lot, and every time he said it, my parents would make me leave the room. They never told me that was why they suggested I go play or take the dog outside or put my clothes away, so I never thought much of it until this

moment. I did not know what the word meant. I never even knew who my grandpa was talking about when he used it. But this time he said it in reference to my best friend, and I did not understand why because I did not understand the word itself.

“Lauren, go make sure your room is clean before she gets here,” my mom immediately said to me as my grandpa ended his question. So, off I went to my room. I picked up the phone and waited for Cassie to come back on the line to let me know that her mom would bring her over to my house. I looked around my room, and there was nothing to clean up because when you live in a house with two Air Force veterans, well, you are born with tidiness in your blood. I walked back out to the dining room, and my mom was washing the coffee mugs. Grandma and Grandpa were no longer there, so I decided it was safe to ask my mom about Grandpa’s word choice.

“Momma, what’s a n***let?” I asked.

“Sweetheart, don’t ever say that word. It’s not a nice word,” she replied.

“But Grandpa uses it all the time, and if it’s not nice, then why did he call Cassie one?” I questioned. My mom rinsed the last mug, set it in the dishwasher and looked over at me. She guided me to the living room, and we sat on the couch. *“This must be serious,”* I thought to myself.

“When your grandpa was a boy, people used that word to refer to someone with skin like Cassie’s,” she explained. I am certain I looked confused because she asked, “Do you know what I mean when I say ‘skin like Cassie’s’?” I shook my head no; I never noticed Cassie’s skin. I never knew that I should notice her skin. Wasn’t her skin like mine? Wasn’t it just, well, skin, like hair is hair and eyes are eyes? “Cassie has

darker skin than you have, Lauren, but that is not a bad thing. We do not judge people based on the color of their skin, ok? Cassie's skin color has nothing to do with how great of a friend she is. Don't forget that," she stated. And I didn't. I never forgot.

Cassie came over, and everything was the same except I saw her skin. It was beautiful, and I thought it looked like the Nestle powder that my mom put in my milk to make it taste like chocolate. That was when I saw the difference. My skin looked like the color of the corks in my mom's wine bottles, not like chocolate milk mix. Why was her skin colored so different than mine? Did this mean that we weren't two peas in a pod, partners in crime, sisters separated at birth?

Something changed in my understanding of the world around me that day. I had become socially conscious of all the different skin colors of every person I saw, a result of what Downey (2015) says is the human self-development through social interactions. Before that day, I was blind to the meanings that society put on skin color, but now my eyes were open to shades of colors I had never noticed before and a faint ability to determine social worth based on those shades. I had stepped into Harro's (2004) third stage of socialization where institutional and cultural beliefs were now lenses through which I had the option to see others. That day, the little eight year old me became racially conscious. That day, I was officially infected with a social construction that my parents had worked hard to protect me from for eight years. That day, I endured an interpersonal experience that forever changed my view of the world. From that moment, I became critically conscious of sociocultural issues that connected with my personal realities with friends and family.

2.5.1.4. Marriage

The space of my marriage is characterized by both interpersonal arguments and debates around issues of equity with my in-laws along with intrapersonal reflections about what I believe and value for my family and my students. My husband grew up in a town that was much less multicultural than the town where I was raised. As a White male when he graduated high school and went to college, he experienced culture shock as he began to meet people from different social and racial groups than his own. Luckily, the stereotype-driven notions he had about groups of people who were not from the same cultural and social groups as he was began to break down quickly, and he developed his own understandings and beliefs about other cultures, very different from his family's, and much more accepting and open to human differences in general. It was only after he experienced this interpersonal change that I came into his life. His recognition of the humanity of each person despite the labels and prejudices he was raised with provided me with the support I would need to have difficult discussions with his family throughout our marriage when it came to discussions of social issues, values, and beliefs.

2.5.1.4.1. Interpersonal Debates & Intrapersonal Reflections

I was raised to accept people as people, no matter their differences: to see everyone as human and to love all people. My husband's family, however, still harbor many prejudicial views against people of disenfranchised groups. In fact, during the first three years of dating my husband, I had my first experiences with standing up for my beliefs and values regarding cultural differences among humanity, and I struggled.

2.5.1.4.1.1. Todd

My niece, Bailey, was a newborn when my husband, Chris, and I began dating. I first met her when she was three months old. That day will forever mark the first time I experienced someone stereotyping me, making assumptions about me because of my gender. Bailey's mother was at work, so Chris' brother, Todd, and their father, Tyler, were watching her. Chris and I walked into the house, and Todd immediately handed Bailey to me. I thought nothing of it, simply assuming that he knew how much I loved babies and would want to hold her anyway. I noticed a very strong smell coming from her diaper and stated, "Oh, I believe someone has made a gift in their diaper!" I looked at Todd with the expectation that he would take her from me to change her. After all he was her dad, and I had never been around her before.

"Well, change her," Todd directed me. I looked at Chris in confusion. He looked embarrassed. "You're the woman in the house right now. It's your responsibility to change diapers," Todd continued.

"Excuse me?" I asked.

"Women change diapers. Not men," he said.

"I'm sorry, but you are her father and expecting me to change her diaper simply because I am a woman is not going to fly with this lady," I said, attempting to sound light-hearted and not angry, as I placed Bailey in his lap. He looked at me in shock, with an expression of *how dare you disrespect me, woman* look on his face.

Thankfully, Chris had already developed a much more culturally competent ideology because Todd looked at him with an expectation that he would correct me, the

woman, for not following Todd's, the man, orders. Chris stated, "Lauren doesn't put up with misogyny. If you want your daughter's diaper changed, then change it yourself. You wanted a child. You got a child. Now be a father." It was seconds later when we left. Through intrapersonal reflections from that experience, I realized that being with Chris meant that my values, beliefs, and morals surrounding equity, diversity, and empathy might be challenged by some of his family members. My socialization cycle (Harro, 2004) seemed to be starting over as I had a new sphere of influence now that I was a member of a family whose values and beliefs were different than what I had experienced in my own family sphere. As George Herbert Mead (1934) explained, my self was going to develop in some way through the social interactions that would continue with my in-laws, though it was my responsibility to make sure that I continue to critically reflect on those interactions.

2.5.1.4.1.2. Tyler

My father-in-law was a bus driver for his town's school district as well as the teacher aide that maintained the in-school-suspension classroom for all the district's schools. As an employee of a school district, he was familiar with the common school holidays, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. During my first year of teaching, the school district where I taught recognized MLK, Jr. Day by marking it as a school holiday for both students and teachers. My husband and I were visiting his parents, and I happened to mention that I was off the next day for MLK Day. Tyler's response came as a complete shock to my ears: "Oh, y'all get out for N****r Day, huh?"

My brain went into overload and confusion. What did I just hear? Did that really just happen? How do I respond to this without ruining my relationship with my father-in-law but still maintaining and supporting my very deeply embedded belief system and values? “I’m sorry, Tyler,” I started, “but what did you just refer to tomorrow’s holiday as?”

“N****r Day,” he responded in a very unequivocal demeanor. “That’s what it is. It’s just a day for Black people.”

My husband spoke up quickly as he could see me boiling with frustration and anger, not just at Tyler, but with my own inability to find an efficient way to defend my own beliefs in an adequate manner that would not force Tyler to throw a wall of defense in my face. “Dad, that is not ok to say,” my husband stated very firmly. I was still in shock. I did not know what to say. I mean, I knew what I wanted to say. Because the person who made this bigoted comment was my father-in-law, I struggled to find the right words to communicate the importance of correcting beliefs such as these with the necessity of maintaining positive familial relationships with my in-laws for the sake of my husband and our family.

“Tyler,” I stated, “do not ever use that word around me again, please. It makes me very uncomfortable, and I don’t agree with its usage to refer to people who simply have darker skin than you.” He didn’t respond, simply sat in his chair and continued to watch the television.

Again, like we did when Todd had used a gender stereotype against me, we left seconds later. For my entire childhood, I had been sheltered from this blatant hatred and

racism and was told that these types of beliefs were wrong. Now I was a part of a family that truly believed these things. I was officially completing the final stage of Harro's (2004) cycle of socialization as I had developed my own social beliefs, values, and expectations and fought back to blatantly and explicitly resist the bigoted ones that some in my social circle held. This interpersonal experience with my father-in-law made me feel the weight of the world on my shoulders as I realized that my students probably experienced this same type of rhetoric either about themselves or about others from their own families and friends as well as the world around them. It was in this realization that I became a critically conscious teacher. I made one of the most important decisions of my life: never would I allow an opportunity to help others develop their critical consciousness slip away. The symbiotic relationship of my interpersonal and intrapersonal would be a major piece of my teacher identity to continue to inform and construct my empathetic capacity.

2.6. Conclusion

Who we are and how we perceive the social world we live in is directly influenced by the socialization we experience throughout our lives. From childhood to adulthood, socialization is a continuous lifelong process. The experiences I had as a child and a young adult strongly influenced the ways in which I observe and interpret the world around me in order to implement active care into my everyday interactions. The symbiotic relationship between my intrapersonal self-reflections and my interpersonal experiences molded my empathetic capacity in a way that provided the open-mindedness

and critical consciousness necessary to later develop a pedagogical care within the classroom.

My earliest development of social and cultural awareness was informed by the recognition of differences among social groups around me; differences in their own identities and labels as well as differences in how those identities and labels were viewed and treated by society in general. From issues of race to problematic gender stereotypes and all things in-between, these experiences highlighted greater issues in society that would later directly influence the young people I cared about and loved: my students. Having this type of awareness would soon prove to be a major asset as a classroom teacher in having positive and healthy interactions with students and colleagues and developing a culturally relevant and inclusive pedagogy where all students benefited and learned.

The most important sphere of influence for my socialization was my family, specifically my parents. When issues of equity entered my world through the experiences I had with others, they were able to take active steps in limiting the development of bias, prejudice, and bigotry within me. Through open conversations where their honesty of the negative parts of society met my genuine questions of what I saw happening, they were able to help guide the processing of the experiences I had. They made sure that I was socialized with people outside of my own cultural and identity circles as a way to help me to see all people as equally human, to appreciate differences between individuals and groups, and to be active in supporting and loving those who were different from myself. All of these lessons laid the foundation for who I

would become as a classroom teacher and how I would interact with my students and develop learning opportunities that benefited them all.

Culturally responsive teachers seek out knowledge about other cultures that are represented in their classrooms in order to modify the curriculum and instruction into a more inclusive learning experience (Farinde-Wu, Glover, & Williams, 2017; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2011, 2014). They take responsibility for providing the best environment possible for their students, exhibiting persistence in developing relationships with all students, readily admitting fallibility when they are wrong, and applying practical theory to student learning that enhances the unique learning styles of all students (Haberman, 1995). Because these teachers proudly take on the responsibility of covering curriculum requirements in a way that connects to real life contexts (Ladson-Billings, 2011), their students learn content-specific knowledge while also gaining important social skills and wisdom. A culturally competent teacher disposition communicates to students that their teacher cares. Craig (1995) cites Dewey's (1917) claim that "communication enables knowledge to become a common possession of community members" (p. 152), so culturally responsive dispositions of teachers help to shape the caring dispositions of their students in the classroom. My own culturally relevant knowledge began to be excavated throughout my primary years as my socialization specifically focused on limiting my exposure to prejudice and bigotry and informing the construction of my empathetic capacity.

The injustices and inequalities within the school system were consciously recognized by my little eight-year-old self when my dear friend Markel was treated

unfairly for an experience on the playground of which he did not choose to be a part. His treatment was based on the cultural differences he had from the dominant culture of those individuals who made decisions at the school. This blatant racism towards, and mistreatment of, an innocent child based on social assumptions and bigotry outside of his control shaped how I would later see and act on the treatment of students in my own classroom by the educational system and other social influences. It is because of this specific social experience, and the other experiences documented in this article, that my teacher heart would grow strong with care and empathy.

2.7. References

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3. MIRROR MOMENT REFLECTIONS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS

3.1. Introduction

Nora was a Mexican American, female student in my fifth period class. For the first two months of school, it felt as if she was impossible. No matter how I adjusted my instruction, where I sat her in the room, or what accommodations I gave her, she always talked back to me, disrupted class, and refused to do her work. I began to dread the thought that if I did not figure out a way to reach her, she would become a part of the achievement gap statistics, something that truly made me cringe. Haberman (1995) stressed the importance of maintaining positive feelings about students even when it seems impossible, so I did my best to sustain my belief that, underneath that angry and mean-spirited exterior, Nora was a kind, sweet, and smart young lady. Despite my best efforts when I would show her how much I believed in her, she would express an anger towards me for even having positive feelings about her. Our relationship changed the day I assigned Nora lunch detention for her excessive tardies to my class.

During her detention, she said, “You’re never going to fix me. I’m just an angry person and that’s all there is to me. You have no idea what that’s like.”

“I get it,” I responded as I continued to eat my lunch and work on some emails at my desk. “I’m angry today, too. You’re not the only one who has moments of anger.” I thought that maybe by telling her I had a similar feeling; she would reveal *why* she was so angry.

“What could you possibly be angry about?” she asked. “You White people always think you have it so bad, but really you have perfect families with all the money and no real problems in the world.”

“Well, today I’m angry because it’s the anniversary of my older brother’s death,” I told her. “He died of cancer three years ago, and it’s something that still makes me mad.”

There was a silence for about five minutes. Then Nora said in a soft voice, a sound I had never heard her use before, “My brother died three years ago, too.”

It was this moment that the wall of protection she had built finally fell. Her anger and grief towards her brother’s death were something that I could relate to. Our shared grief gave me a purpose in her life as someone who could provide a safe space for her to finally work through those emotions and experience the waves of intense feelings without being judged. While she continued to be a difficult student for her other teachers, she became a totally new student in my room. No longer was she tardy. She participated effectively in class assignments and discussions, and she began to show her true academic potential. At the end of the school year, in a letter she wrote to me, she stated:

Remember the day we started to talk about our brothers, and you told me that my brother would love to see me graduate and how happy he was going to be? Thank you for telling me that because I really never thought about it. I always told myself I was going to drop out of school and work at McDonalds. I remember how we had talks about it every day, and

every single day I wanted to come to school because of you. Well now I want to finish school thanks to you.

And she did just that: she finished school. Graduating was something that most of her other teachers told her would never happen. In fact, she graduated early at the age of 16, an event I did not fail to attend. I am thankful for Nora because she was one of the first students to show me the power of teacher connections and relationships on student success.

3.2. Statement of the Problem

The nature of a quality teacher is a synthesis of both technical and relational dispositions. This combination is a unique characteristic of the profession as it pertains to the development of effective teachers. The ability to facilitate learning for students is dependent on a teacher's ability to reveal a relationship between what learners already know and what they are coming to know, between the students' social-cultural understandings and the scholarly knowledge they are to gain (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Being able to recognize the social and cultural knowledge students bring into the classroom requires a relationship-building ability genuine to the teacher (relational) which builds upon the teacher's content and pedagogical knowledge (technical) (Bullock, 2011; Hill-Jackson & Stafford, 2017).

While both technical and relational dispositions are significant to effective teaching, their importance is not equally balanced. Hill-Jackson and Stafford (2017) assert that "the selection of teachers is infinitely more important than the nature of their training" (p. xv). Formal teacher preparation, while a critical piece for the cultivation of

effective teachers, fails to prepare preservice teachers to collectively meet the socio-emotional and academic needs of their students (Bouton, 2016). Applying generic standards to the definition of what an effective teacher is not only neglects the intricacies of the demands of the profession, but minimizes the obligations of teacher preparation programs to choose teacher candidates who have the empathetic capacity to be supportive and protective agents of all students' learning.

Hill-Jackson and Stafford (2017) define technical teacher dispositions as a set of traits and professional attitudes created by teacher advocacy agencies that are more idealistic of quality teacher classroom performance than realistic of student schooling experiences. These types of disposition expectations fail to link relationship building abilities with the learned teaching theories and pedagogies, a necessary interdependent relationship for effective teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2014). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2016) list only two critically important components in teacher preparation: (1) subject knowledge for content area to be taught, and (2) knowledge and skill in how to teach within that content area. While Clark and Paulsen (2016) cite former research demonstrating that these components are necessary in the professionalism of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000), they are not enough to be solely depended upon for student achievement (Haberman, 1995; Hill-Jackson & Stafford, 2017).

Relational teacher dispositions are directly linked to the ideologies and beliefs held by a teacher, evident in their instructional practices and classroom performance

(Hill-Jackson & Stafford, 2017). Student learning is attributable to teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2016) which is significantly affected by teacher qualifications, instructional practices, improvement in student learning, or a combination of all three (Strong, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Research has repeatedly shown that teacher effectiveness is affected by teacher beliefs about students' ability to learn (Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2012; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Teachers who have lower student expectations tend to be less effective than teachers with higher expectations (Sorhagen, 2013; Gay, 2015). While technical teacher dispositions are often accounted for and measured through successful completion of a traditional teacher preparation program, the relational disposition ideologies are not taught in those same programs (Haberman, 1995). Relational dispositions are elements of teacher care that must be set as a foundation for effective teaching behaviors to be securely built.

Research shows the importance and relevance of teacher-student relationships for both cognitive and affective outcomes in student learning and growth (Bouton, 2016; Boyer, 2010; Brekelmans, 1989; den Brok, Brekelmans, & Wubbles, 2004; Cornelius-White, 2007; Gay, 2000; Habberman, 1995; Hattie, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2009, 2011, 2014). The framework of this article spotlights the lifelong process of developing social awareness, critical consciousness, and social advocacy to resist bigotry in one's personal and professional life. It is through this theoretical framework that teachers build their relational competencies upon the foundation of their preparatory interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences. These competencies are demonstrated through the direct social and emotional interactions a teacher has with both students and coworkers.

3.3. Literature Review

3.3.1. Teacher Relational, Social, and Emotional Competence

Teaching is a career that is foundationally based on relationships (Fiorilli, Albanese, Gabola, & Pepe, 2017). These relationships extend from colleagues to students to families and are built upon previous experiences. From the body of research that explores relational dynamics, the social and emotional competence theory, also known as relational competence theory, has emerged (Hanson, Carpenter, & Jones, 1984; Niederberger, 2013). The framework outlined in this theory is distinguished by three concepts which include equal-worth/respect, authenticity, and responsibility (Niederberger, 2013). The core of a teacher's work is to provide a safe, interactive social environment where learning can thrive among different classroom dynamics, relationships with students and parents are continually developed, and cooperation with colleagues and other professionals is a daily occurrence (Tynjälä, Virtanen, Klemola, Kostiainen, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2016). Relational, social, and emotional competence are essential characteristics that teachers must embody for the optimal classroom environment to be present so the desired, positive student success and behavior can occur (López-Martínez, M.J., 2014).

Socially and emotionally competent teachers set the tone of the classroom by developing supportive and encouraging relationships with their students, designing lessons that build on student strengths and abilities, establishing and implementing behavioral guidelines in ways that promote intrinsic motivation, coaching students through conflict situations, encouraging cooperation among

students, and acting as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication and exhibitions of prosocial behavior. (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009, p. 492)

When socially and emotionally affirming classroom environments are not supported and fostered, the classroom environment deteriorates teacher effectiveness, leads to low levels of on-task behavior and student performance, and contributes to teacher burnout (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Effectiveness of teachers directly relates to the beliefs teachers hold about their students (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2012); consequently, teachers must cultivate a classroom climate where students can succeed through positive relationship-building. Niederberger (2013) cites Juul and Jensen's (2010) work that highlights the importance of high-quality relationships developed by the teacher's ability to see beyond the most obvious behaviors and words of students to understand and treat each student as an individual worthy of an education. Socially and emotionally competent teachers should manifest culturally relevant knowledge by modifying their curriculum and instruction to be caring and empathetic towards all students

3.3.2. Care as an Academic

Noddings (1986) described care as receptive. The one-caring must be open-minded to become deeply engaged in the one-cared-for and responsive to their needs. "Whatever [the one-caring] does for the cared-for is embedded in a relationship that reveals itself as engrossment and an attitude that warms and comforts the cared-for"

(Noddings, p. 19). Furthermore, Noddings links the concept of care to empathy claiming that:

Caring involves stepping out of one's own personal frame of references into the other's. When we care, we consider the other's point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves. Our reasons for acting, then, have to do with both the other's wants and desires and with the objective elements of his problematic situation. (p. 24)

From Noddings' work, care can be understood as empathy, a way of being open to others' feelings and able to feel with them rather than only feeling for them. When it comes to teaching and learning, Cooper (2002) suggested that a caring attitude transpires through empathy during individual relationship building and cultivation. When a teacher's care shows through their empathy, students' learning is most effective (Cooper, 2004). The degree of empathy shown by a one-caring teacher is transferable to the one-cared-for student. If the teacher shows a great deal of empathy towards a student, that student tends to mimic that empathetic behavior and their ability to share and learn from others will grow (Cooper, 2004). "Therefore empathetic teachers model and facilitate an empathetic ambience for learning and development" (Cooper, p. 13).

Care is a continual need of the human brain that encourages greater openness and a desire to engage in interaction. Winkley (1996) asserted that babies' brains grow when they feel cared for while negative feelings produce a withdrawal affect that shuts down the development of the self. Therefore, when learning, it is important that students have frequent, positive interactions with their teachers in order to stimulate emotional

engagement in the content being taught as well as the context of how and where that content is being delivered.

Research of student perspectives has shown that positive interactions and relationships with teachers who model care and empathy in the classroom enhanced student academic success, promoted high achievement, made schooling a meaningful experience, and empowered student voices (Hancock, 2003; Hancock, 2011; Hollins & Spencer, 1990; Howard, 2001). This type of environment leads to students feeling appreciated and respected as part of their learning community. Walker (1996) asserted that kinship and community are developed in a classroom that is led by a caring teacher through genuine listening, sincere support, and synergetic collaboration. Noddings (1992) affirmed this notion through highlighting the importance of interactions that recognize and affirm the value of students as people. These types of interactions are not necessarily content or curriculum-based, but “such ‘off-task’ interaction is more likely to enhance liking and feeling of community than purely task-related engagement” (Cooper, 2004, p. 14).

3.3.3. Ethic of Care in Multicultural Education

In the early 1980s the philosophical term “the ethic of care” became prominent in the works of Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (1986, 1992). Though the notion of care has received more attention, it remains an underexplored research topic in education. Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1992) urged educators to model care through dialogue, practice, and confirmation based on the needs, responses, and relationships of and with their students. Chaskin & Rauner (1995) and Erickson (1993) supported

Noddings' (1992) claim that caring is fundamental in fostering quality interpersonal interactions among teachers and students and maintaining effective academic and social environments.

As the student body in the United States continues to diversify, multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995) is necessary for preservice and inservice teachers to study, utilize in their classrooms, and embody in their individual teaching philosophy. Geneva Gay (2004) defined multicultural education as “a set of beliefs and explanations that recognize and value the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping lifestyles, social experiences, personal identities, and educational opportunities of individuals, groups, and nations” (p. 33). For multicultural education to positively impact the education of students, teachers must also demonstrate empathy and a strong sense of care for others.

Furthermore, molding culturally competent teachers is critical given the diversification of US schools and cultivating an ethic of care is central to this teacher development process. Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced the concept of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) to the field of multicultural education with the goal to actualize an instructional approach of care. Three criteria were used to develop her pedagogy including (1) holding high standards for students to promote their academic development, (2) nurturing and supporting competence of cultural differences, and (3) recognizing and understanding the differences between “self and other, social relations, and knowledge” (p. 483). CRP allows teachers to see students as complex individuals who have multiple identities influenced by socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion,

and gender. Practicing CRP provides teachers with the tools to access the knowledge that students bring to the classroom leaving out labels that may develop incorrect assumptions about a student's character and ability.

As the student body in the United States continues to diversify, multicultural education is imperative for preservice and inservice teachers to study, utilize in their classrooms, and embody in their individual teaching philosophy. Additionally, Gay (2004) defines multicultural education as, "...a set of beliefs and explanations that recognize and value the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping lifestyles, social experiences, personal identities, and educational opportunities of individuals, groups, and nations" (p. 33). However, this cannot be accomplished without manifesting empathy and a strong sense of care for others.

3.4. Research Questions

- 1) In what ways did interactions with coworkers foster care-centered relationships and encourage student success in the classroom?
- 2) How did my interactions with students and my mirror moments of reflection on those interactions contribute to the development of my ethic of care and empathy in the classroom?

3.5. Methodology

I consider my cultural journey as a White female educator through several mirrors. Cultural responsiveness is a characteristic of teachers that must first be excavated through cultural, social, and professional reflection and critical self-analysis (Loh, 2014). Understanding the world in relation to how the socio-cultural and political

components affect the classroom is a necessary skill that teachers must possess in order to support the academic and social successes of their students (Gay, 2001). Connecting the personal to the cultural helps to develop the ability of self-critiquing in social contexts (Muncey, 2010). Being conscious of the ideologies we bear allows critical self-analysis and reflection to occur, ultimately shaping and impacting the social identities we hold that impact our work as teachers (Brock, Borti, Frahm, Howe, Khasilova, & Venture-Kalen, 2017).

Bochner (1997) argued the importance of maintaining attachment of the personal and the theoretical. He stated that scholars “learn to hide our personal self behind a veneer of academic and theoretical detachment, fostering the misconception that it has no influence, no place, no significance in our work [and that] it is rare, indeed, to find a productive scholar whose work is unconnected to his or her personal history” (p. 433). Through the use of relevant theory and literature, the personal experiences we have are able to be analyzed and contextualized (Marx, 2017). Adams, Holman-Jones, and Ellis (2015) proposed that “when we do autoethnography, we look inward into our identities, thoughts, feelings and experiences - and outward into our relationships, communities and cultures” (p. 46).

This article uses autoethnography as a channel for lived experiences to be analyzed. Autoethnography is a study of the complex intricacies experienced with the self and in collaboration with others (Chang, 2008). Like a mirror, this method allows teachers to use their own experiences as a reflection tool to view their work and skills in the classroom. Autoethnography provides mirror moments that help practitioners to

better understand themselves as well as their students and how the interactions between the two create empathy and care in the class setting. One of the most important advantages of using autoethnography when studying teacher-student relationships is that it will “contribute to others’ lives by making them reflect on and empathize with the narratives presented” (Méndez, 2013, p. 282).

The data collection for this article started with journal writing. I began journaling by writing down a list of students’ names who were highly memorable. This list was comprised of 27 names. Then, I wrote one experience that stood out about each of those students. From there, I considered which anecdotes directly influenced or were influenced by my own empathy and care in the classroom and narrowed them down to 17. Next, I categorized each student based on whether or not they pushed me to be culturally relevant in the classroom. This left me with five students whose stories from my experiences with them highlighted care in either an interaction with me or with instruction in my classroom. For this article, three of those five students’ anecdotes were chosen to be analyzed because they were moments of teacher-student interaction that actively and consciously altered and molded my views of the social world around me. In the next phase of my journal writing, I began writing down the most memorable moments with colleagues. Most of these were positive, but a few were negative. In total, I started with a list of 19 colleagues’ names. I then began recalling old conversations and experiences with these former coworkers, and pulled out the ones that were key to growing my empathy capacity and highlighted the important reminder that students are the most important part of the educational system. This left me with three experiences

with three different teachers. Finally, I pulled out letters I had kept from former students that were written while they sat in my classroom. These letters helped me to identify the key characteristics of a caring teacher that are seen through students' eyes. In total, 32 letters detailed an aspect of care that students felt were important in a teacher. Specifically, one letter's message highlighted the importance of interactions with students. In the forthcoming autoethnography, these three types of sources accompanied by literature inform my research on the importance of active caring interactions in the school environment through the use of narrative analysis.

Golombek & Johnson (2002) advocate for the use of teachers' narrative inquiry as a professional development tool (as cited by Johnson & Golombek, 2017). Narrative inquiry is defined by Clandinin (2013) as "an approach to the study of human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding" (p. 17). For preservice teachers, this is necessary for recognizing the experiences of students who are culturally different than themselves, especially in developing their teacher identity as culturally relevant. Narrative inquiry provides a vehicle for learning about individual experiences while also developing an understanding of social, cultural, and institutional elements of life that affect the classroom. Narrative inquiry is diverse in its application in the educational world (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007). From teacher identity and professional developing to the molding of novice teachers and stories regarding multiculturalism in the classrooms, there are a multitude of ways in which narrative inquiry can be used in the excavation of culturally responsive knowledge.

3.6. Impact of Experiences with Colleagues and Students on My Socialization

I encountered many struggles concerning bigotry with my in-laws like those mentioned in article 1 (An Autoethnographic Analysis of a Teacher's Preparatory Experiences) of this dissertation, many of which continue today, though with less occurrence now that my views and beliefs are understood by my husband's family. And while those discussions and experiences were, and continue to be, uncomfortable, they increased my capacity to bring care and empathy into the classroom. I realized that the beliefs expressed by my in-laws about the world around them were very real and common beliefs held by many people in the United States, especially in a conservative community in which I lived and taught. These interpersonal experiences were attacks on my intrapersonal values but helped to advance in me a deeper understanding of the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with both colleagues and students in order to derive an instructional practice that was both culturally relevant and empathy-based.

3.6.1. Pedagogical Experiences

The ways in which teachers care for their students are directly impacted by the type of preparatory care they receive in their formative experiences. From those preparatory care experiences, teachers find a foundation for the pedagogical care that they provide in their classrooms, both interactionally and instructionally.

3.6.1.1. Interactional

Interactions are key for teachers to learn to engage their qualities as an empathetic person to develop into an empathetic teacher. The idea of interactions within

the context of schooling and education is often thought of through the lens of teacher-student relationships, yet these relationships are not isolated to just the teacher and the student. These relationships are directly tied to the interactions and relationships between colleagues, including other teachers, administrators, and staff personnel (Tynjälä, Virtanen, Klemola, Kostiainen, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2016). The beliefs and values of those around us influence our own beliefs and values (Harro, 2004). This is especially true in the development of the beliefs that teachers hold regarding their students.

3.6.1.1.1. Colleague Interactions

I am a statistic. Over half of all educators move school districts or completely leave the teaching profession within their first five years of teaching experience (Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell, 2017), and I am one of them. In the three years that I taught in the K-12 sphere, I worked in two different school districts. These school districts, while similar in student characteristics, environment, and behavior, were very different in terms of teacher relationships with one another, especially in a team setting. The first school district where I taught had a very negative team environment among teachers.

3.6.1.1.1.1. Mrs. Valera

During my first year of teaching, I taught 10th and 11th grade English/Language Arts and Reading. I was assigned a mentor who taught 12th grade Biology. Our classrooms were in opposite wings of a very large high school, and, though I attempted to schedule meetings for help with questions about classroom, instructional, and content

issues, we met only twice throughout that entire school year. If you asked me to pick her out of a crowd, I would fail.

Thankfully, another English/Language Arts and Reading teacher, Mrs. Valera, saw my struggle and swooped in to help me by taking me under her wing as an unofficial mentor. Without her, I would not have been able to effectively process the equity and diversity issues I faced as a White, middle-class teacher teaching mostly students of color living in low-socioeconomic households. While I had a desire and a passion to love my students and to give them anything and everything they needed to succeed, I failed to have a deep understanding of the variety of needs my individual students had. Mrs. Valera assisted me in directing my passion into my practice in my classroom. She provided me with a safe space to gain cultural competency which allowed me to raise my teaching efficacy. I was able to adjust my attitude towards my students and their individual needs to create a more positive and meaningful environment in my classroom. I came to understand that in order to maintain high goals for my students, I had to adjust my instruction to meet their needs. Taking the time to truly understand who my students were and what they knew provided me the opportunity to communicate my hopes and aspirations for them.

The first time a student communicated that another teacher helped her more than I had, I took it very personally. A Puerto Rican student said, “I went to tutoring with Mrs. Maldonado and she explained this in a way I understood better. Can I go work in her room on this assignment?” I let the student go after checking with Mrs. Maldonado (a Puerto Rican English/Language Arts and Reading teacher across the hallway) to make

sure it was fine with her, but I had a very bitter and angry feeling brewing inside me. I was so uncomfortable. Why did this bother me so much? The student was not rude when she asked to go to another teacher for help. In fact, she was very sweet in her demeanor and tone. Her leaving did not disrupt the classroom; I was genuinely glad that she was finally able to understand the material because, as a teacher with no Spanish language knowledge, I struggled to help her like I could with my native English speaking students. But, the self-reflection continued to brew into frustration throughout the day.

When the dismissal bell finally rang, I went to Mrs. Valera's classroom, sat down in a desk with a heavy sigh, and I said, "What's wrong with me?"

She laughed and said, "What do you mean? What happened?"

"My ELL student asked to go to Mrs. Maldonado to do her assignment today and didn't even ask me for help first," I told her.

"So?" she questioned.

"I feel like I'm a terrible teacher because she couldn't rely on me to teach her," I stated in a shaky voice that was about ready to crack under the pressure of a waterworks show developing in my eyes.

"Did you let her go to Mrs. Maldonado?" she inquired.

"Yes, of course I did. That's what she needed. She was able to gain an understanding from Mrs. Maldonado, so of course I let her go," I replied.

"Then you just answered your own questions," she replied. "You made sure she was able to go where her learning was best influenced and supported. A good teacher cares about her students' learning and not about her own ego. You let her go to

Maldonado because you knew that was what she needed to be successful, and her success and learning is the most important part of helping her to become confident as a student in this new country she is living. If you didn't care about her success as a student, as an individual, or as a human being, then you would have made her stay in your classroom and struggle through without the resources you knew were available just across the hall.”

This was the moment when I realized that the interpersonal communication of care that I had developed from a young age and the intrapersonal decisions made based on that care had come crashing into my professional career as a teacher. My love for my students and their success enhanced my desire to provide this student what she needed. Before the interaction I had with my student, I had built a relationship with her that had a foundation of care and empathy, empowered her voice, supported her achievement, and respected her individual learning experiences (Hancock, 2003; Hancock, 2011; Hollins & Spencer, 1990; Howard, 2001). But the struggle to process the feelings of not being the best teacher for all students brought me to Mrs. Valera. Without the type of relationship that I had with her, I may never have been able to positively handle the very real fact that every student has unique academic needs that are partially defined by their cultural backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1995). From that moment on, I never had to take student requests for help as a personal attack because I was often able to identify their needs based on my interactions with them. This was a lesson that I took to the next school district I taught.

3.6.1.1.1.2. Jackie Towner

When I transferred to a new school district, I also changed the grade level that I was teaching. This time, instead of high school, I was teaching 8th grade English/Language Arts in the smaller setting of a middle school. There were about 250 students in the 8th grade and two teachers for each required content area (ELAR, Math, Science, and Social Studies). At first, I was worried because that meant I only had one other person that I would be able to count on to be a partner teacher. Thankfully, I was blessed with Mrs. Towner, an African American woman who had been teaching for seven years when I first arrived at the school. We cliqued immediately and developed a relationship that continues to this day. Mrs. Towner provided me with the true understanding of what Haberman (1995) describes as a network of like-minded teachers. She was always there as a partner to help with lesson planning, process student struggles and successes, and provide loving advice that both supported my initial beliefs when I was right, or redirected my understanding of a situation through a different lens when I was wrong.

We were the dynamic duo of the school, two partners-in-crime, often getting into “trouble” because of our instructional practices and classroom management techniques, which were typically untraditional and not necessarily what was requested of the teachers by the administration. One example of our untraditional techniques was an issue with a dress-code policy that seemed like a good idea on the surface, but actually caused many more problems than they prevented. Thankfully, the professional relationship Mrs.

Towner and I had provided us with an internal support system strengthening us to do our job: protect our learners and their learning success.

Sagging of pants had become a very, very common occurrence in our school among our male students. At a faculty meeting one week, many teachers voiced a loud concern about this, so our principal and assistant principals developed a mandate for all students with sagging pants to be written up and sent to in-school suspension (ISS) for the remainder of the day. Next, they expanded this mandate to include a stipulation that for every number of days a student sagged their pants, they would receive an equal number of days in ISS. Mrs. Towner and I went back to my room after this meeting to ponder the repercussions this would have on, not only us as teachers, but our students and their school experiences.

We made a list of students we knew sagged nearly every single day. There were about 75 boys on our list, no girls. Then we went down the list and discussed each student's individual experiences both at home and in school. What we found was that most of our students who sagged came from very poor families, no surprise considering that 79% of the students that our school served came from low-SES households. The next day we decided to talk with these students individually and see what their reasoning for sagging was. As caring teachers, it was important to us that we genuinely listened and provided sincere support to collaborate with our students to find a solution to keeping them in the classroom, something that Walker (1996) asserts is necessary in developing a positive classroom community.

“These are my older brother’s pants and he is fatter than me, Miss. We can’t afford for me to go get new pants, so I always have to wear his hand-me-downs.”

“My mom hasn’t been able to buy me new pants since 6th grade, Miss. Luckily I grow taller but not fatter, so the pants still fit around, they’re just too short.”

“No way am I going to pull my pants up and wear high-waters. I’d rather get in trouble with him [the principal] than get made fun of all day and beat up after school for my ankles showing.”

“I sag so people don’t know that I’m wearing my cousin’s pants. He’s 2 years older so they don’t actually fit me. They just keep falling down and I can’t afford to go buy a belt.”

Over and over and over again we heard our boys explain that they were sagging because of issues outside of their control and not for the common misconception that many of the faculty members had made. So, Mrs. Towner and I decided to look at the sagging issue as a problem the students were having instead of a problem the students were causing. Our beliefs about our students had to be revisited in order to provide them with the most effective version of who we were as their teachers (Rubie-Davies, Fline, & McDonald, 2012; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). We got online and purchased a few large boxes of zip-ties. The students whose pants were too big came to us every morning to get a zip-tie or two to hold up their pants. The students whose pants were too short, they received a zip-tie to help hold their pants in place where they didn’t cause them to have “high waters,” allowing them to walk down the hall without bringing attention to themselves that their pants were sagging by holding them up all day. However, the deal

was that these students would do their best to wear basketball shorts instead of just underwear beneath their pants as well as longer shirts that covered the top of their pants to hide the sagging.

To say that our administration and the other teachers were annoyed is an understatement. We received a lot of backlash for providing zip-ties to our students. One of our favorite comments from other teachers was, “How will they learn how to dress right in society if they are always given a way out of having to dress right for school?” Thankfully, Mrs. Towner and I knew that the bigger lesson learned here was that there are caring, empathetic teachers out there who do want the best for them, who don’t want to see them sitting in the silent classroom of ISS receiving no instruction day in and day out because of social and financial problems they had no control over.

That year, we had a 96% growth rate of our students’ standardized test scores; nearly every single student in our classes did better on their ELAR state test than they had done the year before. Research shows that positive relationships and interactions with empathetic and caring teachers in the classroom empowers students and makes their schooling a meaningful experience (Hancock, 2003; Hancock, 2011; Hollins & Spencer, 1990; Howard, 2001). My interactions with Mrs. Towner helped us, together and individually, keep our students in class, provided them with a safe environment in which to focus, and showed them what it was like to be viewed as an asset to the classroom and their peers, not as a behavior problem that brings liabilities into their school.

3.6.1.1.1.3. Brenda Baldwin

If there was one colleague who taught me the importance of loving my students unconditionally, it was Ms. Baldwin. The students hated her. “Hate” is a strong word, but that was the students’ word. According to them she was rude, mean, thought they were stupid, and didn’t care about them. While I don’t think that was the true core of her character, she definitely struggled with showing empathy and lacked in cultural competency.

We shared a mutual student: Teigen. She was an African-American young lady, identified as bi-sexual, and came from a single-parent household where her mother held several jobs to support their family of eight. Ms. Baldwin was a White, heterosexual teacher who came from a two-parent household with a stay-at-home mom and a father who was a medical doctor. Their experiences and circumstances were different to say the least. Noddings (1986) stressed the importance of stepping out of our own frame of references and into another’s in order to experience empathy and display care. Because that was not something Ms. Baldwin seemed willing to do with Teigen, their differences caused a lot of tension during their interactions.

Teigen was often labeled as a “behavior problem” with her teachers, mostly because she became frustrated when she did not understand a topic or assignment. She would become distracting to her classmates by getting off task and encouraging them to do the same, simply so her inability to understand the content would be hidden by disruptive behavior instead. She and I worked hard to develop ways that she could avoid getting in trouble and get the help she needed on her work without her friends thinking

that she was not “cool.” One of those ways was removing herself from situations where she felt embarrassed by her lack of understanding and moving to a place where she could concentrate without distractions and without becoming a distraction herself. She was doing great with this in my class, often asking to sit in the hallway to work or to put her headphones in to listen to music while she worked.

One day, between class periods, Teigen asked me if she could come work on her math assignment in my room. Students’ math classes were two class periods long, so her question was really in relation to removing herself from Ms. Baldwin’s classroom for the second half of her class time. Before I could tell her that she would need a signed pass from her math teacher, Ms. Baldwin came storming down the hall yelling at Teigen. I guided Teigen into my classroom and told her to sit at my desk while I spoke with her teacher.

“Don’t you dare hide that little brat!” Ms. Baldwin yelled at me. “She does nothing but cause problems in my classroom, she always wants to sit in the hallway or listen to music! She needs to learn how to sit quietly and do her work in her desk like she’s expected!”

“First of all,” I began, “have you ever asked her why she wants to sit in the hallway or listen to music while she’s working on an assignment?” Like Walker (1996) asserts, developing a type of kinship and community within the classroom comes from a teacher listening to student needs and supporting those needs.

“No, but her reasoning doesn’t matter because it’s against my rules!” she exclaimed.

“Second of all,” I continued, “you will not raise your voice and speak to my student in that tone, you will not call her negative names, and you for certain will not disregard her needs as a learner, failing to recognize that she is doing her best.” Recall Gillian’s (1982) and Noddings’ (1992) assertion that it is critical for teachers to model care through their dialogue with students, their instructional practices in the classroom, and the confirmation of student needs in order to develop meaningful and positive care-centered relationships.

Ms. Baldwin stared at me for a moment, then said, “You can’t just let students come to your classroom whenever they want, especially when they don’t have their assigned teacher’s permission!”

“I was just about to send her to you to ask for permission until you decided to verbally attack her at the doorway of my classroom,” I responded. “In my room, student learning and growth is protected. Right now, that means protecting Teigen from your negative and unhealthy criticism and protecting you from having any more students see you as someone they cannot take seriously with their education.” I went into my room, shut the door, and emailed the attendance office to let them know that Teigen was in my room for the class period just in case Ms. Baldwin tried to put another discipline mark on her record with an absence.

3.6.1.1.2. Student Interactions

The interactions I had with my colleagues built a solid foundation for me to have effective and open student interactions that ultimately helped me develop strong student relationships. They provided a way of always viewing my students as individuals with

very real, human needs and not as test scores, social ills, or people to “fix” or help assimilate into the dominant culture’s expectations. I was their advocate, their person to turn to when they needed support, someone they could count on to be there for them and their best interest no matter what. In these experiences, I learned that a major part of being an empathetic teacher is having true, unconditional love for students. It is a love that goes beyond the expectations of an educator. An empathetic teacher imprints compassion onto every single student that walks into their classroom. Their love is like a protection spell, a force field, for students’ academic, social, and personal learning.

3.6.1.1.2.1. Roberto

During my second year of teaching 8th grade English/Language Arts and Reading, I had a group of English Language Learner (ELL) students placed into one of my class periods not long after Thanksgiving break ended. Out of these seven ELLs, the one that struggled the most with his English language proficiency was Roberto. He had only been in the United States for two years, and he only spoke Spanish when he arrived. Roberto’s English language acquisition was still in the beginning stages when he came to my class. He struggled academically in my class because so much of the content required him to not only read English texts, but to also identify and analyze literary devices within those texts.

A few days before the two-week Christmas break, I took all of my students to the library to pick out any book they wanted to read while they were out of school. Roberto sat on a couch in the library with a look and demeanor of discouragement. I went and sat next to him.

“You don’t want to take a book home for the holiday break?” I asked him.

“I can’t,” he replied.

“What do you mean you can’t?” I questioned.

“I don’t get English. English makes me stupid,” he said in a despondent voice.

“You aren’t stupid,” I encouraged. “You can get a book in Spanish if you would like. You don’t have to get one that is in English. I want you to have something you enjoy.” Ladson-Billings’s concept of CRP includes meeting each student where they are, no matter their ethnicity, socio-economic status, or any other social labels placed upon them. With Roberto, this meant recognizing that his academic intelligence was not dictated by his minimal English language acquisition.

His face lit up and he smiled and walked over to the ELL section of the library. I went and checked on some other students and then announced that it was time to decide on a book and check it out at the librarian’s desk. I stood by the exit so students could line up after they finished. Roberto was the first in line. I noticed it was really a thick book for an 8th grader in a regular level English class. It was titled *La Marca del Escorpión* [The House of the Scorpion].

“That book looks really interesting!” I said to him.

“It’s one of my favorites. I love it,” he said. “Thanks for letting me read in Spanish. I really like to read, just not in English.”

“Did you read a lot in school when you were in Mexico?” I asked him.

“I was the best!” he said laughing. “I’m really smart, Miss. Just not in America; only in Mexico.”

“What do you mean not in America?” I questioned.

“Here, everyone thinks I’m dumb, that’s why I’m in dumb American classes. If I was in Mexico, I would be in your smart classes,” he replied.

It was at this moment that I realized Roberto was a gifted learner who had not been identified as gifted since he had moved to the United States. Because he didn’t speak English well, he was immediately labeled ELL and given special education resources. It was as if the school system was trying to imply something negative regarding his ability to learn simply because his native language was Spanish and not English. Though he was correctly labeled an EL, as he did not know the English Language, his ability to excel in academics was not supported with the correct resources. I was heartbroken because I knew that his abilities and potentials were being completely neglected. His knowledge and growth were being suppressed due to one cultural difference between himself and the American school system.

My instruction for him began to change as I differentiated using Spanish alternatives that the Spanish teacher and ELL director helped me to obtain. He began to excel in class and even became like a teacher’s aide with the other six ELL students during literature circles and test reviews. His entire demeanor went from completely discouraged and pessimistic to emboldened and confident. Having this interaction with him allowed me to see a part of who he was as a student and help him to grow, ultimately helping students who are learning English to grow as well.

3.6.1.1.2.2. Carter

One day during the second semester, Carter came into class, sat down on the couch at the back of the room, and fell asleep before the bell for class to begin had even rang. As the other students worked on their warm-up assignment, I quickly took attendance at my desk and noticed an email from Carter's science teacher that said, "Carter has had a bad attitude all morning. He continues to try to put his head down in class to sleep and when I tried to wake him up, he just called me a b***h, threw his hood of his sweatshirt over his head, and went back to sleep. He has detention for me after school. Is there anything you need him to work on for your class this afternoon that I can have him do once he's done with my assignment?"

I looked over at Carter on the couch, sound asleep. He was wearing the same clothes he had worn the previous day. I glanced over at the cell phone charging station I had for students in my room and his cell phone was not there, something strange because he always charged his phone in my class. Something was unusually off about him that day, so I let him sleep and responded to his science teacher's email:

"Actually, I have quite a bit for him to do for my class. I know your daughter has a swim meet today, so why don't I keep him in my room for detention so you can go watch her and not have to worry about being here for him. If that's fine with you, send me your assignment for him, and I'll be sure to have him work on that, too." She pleasantly agreed to the arrangement and thanked me for "taking him off [her] plate."

Carter's last class of the day was mine. When the release bell rang for school to end, Carter did not budge an inch. Once all the other students had left the room, I went

and sat on the couch next to him, gently trying to wake him. As he awoke and realized that no one else was in the classroom he said, “Why did you let me sleep the whole time?”

“You were obviously very tired, Carter. I noticed that you didn’t even have the energy to put your phone on the charger like you always do, so I figured your body needed some rest,” I explained. “You’re a smart boy, so I know you’ll be able to get caught up with today’s assignment before you head home.”

“Oh, yeah, I can do it in my science teacher’s room,” he stated. “I have detention this afternoon with her anyway.”

“Well, I emailed her at the beginning of class to see if I could just let you serve your detention in my class instead,” I told him. He had a look of relief as he smirked and laid his head back on the couch.

“Thanks, Miss,” he stated. “I work better in here anyway.”

I handed him his science assignment and told him that once he finished, I would go over today’s lesson and assignment for my class. He got to work right away and after about 20 minutes brought his completed work to my desk. “Mrs. Williams,” he started, “can I talk to you?”

“Sure,” I said, and I turned away from my computer to give him my undivided attention. I had hoped he would share with me why he was so tired today. He was not the type of student that was comfortable being approached by others, but if he was the one doing the approaching, he was more willing to be vulnerable and ask for help.

“My brothers are in a gang,” he started, “and I am having to join to keep my sister safe from what she’s always having to do to help our family.”

This was when I learned about all the ins and outs of Carter’s family dynamics. According to Linda Burton (2007), “adultification comprises contextual, social, and developmental processes in which youth are prematurely, and often inappropriately, exposed to adult knowledge and assume extensive adult roles and responsibilities within their family networks” (p. 329). While I had many students throughout my three years of teaching who were products of this phenomenon, Carter is a student who particularly stands out among them all.

With three older brothers and one younger sister, his single-mother carried a very heavy burden of raising five children on her own, often leaving her absent from the home in order to provide financially the best she could. However, even with the multiple jobs she held, his mother’s income was never enough for a six-person household. Each of her children had to also take on the role of provider in order to meet the basic needs of the family. Because of this situation, Carter regularly witnessed adversities that no child should have to see; his brothers meddling in drug-related exchanges that often led to violent occurrences, his 11-year-old sister coming home daily after exchanging sexual favors to gang members for monetary pay, and now his own similar obligations to this lifestyle.

“The OG [original gangster, leader of the gang] said that he’ll make sure the amount of money my sister gets for her night walks [prostituting] will be given to our

family without her having to do the actual work,” he started, “as long as I agree to join and do all the bagging [preparing drugs for sale] and exchanges.”

I sat in shock and anger as my empathy and grace grew for Carter while I listened to him tell me everything he and his family dealt with on a day-to-day basis. This was why he was so tired; he had taken on extra work for the gang in order to protect his little sister from the torture of child sex trafficking.

“Mrs. Williams,” he ended, “please don’t tell anyone. No one can know. I just wanted to tell you because I know you care, and you always find ways to help people during school.”

“Carter,” I started, “what can I do? What do you need from me?”

“I need a safe place for my sister to be until my mom can get off work every day,” he stated. “She’s in sixth grade and goes here, but she’s such a good kid so she never gets in trouble or has to stay after school for detention. Can she stay in your room after school just until 5:30 when my mom can come get her? That way she doesn’t have to walk home alone. I can’t walk with her after school anymore because I have to go to the OG’s house every single day.”

“Yes,” I said. “She can come to my room. And if I’m ever not here, she can go to Mrs. Towner.” Carter knew that my relationship with Mrs. Towner was strong enough and built on so much trust, that she wouldn’t ask questions. We continued the afternoon with a quick review of that day’s lecture and assignment for my class, and as he left my room, I cried. He did not want me to tell anyone. As a mandated reporter, I was legally required to report this situation to Child Protective Services (CPS), so that is what I did.

Filling out that report was hard and scary. I worried about the safety of this family from the gang if they found out that someone knew what was happening. Thankfully, I could file the report anonymously so there was no paper trail of where the information came from, hopefully protecting Carter from being hurt for telling.

This interaction proved to me the importance of knowing your students and their unique habits in order to recognize when something is wrong and provide the help they need to the best of your ability as a teacher. Carter's science teacher saw his behavior of sleeping and aggravated spirit as a burden to her and a blatant display of disrespect. She failed to recognize these behaviors of Carter stemmed from something outside of school and more important in his current situation than the science content he was receiving.

3.7. Conclusion

An empathetic person is purposeful in rejecting assumptions, stereotypes, and social stigmas in order to engage deeply in the needs and experiences of others (Noddings, 1986). Oftentimes, those conclusions are completely wrong or, at minimum, misinformed or uninformed enough that they are extremely distorted. Through this autoethnographic journey, I have concluded that empathetic people provide more grace to others, are more open to listen to the circumstances with which others are dealing, and are willing to help and support those who need and ask for it in order to avoid negatively impacting a relationship with stereotypes and assumptions. The interactions I had with coworkers provided opportunities for me to not only be conscious of my own biases and misinterpretations, but to help build my empathetic capacity towards my students. I came to realize quickly that in order to provide the best environment and support for my

students, I needed to be completely willing to take criticism of my own biases and misunderstandings from other teachers who could provide me with knowledge about my students and their cultures. Along with those positive interactions with colleagues, my empathetic capacity was also strengthened by negative interactions with other colleagues. From administration placing policies and systems before student needs to teachers refusing to recognize their own biases and prejudices towards certain students or groups of students, I was able to clearly see the actions and characteristics I did not want to embody in my own teaching practice. These interactions ultimately led to me become a more empathetic and care-centered teacher; a teacher my students were able to rely on to feel safe in their individual academic endeavors and growth; a teacher who was their advocate in a system that often seemed to be against them. The teacher identity I was fostering for myself proved to be key in the positive successes my students experienced in their academics.

While interactions with colleagues was a central component of developing my ethic of care and empathy in the classroom, the interactions I experienced with my students proved to be critical in providing mirror moment reflections for me to continue to grow and mold in my empathetic capacity. It's easy to get stuck in the daily schedules, the district and state mandates, and the constantly changing procedures and rules of a school, but when we take time to step back and look in the mirror at how we handled our interactions with students, the mundane routine of a school day becomes an exciting and eye-opening experience of self-exploration. Being able to reflect on my interactions with my students was my key tool in continuing the lifelong process of

empathy development in my teaching career. From being able to recognize the systemic biases that blocked the needs of students from other countries to providing a safe-space for students struggling with home life issues, I was constantly challenged to expand my empathetic capacity and open my mind to the different realities of life from my own that many of my students were experiencing.

The importance of reflecting on interactions with both students and colleagues was something that truly came to light with Nora. Though she was my toughest kid to connect with in the beginning, when that connection was finally made through an interaction about our similar experiences with loss and death of a family member, I truly understood why teachers need to interact with their students and why students need their teachers to be consciously making an effort to do so. Nora showed me what the power of a positive teacher-student relationship could do in the life of a student and in the life of a teacher. Empathy towards and love for students, no matter their culture, language acquisition, behavior issues, or any other label given to them by the educational system, is the most important part of a classroom environment (Chaskin & Rauner, 1995; Erickson, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1992). When a teacher can be a beacon of love and empathy for a student like Nora, student success and teacher effectiveness grow and flourish. “The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts” (Palmer, 2017, p. 11).

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4. ACTUALIZING CARE AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE FOR A WHITE FEMALE TEACHER

4.1. Introduction

Over the years, I have heard the sentiment that core-content teachers love content more than most of their students. As an 8th grade English Language Arts and Reading teacher, I felt this reality to my core, specifically when it was time to start our poetry unit. When the first day of poetry arrived, the eye-rolling, loud sighs, and flat out declaration of hatred towards poetry filled my classroom. You would have thought I was asking them to cut their left hands off.

“MISS! I hate poetry so much!” one student cried.

“Poetry sucks!” a young man in the back of the class shouted.

Another dramatically declared with her head thrown back, “This is about to be the worst three weeks of my life!” And yet a third student exclaimed, “Poetry has nothing to do with any part of my life! This is such a waste of time!”

It only took one day of this for me to recognize that I needed to approach this unit with students’ interests at the forefront of every lesson. I decided to begin every class warmup featuring a current hit song (always the school appropriate/clean version) based on the genres of music my students had expressed they enjoyed. This one element provided lots of teacher-student interactions since I had to reach out to them about their music interests in order to know if I was playing the “cool songs” or not. When these

interactions started coming alive in the songs at the start of each class, my students felt their voices were heard and interests were important to me.

The curricular changes of our poetry unit, however, made the biggest difference in my students' enjoyment and academic success in the poetry sections of district and state testing. I had to accept my students' realities. When I paid close attention to how my students spoke to each other, what they said, and how they used their words, it was clear that their youth culture was full of poetic and literary devices. More importantly, they were completely oblivious to the fact that they were using them. Additionally, as I walked the hallways for duty, I began collecting snippets of dialogue between the students.

“Ugh! That girl is thirsty!”

“Man, I woke up today wanting some sunshine and all you're giving me is shade.”

“Well she's just salty because her ex-boyfriend is with Kim now.”

Often we refer to these as colloquialisms or slang, but in my classroom they were referred to as the “beautiful oral and written art being created.”

One evening, I began looking at how students wrote in their daily lives on their social media accounts. I wrote down several posts to include in the next day's lesson on identifying literary devices in written text.

“Come scoop me,” one student had commented on a friend's post about getting their driver's license.

Another student had made their most recent Facebook post state, “I only break bread wit ***** I starved with.”

Over and over I witnessed students in my class use alliteration, hyperbole, personification, allusion, similes, metaphors and many more literary devices frequently and correctly in their own lives. My students were poets and had no idea how genius their words actually were in a literary sense! Oh, but the next day they would know because their words, their creations, would be examples of academic brilliance during my lesson.

About a week into our poetry unit, several students pointed out something very important to me: “I might be able to read, understand, and even identify literary devices in Tupac Shakur’s music, Mrs. Williams, but the end-of-year state test isn’t going to have Tupac’s lyrics.” This was a very valid point. So, I showed them how the themes and literary devices in the lyrics of their favorite music artists were also in the lines of poems written by people like Shakespeare and Langston Hughes. Oppression, survival, strength, hope, love, identity, perseverance, and ambition were themes and topics that stretched across cultural writings and songs. When students saw this, they began to develop more confidence in identifying the academic terms during quizzes and tests.

At the end of our poetry unit, students were asked to use poetry as a means for self-advocacy. Their willingness and excitement to do this was completely the opposite of the sentiments they had on the first day of the unit. From topics about school dress code and standardized testing to political issues and community problems, my students created beautiful and strong poetry pieces. But more importantly, they developed

confidence in their academic abilities and positive beliefs about who they were as thinkers, learners and creators of knowledge. As their teacher, I was able to consciously embed beliefs that all students are smart, all students have valid ideas, and all students have the right to express themselves and their cultures in a safe and supportive learning environment. When curriculum, diversity, and empathy collide, schooling becomes enjoyable for both students and teachers. But this requires an educator with an open heart and a willingness to learn from and about students as a critical ongoing process of effective teaching.

4.2. Statement of the Problem

Multiculturalism is a concept that is often wrongly defined, especially in social and day-to-day settings. Unfortunately, many times it is looked at as being *the race thing* or *the gender thing*, but in all reality, it is simply being *the human thing*. Taubman is quoted on his view of multiculturalism stating that "to look at the personal, to begin to face the provisionality and contingency of identity, is to surrender the security of stable identities" (Elbaz-Luwish, 2015, p. 283). Along with Taubman, "Jansen (2008) considers the need for a *pedagogy of compassion*" (Elbaz-Luwish, 2015, p. 283). This is such a powerful way of looking at how multiculturalism is defined on a personal level, especially since the personal levels tend to spill over into the professional level. For teachers, compassion and empathy are important characteristics to embody on a deep level because of the direct influence they have on student learning (Bouton, 2014). Having empathy as a teacher is necessary in order to gain knowledge about other cultures in order to meet students where they are. This includes learning about students'

heritage. Culture plays a major part in students' learning perspectives and styles, so when pre-existing stereotypes are still highly functioning within a teacher, it can cause unnecessary tension in student learning. Being aware of the culture from which students come from is imperative for their learning and for the teacher's personal growth.

Relatedly, teacher's professional identity is directly related to job satisfaction, self-efficacy, commitment to the multilevel and multifaceted aspects of the education field, and the motivation to succeed and continue in the profession (Day, 2002; Leijen, Kullasepp., & Anspal, 2014). Moreover, Elbaz-Luwisch (2015) speaks to the idea of creating a pedagogy of narrative for teachers as a way for them to reflect on their own biases, misunderstandings, and belief systems, which are critical reflexive processes in identity formation. Teachers' life experiences could hold the key to understanding the processes associated with developing empathetic educators. Furthermore, Valenzuela (2016) cites Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) in explaining that educators' dispositions and habits of understanding have a direct impact on the ways in which knowledge and skills are transferred to students of color and learning from marginalized communities. For teachers, being able to "draw on their own life experience, presenting issues of diversity from a personal as well as critical perspective" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2015, p. 282) is extremely important to be an effective educator of a multicultural classroom. This article explores my experiences as a White female educator in culturally diverse classrooms, and the efforts I made to develop empathy, which I translated into my classroom as impactful relative teaching. Following a focused review of the literature

related to teacher care and empathy, I employ autoethnographic analysis to explore how my dispositions impacted my ability to create and deliver effective instruction.

4.3. Literature Review

4.3.1. Teacher C.A.R.E.

Relational dispositions of a teacher stem from a relational ethic that is “dependent on a natural caring” (Noddings, 1988, p. 219). Having this morality of care means that a teacher will perform positive acts that help enhance their students’ growth due to a feeling of conviction rather than an instrumental desire to satisfy technical disposition expectations (Noddings, 2012). I argue that this ethic of teacher care is comprised of 4 components that make up a relational disposition in teachers: Concern, Action, Responsibility, and Empathy (C.A.R.E.). Within each of these components are Haberman’s (1995) 7 midrange functions, all of which are supported by the relational dispositions of a culturally responsive teacher (Farinde-Wu, Glover, & Williams, 2017; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2011).

4.3.1.1. Concern

Culturally responsive teachers have a deep concern for building relationships with students, and therefore seek out knowledge about other cultures that are represented in their classrooms in order to modify the curriculum and instruction into a more inclusive learning experience (Farinde-Wu et al, 2017; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2011). Developing an intimate knowledge of students’ cultures encourages positive teacher-student relationships, an approach that supports a teacher’s ability to connect with children in poverty or at-risk (Haberman, 1995). These relational experiences

improve teacher self-efficacy, develop positive teacher identities, and strengthen teachers' ability to function in a profession with a high burnout rate (Haberman, 1995). The ways in which teachers understand and define their own identity as educators shapes how they understand and define their students, and to what extent they have concern for those same students holistically (Devine, Fahie, & McGillicuddy, 2013), a necessary relational disposition for a care-centered teacher.

4.3.1.2. Action

True care requires faithful action and devotion to students, shown through protecting and valuing student learning (Haberman, 1995). Culturally responsive teachers are “relentless in their efforts to ensure the success of culturally diverse students” (Farinde-Wu et al, 2017, p. 283). A caring teacher is an active agent of transformation for their students' acquisition of academic knowledge, not by waging a war on students' cultures or by assimilating to students' ways of life, but through wisely embracing student culture and participating with them in their learning. Students then feel respected and loved by their teacher who is able to model tolerance and appreciation of others. Ladson-Billings (2014) refers to this as cultural competence: “the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture” (p. 75).

4.3.1.3. Responsibility

Culturally responsive teachers are self-reflective of their biases and beliefs of students as well as their own cultural frames of reference (Farinde-Wu et al, 2017). They take responsibility in providing the best environment possible for their students,

exhibiting persistence in developing relationships with all students, readily admitting fallibility when they are wrong, and applying practical theory to student learning that enhances the unique learning styles of all students (Haberman, 1995). Because these teachers proudly take on the responsibility of covering curriculum requirements in a way that connects to real life contexts (Ladson-Billings, 2011), their students learn content-specific knowledge while also gaining important social skills and wisdom.

4.3.1.4. Empathy

Bouton (2016) affirms that the socio-emotional trait of empathy is a necessary skill for all preservice teachers, a disposition that is not taught in teacher education programs, but rather is “a personal and emotional trait that occurs inside of a person’s mind and being” (p. 17). Empathetic people in general are found to be highly skilled at inferring and decoding another’s feelings and behavior, ultimately improving learning (Swan & Riley, 2012). Haberman (1995) emphasizes that a caring teacher-student relationship is not synonymous with a loving teacher-student relationship. Rather, a caring relationship is seen in the teacher’s professionalism of maintaining positive beliefs of all students’ ability to learn while encouraging academic and social growth and respect. It is in this professional, yet emotional, state that a culturally relevant teacher begins to transition from a position of sympathy (feeling *for* students) to a position of informed empathy (feeling *with* students) (Ladson-Billings, 2011). There are three components of informed empathy: behavioral, cognitive, and affective (Bouton, 2016). A teacher who displays these components of empathy have the relational dispositions of being conversational, curious, and challenging. It is through the mirrors of each of these

components that an educator is able to continue to foster and grow their empathetic capacity.

4.3.1.4.1. Conversational

Teaching is a series of social interactions, requiring meaningful dialogue and reflection that is supportive and patient (Noddings, 1984). Noddings (2010) stresses the importance of dialogue in “identifying needs, to learn what the cared-for is going through, or what the carer is aiming for, and then to work cooperatively on meeting those needs” (p. 147). Deeper focus on supporting our own beliefs rather than learning about someone else’s creates a barrier within dialogue. However, empathetic teachers use behavioral empathy through the relational disposition of conversation with colleagues and students to exchange ideas and perceptions as a way to grow their empathetic capacity. This provides teachers the ability to express their concern and care to students effectively (Patterson & Purkey, 1993), leading to enhanced classroom interactions and climate. Students who feel their teachers actively try to understand them have been shown to work harder and achieve greater academically (McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

4.3.1.4.2. Curious

Empathetic teachers embody a sense of curiousness which, when supported by their effective conversational abilities, provides opportunities to learn about different perspectives with a sincere and open mind. This cognitive empathy leads them to be intuitive of others’ experiences and feelings, helping to reduce any prejudices that may lie within their unconscious. A curious personality strengthens confidence in

experiencing social interactions which result “in reduced egocentrism and heightened social sensitivity” (Piaget, 1995). The more social interactions that are experienced, the greater the chances of being able to understand another’s perspective, leading to the development of a more favorable attitude towards another (Shih, wang, Bucher, & Stotzer, 2009). Pinar (2012) stresses the importance of learning about different perspectives stating that “it is understanding that informs the ethical obligation to care for ourselves and our fellow human beings, that enables us to think and act with intelligence, sensitivity, and courage in both the public sphere and in the private sphere” (p. 190). Teachers who use their curiosity to open their minds and hearts to differences model tolerance in the classroom that supports student inquiry where new and different views are explored, considered, and respected (Thompson, 1998).

4.3.1.4.3. Challenging

Teachers must accept their role in reconstructing society because of the problems of the social situation of the modern era” (Slattery, 2013, p. 233). This is a challenge that empathetic teachers are inspired by and therefore oblige themselves with. Affective empathy leads to attitude change toward the other and a strong sense of compassion for those who are suffering from discrimination (Stephan & White Stephan, 2004). Teachers who are culturally relevant develop a sense of justice within themselves and their students where “justice” is a condition in which all people can flourish (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Thompson, 1998). Because teachers have the ability to mold young minds and develop a new generation in a way that no other profession can, those who epitomize the relational disposition of being challenging confront prejudices as a method of

discovering commonalities. Stephan and White Stephan (2004) cite considerable evidence (Byrne, 1971; Rokeach, Smith, & Evans, 1960) that “an increased perception of similarity of others to the self increases liking for these others” (p. 785) and stimulates the prejudice-reduction process.

Gay (2000) states that teachers who embody care tend to have students who perform well holistically-- academically, socially, morally, and culturally-- therefore empathy education is a necessary element to include in teacher preparation classrooms. McAllister and Irvine (2002) studied practicing teachers’ beliefs regarding empathy as an important element in their effectiveness with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. They found that “teachers’ beliefs about empathy and their resulting attitudes and behaviors point to the value of nurturing powerful beliefs, such as empathy, in teacher education programs” (McAllister & Irvine, 2002, p. 442). Developing more empathetic teachers to be sent into K-12 classrooms increases the potential for high achievement and greater student confidence in content learning among diverse learners. More research is needed, in the field of education particularly, on the benefits of empathy as a professional and relational disposition. Because dispositions are acquired, supported, or weakened by environmental interactions (Da Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007), teacher educators must be sure to provide preservice teachers with classroom experiences that will support positive interactions for the relational disposition of empathy to be developed.

4.4. Research Questions

1. What types of instructional practices were developed through my experiences as an empathetic classroom teacher?
2. How did the instructional practices utilized in my classroom affect the social and academic experiences of my students?

4.5. Methodology

Loh (2014) describes the use of narratives in education as helpful in bridging the theory-practice divide that many novice teachers unexpectedly experience once they are in their own classrooms. Pre-service teacher preparation and in-service teacher professional developments have the potential to develop empathetic, culturally aware, and strong teachers. Many people struggle with recognizing their own biases, something highly necessary for a professional in a classroom of culturally diverse students. In a narrative form, teachers are able to put their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs on paper and recognize where they have come from, who they are as teachers, and what they wish to be in their classrooms. Boylorn and Orbe posit that autoethnography encourages researchers to apply “a critical lens, alongside an introspective and outward one, to make sense of where we are in the context of our cultural communities” (p. 17).

Typically, it is easier to connect with anecdotal examples than only theory-driven facts. Teachers can quickly recognize themselves and find answers to their own questions in others' stories. Supportively, Loh (2014) asserts, "The knowledge, insight, and understandings gained from the narrative renderings helps to elucidate and clarify misconceptions, and thus provides an important way to reduce the accumulated beliefs

and impressions gained from the apprenticeship of observation" (Loh, 2014, p. 213).

Autoethnography is a narrative method that provides a gateway to begin the recognition and deconstruction of biases that cloud teachers' perceptions and understandings of the diverse student populations in their classrooms.

In order to understand how my social interactions impacted my classroom pedagogy, I analyzed journal writing of my own memories of conversations with former students and reflected on past lesson plans. Each of these data sources were cross-referenced to increase the accuracy of my stories and reflections. I began my journaling by writing down a list of students' names who were highly memorable. This list was comprised of 27 names. Then, I wrote one experience that stood out about each of those students. From there, I considered which anecdotes directly influenced or were influenced by my own empathy and care in the classroom and narrowed the list down to 17 student names. Next, I categorized each student based on whether or not the interaction with them pushed me to be culturally relevant in the classroom. This left me with 5 students whose stories of my experiences with them highlighted care in either an interaction with me or with instruction in my classroom. For this article, 2 of those 5 students' anecdotes were chosen to be included because they were moments that actively and consciously altered and molded my instruction through empathy and care. Next, I made a list of experiences and events that directly influenced my lesson plans. There were 16 experiences that came to mind. I found the lesson plans that correlated with the time frames of those experiences and events and began analyzing the changes made to them. From the original 16, there were 3 that directly related to the 7 characteristics of

care that consistently stood out: concerned, action-driven, responsibility dependent, empathy focused, conversational, curious, and challenging. These characteristics are supported by literature and exemplified in the forthcoming autoethnography.

The stories to follow use narrative analysis to situate the stories that are told as both method and phenomenon (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Storytelling is an integral part of the human existence (Fisher 1984) and the narratives that come from storytelling help to analyze and make sense of the complexities of social situations (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2003; Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), “Stories are how we make sense of our experiences, how we communicate with others, and through which we understand the world around us” (p. 33-34). The findings in this article highlight stories of my relevant experiences within social situations and relationships where I sought to demonstrate care for students through designing and enacting culturally relevant language arts lessons to meet the developmental needs of students in my culturally diverse classrooms.

4.6. Experiences with Curriculum and Instruction

4.6.1. Pedagogical Experiences

Interactions with students and coworkers is essential in building relationships in the classroom. These interactions lead to important understandings of the unique needs and abilities of each student that sits in your class. When a student is seen as equally human, full of all the same qualities as yourself as a teacher, they become more than just their most recent test score or discipline record. The *Socialization to Care* combines the formative experiences of a teacher with the interactional and instructional pieces of their

pedagogical experiences. Care, actualized through pedagogy, can be seen in the types of instruction and strategies that are used in the classroom. When a teacher has an awareness of their interactions with students, the concept of differentiation becomes more prevalent in their instructional practices.

4.6.1.1. Instructional

The interactions I had with my students, not only helped me to become more aware of the inequities and inequalities of the structures within school and society, but also gave my students self-confidence and boosted the morale of learning, providing an opportunity to use their knowledge, passions, skills, and talents to advocate for their beliefs and aspirations.

4.6.1.1.1. Caring Teacher-Student Relationships

Ladson-Billings (1994) and Gordon (1999) identify empathy as a component of teachers' success. Care helps teachers to connect content to the lives and experiences of students through active, purposeful, and dependable relationship building. Teachers who build these types of positive, empathetic relationships have proven to increase student motivation and improve academic performance in the classroom (Foster, 1995; Gay, 2000; Irvine, 1990).

4.6.1.1.1.1. Landon

One of my student athletes was the school's basketball star. Landon was a Hispanic male whose love and passion for basketball was a driving force for nearly every aspect of his life. I never had any issues with him doing his work or paying attention in class because he knew that if he didn't pass or if he got in trouble with his

teachers, he wouldn't get to play in the game that week. Even his relationships with the other students was directly influenced by basketball; he refrained from hanging around students that were often in trouble at school because he really did not want to take on that same type of behavior or get in trouble simply because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. His focus was totally and completely on doing all he could to do well in basketball so that he could someday get a basketball scholarship.

One day, Landon came into class without his usual happy smile and he didn't participate in class activities like normal. Towards the end of the class period, I gave students time to work on their current story-writing assignment and pulled Landon to my desk for a "writing conference," which was simply a code word so that the other students wouldn't know I was really calling him up to see what was wrong.

"Landon," I began, "what's going on? Are you feeling ok today?"

"Mrs. Williams," he said in a really frustrated tone, "my mom said I can't be in the city basketball tournament because she doesn't have the \$40 fee."

"I'm sorry, Landon," I told him. "When is the \$40 due for you to be able to play?"

"On Friday," he told me. It was currently Wednesday and the district pay-day was the very next day. I had an idea, but I didn't want to get his hopes up until I knew it was for sure possible.

"Well, I really enjoyed watching your game last week!" I told him. I tried my best not to miss athletic events because so many of my students were athletes and many of them had parents with multiple jobs who couldn't make it themselves. Every child

deserves to have someone there cheering them on, so I tried to be that person for as many kids as I could. He cheered up a little and talked to me about how he felt the game the week before had gone.

After school, I went to visit with my coworker, Jackie Towner, about Landon's situation. I told her what was going on and asked if she thought she could split the \$40 fee with me. She was more than welcome to help. We called the city parks and leisure office and made the payment in Landon's name. The next day, as he came into class, Landon said, "You'll never believe what happened last night, Mrs. Williams! I got a call from the city saying that my payment had been fulfilled by someone and I am being put on a team!"

"That's awesome!" I told him. "What day is the game? I definitely want to come!"

"The game is Saturday," he replied. I got all the details on location and time, told Mrs. Towner and we both made plans to be there.

After his game, Landon came up to us and gave us a huge hug. "I know it was you, Mrs. Williams, who paid my fee. I asked the coach who made the payment and he told me."

"Well, I didn't do it alone. Mrs. Towner paid for half," I admitted.

"Thank you so much. I've never had teachers who actually loved me enough to help me out with something that wasn't school-related," he said.

This interaction with Landon really helped me recognize that a teacher's purpose is to help develop the entire child, not just provide academic knowledge. One of

Landon's main identities was "a basketball player." This identity fueled his motivation in nearly every part of his life from academics to friendships; when that identity was threatened, other pieces of how he viewed himself were also threatened. Mrs. Towner and I worked together to help make sure that didn't happen, something that we did often with our students each year. Within this context, high quality instruction begins with a deep knowledge, appreciation, and support for the developmental needs of learners. Then and only then can a teacher transform formal academic knowledge into transferable bits of information that engages students in the learning process.

4.6.1.1.1.2. Desirea

Relationships built with students should not come to an abrupt ending on the last day of a school year. I strongly believe that teacher-student relationships are a necessary and natural human link that goes beyond the classroom and into the future, for both students and teachers. The first year after leaving the K-12 classroom, my husband and I experienced the tragedy of pregnancy loss when I delivered our first daughter as a stillborn. Just five days later, many former 8th grade students of mine were checked out of school in order to be in attendance at her funeral that took place in my hometown where I had taught. Though the funeral was in our hometown, she was buried in the current town we lived. Students from my first year of teaching were already in college, a few who attended the local university in the county we lived. Those in our college town made time to come to her burial, one of which was Desirea.

The first time I met Desirea she walked into the high school cheerleading practice the week before school started. I had been put into the position as cheer coach

just a couple of days before, so I had yet to meet or get to know each of the cheerleaders. Across the room I stared at Desirea, a very large and very, very dark complected Black girl, as she hobbled over on crutches. My first thought was that she was in the wrong place. She introduced herself to me and explained that she was the mascot, but would not be able to participate in football season this year because of knee surgery she had that summer. I thanked her for letting me know, and off she hobbled out the door. Cheer practice continued, and I honestly didn't think much more about Desirea until the following week.

On the first day of school, I stood at my door welcoming students into my classroom. I was nervous as a novice teacher and wondered, "What have I gotten myself into?" as all different kinds of students walked in and took a seat at a desk in my English III International Baccalaureate class. One of the last students to enter my door was Desirea. A part of me felt more at ease knowing that she was there. Though I didn't actually know anything about her, on that first day of class I could see that she was smart in her studies, sharp with her wit, and steadfast in her beliefs. Her academic strength and passion created a path for me to get to know her and learn from her just as much as she learned from me.

We bonded during that first year of teaching, something that continued into the present. When Desirea was a sophomore in college, I began working on my doctorate and we, once again, were in the same school but this time both as students. One evening, Desirea reached out to me for a suggestion on a church she could start attending. I told her about the church my husband and I are members of and she began to come with us

every Sunday, something that continued until her graduation when she moved states. Outside of Sunday church service was a women's Bible study every Wednesday that I also attended. I decided to invite Desirea to join our group as well and she did not miss a single week the entire time she was here.

Our relationship had gone from a student-teacher connection, to a strong friendship during my own grief, to a spiritual family bond that she was seeking during her own personal struggles. The natural growth of a relationship is an important part of the human experience. Students and teachers are given the gift of a perfect pairing as they learn with and from each other in and out of the classroom. This openness to developing deep relationships with students is highlighted by Emdin (2016) and represents a critical point in the instructional process particularly for White teachers in diverse schools. My relationship with Desirea has taught me the importance of seeing beyond the social construct of race to the heart of a person. Instructionally, this willingness to open yourself up to cross cultural relationships that escape the bounds of traditional teacher-student relationships is a critical input to developing and sustaining care as an instructional practice. Care has to be nurtured through sustain cross cultural interactions, White teachers should seek out and maintain such relationships because they can predispose them to connecting with students and transferring "insider" lessons to make content relevant and engaging.

4.6.1.1.2. Relevant Instructional Practices

Noddings (1984) describes empathy as "feeling with" which is supported by Darling-Hammond's (2000) and Gordon's (1999) claim that empathy is a key

characteristic of effective teachers. When teachers are able to take on the perspective of their students, especially those from other cultures, a conscious effort to selflessly serve those students' needs develops, something referred to as *altruism* (Goodman, 2000). This type of service is seen in the instructional practices of a teacher in the classroom, often a reflection of their own unique teaching philosophy.

My own teaching philosophy is that every fearfully and wonderfully made child deserves guidance full of love and encouragement for their own unique path. This philosophy references two important Biblical concepts. The first is to “start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6, NIV). While many interpret the idea of “the way they should go” as simply doing things in alignment with God’s will, this also references the importance of recognizing a child’s unique nature and temperament that provides them the innate desire to continue on the path they are designed. Psalm 139:14 states that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” the second concept that makes up my teaching philosophy. When the unique characteristics of every student are recognized and appreciated by teachers, differentiation of instruction develops naturally so that the teacher can expose the talents, gifts, and callings within each child.

There are three ways in which care is demonstrated to students through the type of instruction used in the classroom and the way that the teacher presents the content of the curriculum: recognizing students’ communities, having high expectations for all students, celebrating success through the lenses of uniqueness and growth.

4.6.1.1.2.1. Community References

During my second year of teaching, a local corner-store was robbed at gunpoint. The store owner happened to be clerking that evening and, in his pursuit to protect his business, was shot and killed by the burglars. Many students at the school I taught were devastated by the tragedy. This man had been a well-known member of their community, someone the students saw on a day-to-day basis when they would stop for an after school snack or drink. They had built a relationship with him; he knew many of their names, discussed their extracurricular interests with them, and even gave them encouragement for their academics.

The next school day, student morale was low, many students showing a desire to talk about and reflect on the grief they felt. Most of their teachers continued with their already made lesson plans, trying to ignore the tragedy in an attempt to shelter students from feelings of remorse. These teachers truly thought that this was the best thing for the students as it seemed to provide a safe place away from such a terrible event. However, I could tell my students had a desire for a safe place they could discuss their feelings, a healthy outlet to analyze and process their understanding of what happened to someone they loved.

So, I gave them that space in my classroom. That week, my lesson plan objectives were based on the analysis, comprehension, and synthesis of different types of texts along with developing listening and speaking skills. I trashed the texts I had originally chosen for the day and pulled different articles that related to burglary, shootings, and poverty. I opened the class discussion after students read through the

articles and they were able to discuss their views of the current event in their community with resources that helped them to interpret the details in a meaningful and constructive manner. After the discussions, students requested that they have opportunities to write letters to the family of the store owner and create presentations for how to help the community with grief, improve security in stores, and fight poverty. These desires aligned perfectly with the required state objectives of teamwork, research, writing, and presenting, so I completely agreed to the suggestions and worked to adjust my lesson plans for the next few weeks accordingly.

Through empathy and strong relationships I had built with my students to understand them at a deeper level, I was able to bring their own community and culture into the classroom in a way that was relevant to their realities as well as the curriculum. Adjusting instructional practices to meet student needs heightens their desire to learn and improves engagement in the classroom (McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

4.6.1.1.2.2. High Expectations

The principal of the school in my 2nd and 3rd years of teaching required all teachers to provide daily lesson plans for each prep. During those years, I was assigned 2 teaching preps: regular 8th grade English/Language Arts and Reading and Pre-AP 8th grade English/Language Arts and Reading. All of my students, however, were held to high expectations in my classroom regardless of whether or not they were in Pre-AP. This was frustrating to my principal because he demanded that Pre-AP lesson plans show greater “rigor” than regular classes. In his understanding, rigor meant an increase in the amount and the difficulty of the work done in class. This, however, did not match

my understanding of rigor. For me, rigor was having high expectations for students that were aligned with the differentiation that each unique student required. Why would I only have high expectations for Pre-AP students and less than high expectations for my regular students? My lesson plans were identical for Pre-AP and regular classes and this irritated the principal when he saw that all of my students were receiving the same education, despite the fact that differentiation was always taking place and high academic expectations were having a great, positive impact on student achievement based on the district common-based assessments and benchmarks.

This opened my eyes to the importance of teachers fighting for all students' academic experiences no matter what labels the school system has placed on them (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Slattery, 2013). Had I internalized the definition of rigor that my principal expected, then the unique needs of each of my students would have been ignored. Not only would my regular classes receive less academic opportunities, but my Pre-AP students would simply be given more classwork and homework that didn't necessarily provide the deep learning opportunities they received through the lessons I already had planned for them.

4.6.1.1.2.3. Celebration of Uniqueness and Growth as Success

At the end of the school year during my 2nd and 3rd years of teaching, 8th graders were given an awards ceremony where certificates and medals were handed out to individual and groups of students for their achievements. However, these awards were often based on a definition of success that left many students with no individual award and a feeling of inadequacy in the school setting. While deciding the different awards

that would be given on a grade-level standard, it was voted that all 8th graders would receive “The Bearcat Spirit Award,” an award that had no actual meaning, but rather helped to make sure that every student received something in their award packet. I hated this. No, I despised this, because every single student had an individual achievement that deserved to be celebrated.

After our grade-level meeting about the award ceremony, Mrs. Towner and I went back to my room and decided that we would create English/Language Arts & Reading awards that would be unique to every single student. We came up with two different awards: “The Growing STAAR Award” celebrated growth of any kind on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) standardized test from the previous school year and “The One and Only Awards” celebrated unique personality and character traits of every student. Every single one of our students received each of these awards. Even if a student didn’t grow in their overall score on the STAAR, each of them grew in some area of the content (e.g. poetry, literary devices, expository writing) and therefore received “The Growing STAAR Award.” Examples of “The One and Only Awards” included Mr. Humble, The Professional Procrastinator, Fashionista Award, Confidence Queen, Best Dancer, Most Likely to Try Out for the NBA, and Miss Positivity Pants. This award was a celebration of each student’s unique personality traits that brought character into our classroom and made the class a family.

During the award ceremony, each teacher read off their awards for each of their students. When it came time for the English Language Arts and Reading teachers to hand out their awards, students and parents were on their feet in applause as every single

student was recognized for their unique talents, funny personalities, and academic growth. Watching every student smile with appreciation for knowing that they were seen, they were loved, and they were valued proved the importance of seeing every child as capable and strong in their own unique ways, despite the ways in which society and school labels them. Gay (2000) emphasizes the importance of teacher care in developing successful students who thrive holistically. Though our students knew that we cared about them from the treatment and encouragement they received from us in the classroom throughout the school year, having awards specifically designated to celebrate their individual and unique achievements highlighted their accomplishments for themselves and for all those who were able to experience cheering them on that day.

4.7. Conclusion

Swan & Riley (2012) spotlight the ability of empathetic teachers to infer and decode student behavior and feelings as a tool to improve learning. During the classroom experiences I had, my empathetic capacity constantly expanded as I allowed student needs and interests to inform the content used in the curriculum of my classroom and my instruction of that curriculum. The use of dialogue and conversations with students was one of the most important pieces of developing and embedding instructional practices into the classroom. Not only was I able to enhance my classroom climate through expressing my care of and towards students in an effective way (Patterson & Purkey, 1993), but my students' academic achievement grew when they saw my genuine desire to help and understand their needs and interests (McAllister & Irvine, 2002). This open communication with my students allowed me the freedom to learn about the differences

in my classroom and how I could incorporate the diversity into my daily lesson plans. My students were able to see our classroom projects, assignments, and lessons be used as a way to confront prejudices in the school and even society as a whole. This developed a sense of justice in their academic creations, fueling and encouraging them to work hard in their academic careers in order to make an impact in society and on their social experiences.

School should be a fun and encouraging place for students, but often it is not seen that way through their eyes, especially when a student's identity is not aligned with the dominant culture's identity (e.g. race, ethnicity, and gender). However, when a teacher takes the time and puts in the effort to learn about each of their students, encourage open communication between everyone in their classroom, and develop lessons that incorporate student interests, desires, and needs, then students tend to perform well holistically (i.e. academically, socially, morally, and culturally) (Gay, 2000).

The students I was blessed to have during my first year as an 8th grade teacher opened my eyes to the importance of meeting students where they are in order to accent curriculum and lesson plans with content that is relevant to their realities, their cultures, and their interests. "Poetry sucks!" was their reality. In their other 8 years of schooling, poetry had sucked. It was boring, it was always taught the same, and the poets' work that was used were never poets who looked like, spoke like, or had experiences like many of my students. However, when they finished the poetry unit that year, there was a new love and appreciation for this genre of literature they had previously disdained so much.

Their culture and interests had collided with the curriculum when an empathetic and caring teacher was leading their academic experience in the classroom. When curriculum, diversity, and empathy work together, schooling becomes enjoyable and student achievement grows.

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5. CONCLUSIONS

The excavation of culturally responsive knowledge in teachers is a critical piece of teacher preparation that tends to be missing from the programs that educate future teachers for the classroom. To excavate something means “to expose to view by digging away a covering” (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Biases, prejudice, intolerance, and stereotypes are coverings that must be cleared away in order for teachers to be able to facilitate an equitable learning environment with culturally diverse students. Culturally responsive knowledge in teachers must be available for its application in the classroom to be effective and efficient. Therefore, teacher educators need to use the most compelling methods to help preservice teachers excavate their own culturally responsive knowledge before they enter the classroom.

Self-reflection through autoethnography is the best method for excavating culturally responsive knowledge in teachers, both preservice and inservice. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2015) encourage the use of ethnographic research in education as a way to best understand behavior in a natural setting. For teachers who spend 8-10 hours per day for 180 days of the year in the classroom, this environment becomes a natural setting for evaluating their identity as educators and their attitudes and behaviors that are present in that setting. Ladson-Billings (2011) asserts that understanding how the theories and philosophies we hold within ourselves are developed and seen in our classroom practices is essential to becoming culturally responsive in our teaching. Through narrating the experiences of social challenges faced in and out of the classroom, White teachers specifically are able to use a process orientation for developing cultural

competence (Bueler, Ruggles Gere, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009; Horton & Scott, 2004; Johnson Luchuk & Mosley, 2011; McDonough, 2009; Mosley & Rogers, 2009; Sleeter, 2015).

Critical self-reflection is necessary for recognizing experiences and assigning meaning to those experiences (Whitaker & Reimer, 2017). In teacher education, there are two competing positions on the theory-practice relationship of teaching. One is to aim at preparing new teachers to deliver content and curriculum rather than question or transform educational aims, what is considered technical knowledge. The other is more critical in nature, aiming to develop teachers with an understanding of how to shape socio-political aims of education through theories and process, a major component of relational knowledge. While these are two competing positions, a third position should be considered in bringing them together: consolidating both into a reflective process where teaching is viewed as a craft rather than strictly a technical or moral science. Reflection provides opportunities for technical knowledge of curriculum and content to be observed through relational knowledge of personal theories and ideologies (Khan, 2017). Gook & Gardner (2007) assert that critical reflection is “a process for unearthing individually held assumptions in order to make changes in the social world” (p. 14). While critical reflection is important to be cultivated into preservice teachers, it is complex in process and production of knowledge, making it difficult to measure in research according to Whitaker and Reimer (2017).

While technical dispositions are mostly objective and can be measured quantitatively and qualitatively, relational dispositions are mostly subjective. Relational

dispositions are built on an ideological foundation made up of individual beliefs and experiences (Hill-Jackson & Stafford, 2017). No matter how similar people seem, a person's beliefs are unique to them and each belief piece has an effect on every other piece, ultimately creating a one-of-a-kind whole of a person (Sathyanarayana Rao, Asha, Jagannatha Rao, & Vasudevaraju, 2009). Though a general understanding of someone's relational disposition can be researched through surveys, interviews, narrative inquiry, ethnography, etc., interpretations of the data collected are just that: interpretations. There are so many factors that contribute to relational knowledge, that a clear, black/white, right/wrong, good/bad understanding cannot be made. Relational disposition research analyses are left in a grey area because what is understood is not only affected by what the one(s) being studied say and do, but also by the experiences and interpretations of the one(s) performing the study. This makes it difficult to unpack this kind of research in the preservice teacher classroom without providing experiential learning opportunities for non-propositional knowledge to be applied.

Non-propositional knowledge is defined by March (2010) as experiential knowledge: "lessons extracted from the ordinary course of life and work" which is contrasted by technical academic knowledge that is "generated by systematic observation and analysis by experts and transmitted by authorities" (as cited in Kolb & Kolb, 2017, p. 14). This type of knowledge is dependent upon the experiences that we have throughout our lives. Dewey believed that, in order to be educative, experiences must be connected with or built upon prior experience (Noddings, 2012). Therefore, teacher educators not only have to be aware of students' previous experiences, but have

to be aware of those same students' present experiences in order to build future experiences in the classroom that will grow them in their technical knowledge as well as providing meaning in the experience of that growth that can be used in the present. Unpacking this type of knowledge and applying it to a public understanding within education is difficult since every person's experience is different, even within the same experience setting.

Non-propositional knowledge of culturally responsive teaching is necessary for the foundation of classroom and instructional practices to be efficient with diverse groups of students. Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez (2002) note that this knowledge and the skills that support it must be cultivated through learning opportunities for preservice teachers in which they are able to share personal experiences that produce reflection of how to support culturally diverse students in an unjust system (as cited by Kidd, Sánchez, & Thorp, 2007). Propositional knowledge and expectations are easily gathered through the objectives set forth by policymakers and school districts. However, that knowledge must be weaved together with non-propositional knowledge that should be excavated by teacher preparation programs.

When teachers have a working relationship between their propositional and non-propositional knowledge, student learning can excel in all areas from content knowledge in academics to the ability to use that knowledge for activism in society. Helping students to grow in their citizenship within a country that they will one day lead can be accomplished through teachers' ability to weave all types of knowledge together, modeling to students how to do the same. The study of non-propositional knowledge,

critical self-reflection skills, and relational dispositions in teachers is an arduous task for a researcher no matter what research method they utilize. In the field of education, these are linked together to create culturally responsive teachers; non-propositional knowledge is excavated and understood through effective and efficient critical self-reflection of experiences with others which provides a foundation for strong relationships to be built with diverse students.

5.1. The Socialization to Care

The *Socialization to Care* (see Figure 3) is a theory that describes the lifelong process of developing social awareness, critical consciousness, and social advocacy to resist bigotry in one's personal and professional life. Empathy and care are the core components of the foundation that this theory is built. Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984) emphasize the importance of teachers modeling care to students through dialogue, practice, and confirmation that is based on student needs and relationships. When teachers are conscious in their effort to implement care into their teaching philosophy, their pedagogy begins to morph into culturally relevant teaching, bringing validation to student experiences and cultures in the classroom environment and leading to greater student achievement and success (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Gay 2000, 2015). The *Socialization to Care* is a theoretical framework that requires the meshing of White feminists' (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Ruddick, 1989; Applebaum, 1998; Houston, 1998) conceptions of care (i.e. act of attending, empathy, being receptive, appreciation of the other, and respecting the other) with Black feminists' (Collins, 1993, 1995; hooks, 1994, 2001; Thompson, 1998, 2004) conceptions of care (uniqueness,

personal expressiveness, emotions, empathy, dialogue, and cultural specificity). It theorizes that the nature and quality of formative experiences constitutes a type of *preparatory care*, which predisposes an individual to develop *pedagogical care* as a future educator.

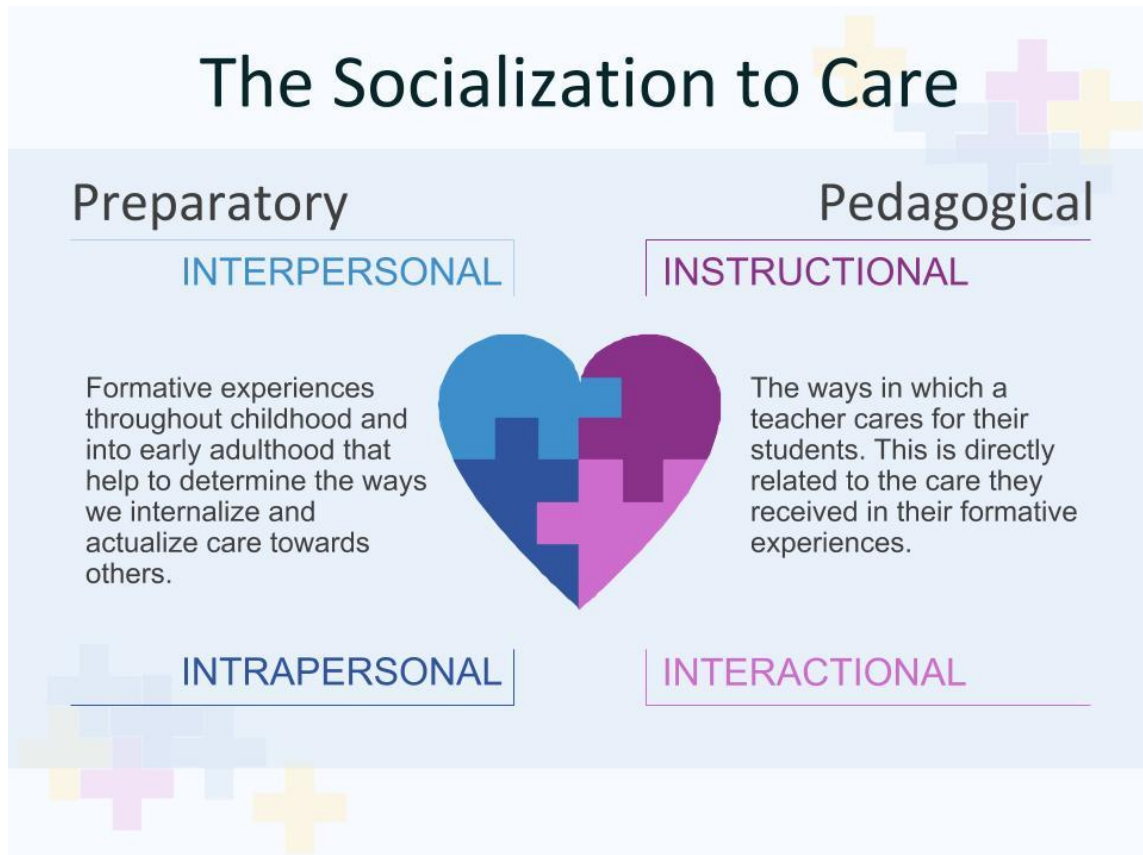


Figure 3: The Socialization to Care

5.1.1. Preparatory Care

Formative experiences throughout childhood and into early adulthood help to determine the way you internalize and actualize care towards others. The cultural and social norms, ideas, and customs that we inherit throughout our lives create a foundation

on which we develop our belief system, a system that includes the biases and prejudices we carry. Harro's (2004) cycle of socialization highlights the foundational aspects of our belief system that our preparatory years create. From a newborn with no social consciousness to a fully grown adult with an awareness of many types of institutional and cultural socialization, our understanding of the world around us is constantly molded, altered, and transitioned by the experiences we have with others and how we reflect on those experiences, ultimately developing our preparatory care. The *Socialization to Care* claims that there are two different types of preparatory care-- interpersonal and intrapersonal-- based upon the ways research indicates how socialization occurs (Cooley, 1902; Downey, 2015; Hensely, 1996; Harro, 2004).

5.1.1.1. Interpersonal

Communication and care that takes place between people is interpersonal. This type of communication and care includes verbal and nonverbal forms to analyze a situation through explaining, teaching, inquiring, and informing. According to the Making Caring Common Project at Harvard Graduate School of Education (2018), how parents and guardians care for their children is tightly connected to their examples of care towards others outside of the immediate family. This leads to a development of how to care for others and how to accept care from others throughout their lives. For educators, the ways in which their colleagues care for them as well as how they care for their colleagues impacts their teaching pedagogy, philosophy, and relationships with students.

5.1.1.2. Intrapersonal

It is important for teachers to hold themselves accountable in their critical and analytical self-awareness of their beliefs and behaviors about and towards their students (Gay and Kirkland, 2003). This consciousness brings to light any necessary changes that need to be made in our character and support the limiting of our absorption of prejudice and bigotry into our teacher identity (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009).

Communication and care that is intrapersonal occurs within the individual themselves.

Intrapersonal care begins with the experiences of parents and how those experiences inform the ways they socialize their children who may later grow into teachers of diverse learners. In an effort to reflect upon, analyze, and clarify situations, internal discourses are used to make sense of one's surroundings. How parents and guardians ensure that their children care for themselves while also living out the core values that have been instilled into them from a young age is the intrapersonal type of preparatory care.

5.1.2. Pedagogical Care

The *Socialization to Care* asserts that the ways teachers care for their students is directly impacted by the type of preparatory care they received in their formative experiences. From those preparatory care experiences, a teacher is able to find a foundation for the pedagogical care that they provide in their classrooms, both interactionally and instructionally. Noddings (1986) describes care as receptive in that the one-caring is always deeply engaged with and responsive to the needs of the one-cared-for. This type of caring is evident in a teacher that embodies a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Gay (2015) asserts that the way people react towards

others is influenced directly by the life experiences they bring with them. The *Socialization to Care*, therefore, theorizes that the preparatory experiences teachers bring with them to the classroom have a direct influence on the pedagogy they employ into their classroom curriculum and instruction. How a teacher defines themselves in their teacher identity will shape how they define the students in their classrooms, determining the foundation of care they provide for those students through interactions and instruction (Devine, Fahie, & McGillicuddy, 2013).

5.1.2.1. Interactional

Foundationally, teaching is built upon relationships (Fiorilli, Albanese, Gabola, & Pepe, 2017). The care demonstrated to students through the relationships built with the teacher by the direct interactions on a day-to-day basis is interactional care. Positive interactions in the academic environment are fundamental elements of displaying care to students (Chaskin & Rauner, 1995; Erickson, 1993; Noddings, 1992). Tynjälä et al. (2016) assert that teachers must provide a social environment that is both safe and interactive in order for students to thrive in their academic learning, where relationships are continually developed among students and their parents/guardians, and that supports daily professional collaboration with colleagues. When a highly empathetic and caring teacher is leading a classroom, these elements are always present.

5.1.2.2. Instructional

The care demonstrated to students through the type of instruction used in the classroom to present the curriculum's content is instructional care. Caring and empathetic teachers embody a culturally responsive pedagogy in their instruction where

they are active in modifying their curriculum and instruction based on the cultures and interests represented by the students in their classroom (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2011). The clear action and activism in protecting student learning and valuing students for who they are is what sets a truly caring and empathetic teacher apart from other teachers (Haberman, 1995). These teachers take on all responsibility of providing the best possible environment for student learning, including constant self-reflection as a way to persist in developing positive relationships with all students and applying pedagogical tools that will enhance learning for all students. Foster (1995, 1997), Gay (2000), and Irvine (1990, 2002) all emphasize the importance of empathy in the classroom because of its proven ability to increase student motivation and lead to an improved academic performance in the classroom.

5.2. Implications for Practice

According to Brown (2007), developing strong partnerships between school districts and universities to provide professional development would allow for the experience of effective mentoring, supporting, and evaluation of teachers, specifically in their ability to cultivate a culturally responsive pedagogy and teacher identity. The preparation of teachers to adequately teach diverse student populations has historically been a struggle. Therefore, professional development opportunities that are job embedded, sustainable over time, collaborative in nature, and teacher-student focused are the most effective and most necessary professional developments needed (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009).

Research has shown that intensive professional development for teachers is highly related to student achievement gains (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). The most effective long-term professional developments also address the everyday challenges that teachers face in the classroom (Garet et al., 2001), especially issues of diversity and equity (Pollock, Bocala, Deckman, & Dickstein-Staub, 2016). While all professional developments require teachers to consider the ways in which to support their students better, the exploration of issues such as race and equity tend to be resisted by many teachers, often being labeled as unnecessary and imposing (Gay, 2005; Wiseman & Fox, 2010). “Preservice teachers become frustrated when they are asked to examine deeply held beliefs, wear inequality-conscious lenses with which they might not agree, or critique their own life experiences as partial or (often) privileged (Gay & Kirkland, 2003)” (Pollock, Bocala, Deckman, & Dickstein-Staub, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary for a research-focused, long-term professional development opportunity to be implemented into the field of education as a way to support teachers so they can better support all of their students in the diverse classrooms they serve in American classrooms.

The Heart of Teaching: An Autoethnographic Journey of Your Own Socialization to Care is an extracurricular teacher preparation experience composed of four modules over the course of four weeks (See Appendixes A, B, C, D, & E). These modules would be most beneficial for White preservice teachers in the summer before beginning their student methods course and student teaching, used as a professional development opportunity. In this non-traditional teacher development space, students working to

become teachers are able to explore their preparatory care to develop their pedagogical care through autoethnography. As they reflect upon their own experiences and any biases, prejudice, intolerance, and stereotypes those experiences may have developed into their belief system, the excavation of culturally relevant knowledge will become available for an empathetic teacher identity to form.

The format of these modules is in the Understanding by Design (UbD) format (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). This framework focuses on backward design in which the goals of the lesson are considered first, then the assessment evidence of if/how students reached those goals are developed, and finally the most appropriate learning activities are constructed to support learners in transferring their learning into the desired results of the goals. The very nature of this professional development topic requires a deep learning of the self and understanding of personal and professional experiences, therefore UbD is the best format since it primarily focuses on student learning and understanding.

Though these modules have been originally intended for preservice teachers to complete before beginning their professional journey, they can also be applied to in-service teachers as a job-embedded professional development opportunity. No matter where a teacher is in their career, constant self-reflection is necessary to grow. Research consistently shows that intensive, sustained, and job-embedded teacher professional development improves classroom instruction and student achievement (Darling-Hammond and Ball, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey 2003, 2009). If increasing student achievement is the primary purpose of professional

development in teachers (Guskey, 2003; Reeves, 2010) and that achievement is attributable to teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2016) which has been repeatedly shown through research to be affected by teacher beliefs about students (Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2012; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012), then continual reflection through *The Socialization to Care* is necessary for all teachers in all seasons of their career.

5.3. Limitations

Though there are many advantages of autoethnography, some limitations of it as a method of research must be addressed. The criticism made most often of autoethnography is its strong emphasis of self which can be viewed as narcissistic, self-indulgent, and too individualized (Atkinson, 1997; Coffey, 1999). In an effort to recreate the experience of the researcher, autoethnography is argued to be more therapeutic than analytic in nature (Atkinson, 1997). As Walford (2004) suggests, there is concern of how much of the narrative accounts are true conversations and events written exactly as they happened and how much are actually simple inventions of the researcher. However, perhaps the major concern for weakness in autoethnography is transferability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Walford, 2004). Due to the aim of autoethnography “to allow another person’s world of experience to inspire critical reflection on your own” (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, p. 22), there is a risk of subjective interpretations arising that oppose the view that the research attempts to present. The close proximity of the researcher to the phenomenon being studied produces concern for the ability of a conclusion and straightforward consensus to be formed for others to

apply to their own experiences. These limitations must always be taken into the consideration of the researcher to take active steps to address these concerns when presenting an autoethnography as a method of research.

5.4. Future Research

Future research should begin with a study of veteran White teachers who are considered culturally responsive in both urban and diverse suburban schools and districts. Nominations by administrators of teachers who are most effective with diverse learners could be used to set up interviews with those teachers about their socialization process. Similarities in these teachers' socialization can be used to determine if the same dynamics of developing an empathetic capacity and a culturally relevant disposition play out throughout their lives. The next step in this research should expand the above research process to novice White teachers to help determine how experience within a classroom affects an educator's empathy capacity. It would then be interesting to repeat the process with teachers of color to compare the development of empathy towards diverse learners with that of White teachers. An important understanding to have before committing to this future research is the understanding that, because socialization is very individualized depending on experiences, the *Socialization to Care* may be complicated by the findings between and among different categories of teachers.

5.5. Conclusion

This autoethnographic analysis began as a critical examination of how my formative interpersonal relationships and intrapersonal development experiences shaped my ethic of care. Through this critical examination, I explored the ways in which my

ethic of care was actualized in the classroom through my interactions with colleagues, students, and family which carried over into the classroom through my instructional practices. Methodologically, through journal writing of my own memories, recalling old conversations with my parents, reminiscences with former coworkers, reflection of student letters, and critical analysis of past lesson plans, the themes that emerged showed the importance of socialization in developing empathy, resisting bigotry, and becoming a critically conscious, White female educator.

As a White, female, culturally responsive educator, it was critical to explore how my beliefs and attitudes towards others shaped my identity and my understanding of and empathetic capacity towards those outside my own cultural groups. My ongoing journey in developing and sustaining an empathetic capacity began with my parents' efforts to help develop within me a strong sense of care for others. Their childhood and young adulthood impacted their own development which led to a parenting style that was committed to equality and provided a protective barrier from bigotry, bias, and prejudice. This maximized my development of social and cultural awareness which later became the foundation for my commitment to culturally responsive education.

I developed a conceptual framework used to explore these experiences as the *Socialization to Care*, a lifelong process of developing deeper levels and expressions of empathy and enacting these dispositions within schools through care-centered interactions with colleagues and students. The social and emotional environment of a classroom directly influences student learning (Goleman, 2008). Therefore, it is important for teachers to be active in developing relationships while consciously

internalizing those interactions to provide support, love, and care for their students. In my career as a classroom teacher, I came to believe that being an advocate for students is a necessary characteristic of effective teachers that is grounded in empathy and compassion for every single student that walked into my classroom, especially as a White female educator.

Despite the growing student diversity in American classrooms, the public school teacher population remains primarily female, of European-descent, and middle-class (Goldenberg, 2014) with less than 20% of teachers being of color (Plachowski, 2019). This means that the majority of teachers, throughout their careers, will provide instruction to students who represent different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and economical backgrounds than themselves (Landsman & Lewis, 2011). Teachers who come into the teaching profession with limited experiences with students and people from different cultures and backgrounds than their own, often enter the profession with negative views of students of color, causing detrimental effects on the educational and social experiences of those students because of color-blind and meritocratic beliefs (Worth, 2005; Vass, 2016). As a White woman, I have the ability to use my privilege as a leverage for change through providing professional development to teachers who look like me that encourages the recognition and breakdown of negative beliefs towards diverse populations of students.

Throughout this inquiry I explored how the disposition of care was actualized at deeper levels and expressions of empathy throughout my life. I explored my development of caring relationships with my middle and high school students and how

those bonds helped me to provide relevant instructional practices in the classroom. Upon deep reflection, I displayed empathy as an element of care through the relational dispositions of being conversational, curious, and challenging in my interactions and instruction with students. From my experiences, there are at least three ways in which care was demonstrated through my instructional practices including: recognizing students' communities, living out high expectations for students, and celebrating student's individual successes in unique ways to promote their continued growth. Through autoethnography, the ways in which my empathetic capacity informed my interactions and instructional practices with my students was analyzed.

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APPENDIX A
DATA SOURCES

June 1 ,2015

Lauren Williams

Dear Mrs. Williams

The Impact you have had on me is inseparable you have affected and changed my life throughout the school year, under your teaching i have become a more smarter , loving person i never realized how much certain teachers cared ,nor did i take the time to thank them.

i will never forget you , you are the teacher that made the difference in my life, the teacher that inspired me ,and the teacher that saved my life you will forever remain my role model without you i wouldn't be the person i am today, i love you Mrs. Williams i just want to say thank you for everything you have done throughout the school year to help me do better in ELA.

Love

June 1, 2015

Lauren Williams

Dear Mrs. Williams

You and Mr. [redacted], I would say, have been one of the largest influences of my life. I honestly have no idea why I'm not in Pre-AP English Language arts, but I love my 2nd period class anyways. I've always looked forward to going 2nd period everyday, but unfortunately that'll end soon.

I would say how you have influenced me is that, you're very loving person. I always see you hug students and talk sweetly to everyone. You seem to always have a charm of becoming a favorite teacher of many students, but it just seems to be because you're just a very loving person.

Love,

Lauren Williams

June 1, 2015

Lauren Williams

Dear Mom,

Thank you for making me laugh, sad, happy and making me feel better when I wasn't being classy I am going to miss you when I go to high school we had a great year well I think we did even when we were bad and made you upset you still loved us and we still laughed and it was fun in your class sometimes I got mad and sometimes i wasn't happy in your class but you helped me through it and I hope to see you when I go to high school maybe we can go to starbucks or we can go shopping maybe we could be twinsies one day and dress alike i've always wanted to do that with you either you or coach you are like a mother to me

I don't think I would have gotten through the 8th grade without you because you're one of my favorite teachers and you actually care if I pass or not some teachers don't even really care if you pass or not they could care less it doesn't matter to them they still get paid any way hopefully I won't have one of those teachers next year I wish that you could go to high school with me like in freedom riders but you can't I hope that "you're gonna miss me when i'm gonna" see what i did there haha I made a joke. BUT I really am gonna miss you Mrs. Williams have fun going to college.

Love your daughter,

June 1, 2015

Mrs. Williams

Dear, Mrs.Williams

Thank you for everything you have done in my life . You made me a better person i can now think positive in life now and you also made me see there is gonna be things that will tear me down but that i also need to get back up and keep trying. You also made me see that i can make it really far in life and not to let anyone tell me i can't and that "Less" is more. And I thank you so much Mrs. Williams.

Love,

Spurlock, Lauren

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 10:28 AM
To: Spurlock, Lauren
Subject: Thanks

I just wanted to say thanks for a good year with [REDACTED]. You were always encouraging and one of his biggest cheerleaders at [REDACTED]. You will be remembered by our family through the years to come.

Thanks again and enjoy your summer!

Sent from my iPhone

April 21, 2014

Lauren Spurlock
1111 North 1st Street
Tampa, FL 33602

Dear Ms. Spurlock,

I want to say thank you, Ms. Spurlock, for everything that you have done for me this school year. You are one of the best teachers I had this school year: you had helped me through the good and bad times.

There was a time when I ask you for help to understand furtive language, I didn't understand the work on the first day, I came to your class so as you help me through the school year. I understand it more because when I ask to stay after school for extra help you stayed to help me.

When you had a bad and you needed a big hug I gave it to you. When you were down and when I was down you gave me love. When I was down or didn't feel good we had good time laughing and joking. And there were times when we needed to get down to business and I got to work.

I will remember this for a long time you'll be in my heart forever. You were like a another mother to me, I will miss forever. I always come back to visit to you and I will never forget you teaching, me a lot of new techniques.

Love always,

April 21, 2014

Lauren Spurlock
[Faded text]

Dear, Mrs. Spurlock

I think that out of all the people you are the most expiring person/teacher that I've have meet because I've really only have one other teacher who like just as much as you because you have helped me out in more ways than one because even though i am really good at reading and its my strongest subject you helped me out more to know where things belonged.

For me you were always my favorite teacher out of all mine because you gave Respect and some fun even when you had your bad days I still liked this class better than any other and even when you had your bad days you weren't all that bad because you were friendly even though strict sometimes.

You've helped me out a lot this year with things even though I still stress test I did a lot better than I have done in years i don't know if i passed yet or not but i'm positive that I have and have a 80 or higher thanks to you, you've even got percentage from 66% passing to 81% passing which is great because you get to keep your job and help tons of more people/kids.

And if it were me i would bring my own future kids to your class and see how well they can do in your class because your that inspiring to me and many more people that I know of and I know that hundreds of people and I hope that, that will be the same for a long time and you will my inspiration for as long as I live.

Sincerely,

[Faded signature]

April 21 2014

Lauren Spurlock
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Ms. Spurlock,

Since you're making me write this letter anyway, I thought I might as well take this opportunity to thank you for helping me out this year. But I guess this means you're not getting a big poster at the end of the year!

I remember a couple months ago when you held me back from fighting [Redacted], and let me calm down in your room after. I appreciate that, because if you hadn't been there I probably would've got in trouble for beating her up, and that wouldn't have looked good on my permanent record. Because of your support and help, you've made me want to be a better person, stay focused on what's really important, and find other ways to deal with my anger. Right now I'm considering boxing.

I've learned more from you throughout this year than I learned from my sixth and seventh grade teachers. I learned how to write papers, analyze poetry, and about persuasive techniques, which I'm sure will help later in life, whereas in [Redacted] class, all he talked about was his daughter and her poodle. You've helped prepare me for high school and college work, which is more than most 8th grade teachers will do.

You've been here for me more than any teacher has ever been. You've helped me emotionally and with my school work, and I can't thank you enough. This year has been really rough and you were one of the main ones that's helped me make it. I've always looked forward to your class and the relaxed environment. You've made a lasting impression on my life and have made my 8th grade year memorable. Thank you for everything Ms. Spurlock!

With much love,



21 April 2014

Lauren Spurlock

Dear Mom,

I really appreciate all the work you do for me, thank you for all the things you have done for me. You are a great teacher. I have learned so much from you, now I was sure I passed the STAAR thanks to you. I am really glad that you are our teacher because you really know how to make things fun, I know sometimes I that I make mistakes but I don't mean to. I also wanted to thank you for being so supportive. You taught me that I should never say never. That when things get hard, I really shouldn't give up. I really think you are a great teacher. I appreciate the personal time and extra you spent helping me. Thank you for teaching me what no other teacher has.

I am really appreciated to have you as a teacher. I remember when school started I hated your class, I honestly hated ELA and I didn't want to repeat it again. I judged you before I even knew you. Over the year you've shown me what it's like to have a teacher that truly cares for me. I walk in everyday willing to learn and do my work, because I enjoy coming to your class. Every day I sit back I learn something new. I do it because you deserve it.

Remember when we didn't like each other because you said I was disrespectful and rude I really respect all my teachers now and I try to stay out of trouble. Remember the day we started to talk about our brothers and you told me that my brother would love to see me graduate and how happy he was going to be, thank you for telling me that because I really never thought about it. I always told myself I was going drop out and work at McDonalds I remember how we had talks about it every day, every single day I wanted to come to school because of you. Well now I want to finish school and be a probation officer thanks to you. You really helped me through a lot.

Remember when you told me to do something that would make me happy. Well I want to help others and I believe I can change into a way better person. You have always been there for me through thick and thin and I really appreciate that. I love you. You better be there when I graduate. Where ever I go in life I will always remember that I had an excellent guide. I will always be thankful to you for all the hard work and effort you have put in. I'll miss you next year! I will always keep my promise.

Love always,

TO: MR. SPURLOCK

MR. SPURLOCK,

Thank you for being at
this past year! You are
Brilliant, Patient, Truthful, Caring, Loving,
Kind, Responsible, and Funny! Stay
that way!

You have helped come
to understand ELA much better!
In a way I understand it!

Your someone who we
need here for future generations
here at [redacted]! Trust me, I have
seen it in you!

Congratulations on your
marriage! I hope it goes
splendidly!

I will never forget you,
you're the best teacher I ever
had! Thank you for that!

Thank you,

Dear Ms. Spurlock

You are such an amazing teacher you
Fun and cool and "HIP" and I love
having you as my teacher. You care
about the kids and love the kids
and you make your room fun!
You are SUPER DUPER pretty
and you have an awesome style!
(Rock It Girl). I love you as
my teacher and I want you to stay
my teacher! Oh and I hope you
have a good life with that Chris
boy (The one that doesn't like my
name.) and if anything happens
tell me! I'll bring the pain! Just
kidding. But I just want you to
know...

I ♥ YA!



Dear Mrs. Spurlock,

I sincerely apologize for not trying my absolute best to do things in your class. Also, I want to thank you for being so invested in our education, not only because it is your job, but also because you truly do care. You are an amazing teacher, probably the best I have ever had. I go home and I brag that I have the best, most awesome ELA teacher in the world.

I am not afraid to say that I very honestly love you. So, I love you. I have never been so moved by a teacher's words until this very day. Thank you for taking the time to read this. Have a wonderful day!

From your student,



Mrs. Spurlock

or Mrs. Williams?/!

Thank you for
being here for
me and being so
SUPPORTIVE this
year. I will MISS
you sooo much mama!

I  You!

D. 

March 21, 2013

Lauren Spurlock
Coach/Teacher

Dear Ms. Spurlock

As being apart of the cheer team and AVID I have been able to see things differently in a way to help me do better as an individual. The purpose of this letter is to request a letter of recommendation for my scholarships.

The reason I have chosen you for a request of letter of recommendation is because you are a respectful and caring individual. You have influenced me to work hard no matter how hard the situation is and I appreciate everything you have done to make me a better person.

Sincerely,

April 5, 2013

Lauren Spurlock

Dear Ms. Spurlock,

As the year has progressed, I feel as though you have become one of the biggest inspirations in my life this year. When I first met you in the summer I thought, "Wow. She's super pretty and really nice. I hope this class is worth staying in IB." Believe it or not, I was going to quit IB after the first month of this year. However coming to your class everyday seemed to cheer me up and made me stay. Not only have you been an inspiration to me, but to most of the other students in IB. You say what's on your mind and take nothing from no one.

When I was severely depressed and had thought the only way of getting rid of it was through suicide, your little note hit home. I still have it and read it every day. After the incident of me going to the hospital for mental treatment happened, I did not blame you at all for worrying. In fact I was happier that someone cared enough to help me even when I couldn't help myself. I've grown a lot over the last few years as a brother, a son, and a student. You helped me grow as a person. You've helped me

You may not know it, but I want to go to Texas A&M, College Station because of you. I already thought of applying but now it's one of my top choices for college. You have inspired and influenced me in so many ways I don't think just this one letter can cover everything I must express. You are my favorite teacher and want you to know that you have changed my life. For that, I want to thank you so much.

Most Sincerely,

Thank You Miss Spurlock
for believing that
I am actually
Beautiful... that
really does mean a
lot to me... even
though I don't believe
I am... Its nice to
know someone
does... Thank You

21 April 2014

Lauren Spurlock
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Spurlock

I need to tell you everything that went down this year. We have so much to catch up on, you are not going to believe half of this stuff i've looked up to you since seventh grade. You were there for all the mess, drama, fights, and arguments. Everything that went on you were there for it. I swear i'm going to miss you.

Alright Ms. Spurlock first things first you see how good i've been this year I have not been in any drama this whole year i feel like i've changed a lot since sixth grade. I was the girl who always found a reason to fight or get in trouble, For no reason it was just to do it. You remember when I was always in [REDACTED] office all the time with [REDACTED]. We were Double Trouble we lie and lie till finally you broke me I don't know how you did it but you did.

Remember when I used to run in your classroom crying all the time because I wanted to fight some of these females here so bad. You literally had to sit down and talk me out of it I still don't understand how you had that power over me my own mother can't talk me out of fighting. You were always the person I needed to talk to. You know I love you right I could have had tons of referrals this year But going to you and telling you the truth instead of just telling a big made up lie to [REDACTED]. You always came through for me and everyone else.

You were always the favorite since seventh grade and I mean that. You were always the one I looked up to just being in your classroom just gave me a sense of peace I felt as if I were home. And finally we love you through thick and thin you seen me at my worse and now that i'm trying to be my best you're still here helping me and coaching me I swear we're all going to miss you and I really hope you get a job at [REDACTED] High just so I can work your nerves for four more years.

Love Always
[REDACTED]

June 1, 2015

Mrs. Williams

Dear Mrs. Williams

On the first day of school I thought that we were not going to get along and that I wasn't going to like you at all. But throughout the year we have gotten closer and now today we have a stronger bond than anything. You have taught me sooo much this year having to do with my personal life and school life. I wanted to let you know that I love you soo much and that if you were not my teacher this year i feel like I would have already been in wheatley. You are like a mother to me and that's what I consider you as. But I would like to tell you that this school year with you has been such an amazing experience. I hope that i will have a relationship with my high school teachers as I do with you, while i'm in [redacted] next year I will go out on that field/floor during all the performances I will have and I will do soo good cause I will be dedicating my dances to you and all the teachers that have always had my back and that have always believed that I will be something in life and not just a black kid that's going to end up in jail. But Once again I love you soooo much and I will MISS YOU MUCH NEXT YEAR.!!!!!!!!!!!!

LOVE,

June 1,2015

Lauren Williams

[Faded signature]

Dear Lauren Williams

Ayeee i really think that you are a fine teacher..Anyway sometimes your mean,just saying , and you stay picking on me,but your fun and so is your class. Im just here to thank you for everything that you have done for me year.Also to say that you have helped me through rough times and i tried to lie:).

It's not just that you have also helped me with my school work.Like stuff i did not understand and to keep on my game to keep up with my work and get good grades.Also when i tried to be lazy you kept me on track to. You have been a very good teacher to me and i know i have not been the best student tho.I do have a question tho have i improved as a student in your class,or no.

I now want to thank you for getting me to learn that i cannot not do my work. Make bad grades if i want to play sports. And if i want to do bigger things.Also that it's not good to try and be someone i am not,and to be myself.that is why i think of you as the best teacher of the year even if the others do not.

So, i think you for being my teacher this year in reading and being the best that you could be. You have changed me as a student. Motivated me to give my best in the classroom and be my own person.Also to not be so disrespectful, and i want to thank you again for changing my attitude,to be not so rude.:)

thank you mrs. williams

[Faded signature]

<p>Weekly Instructional Plan</p> <p>Teachers: Williams & [redacted]</p>	<p>Unit 3: Analyzing Informational Texts</p> <p>TEKS: 8.2A-E, 8.13B-C, 8.9A, 8.10A-D, 8.12A-B, 8.26A-B, 8.28A, 8.Fig19A-F, 8.14A-E, 8.17A-B, 8.19A-C, 8.20A, 8.22A, 8.23A, 8.25A-C, 8.28A</p>	<p>Grade: 8th</p>	<p>Subject: ELA</p>
<p>Week of: Dec. 1, 2014</p> <p>Monday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to identify the types of informational text structures.</p>	<p>Guided Question(s)/Do Now</p> <p>Warm Up: Why is it important to understand the purpose of reading a text? Explain in at least three complete sentences.</p>	<p>The Teacher Will...</p> <p>I Do: Show PowerPoint over text structures for informational texts.</p>	<p>The Student Will...</p> <p>I Do: Take notes over text structures for informational texts.</p>
<p>Tuesday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to determine the purpose of texts, identify the informational text structure, & the specific words and phrases used in those informational texts.</p>	<p>Warm Up: What are the four main informational text structures?</p>	<p>We Do: Show PowerPoint with sample informational texts.</p>	<p>We Do: In groups, use whiteboards to determine the purpose of the texts, identify the informational text structures, and the types of words and phrases used in those informational texts.</p>
<p>Wednesday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to analyze and make connections between texts about the Holocaust.</p>	<p>Warm Up: What causes hatred of another person or an entire race? EDIT: Is murder ever justifiable?</p>	<p>You Do: Help students as needed. Monitor students on Hapara to make sure they are on task and analyze what they seem to be most interested in about the Holocaust. EDIT: Have students focus on articles based on burglary, shootings, and poverty. Provide guidance as they search for those articles on the Chromebooks.</p>	<p>You Do: Log onto the Chromebooks and go to http://www.ushmm.org/. Using the website, explore articles about the Holocaust. They need to take notes about what they learn so that they will be able to use their knowledge. EDIT: Take notes about what they find out about burglary, shootings, and poverty. Have them focus on how (or if) those are connected issues.</p>
<p>Thursday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to create a presentation of the information that I researched.</p>	<p>Warm Up: What is the most interesting piece of information you learned about the Holocaust? EDIT: What is the most interesting piece of information or knew knowledge you gained about burglary, shootings, and poverty?</p>	<p>We Do: Help students as needed.</p>	<p>We Do: In groups, use the texts that students read from the articles yesterday to create Prezi presentations that they will use to present their information they learned to the class tomorrow.</p>
<p>Friday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to review informational texts & figurative language in a jeopardy game.</p>	<p>Warm Up: Get with your group, grab your Chromebook, & finish up your Prezi. You need to finish up your Prezi today so that we can present on Monday.</p>	<p>We Do: Help students as needed.</p>	<p>We Do: In groups, use the texts that students read from the articles yesterday to create Prezi presentations that they will use to present their information they learned to the class on Monday.</p>

Weekly Instructional Plan			
Teacher: Spurlock	Unit 4A – Creating Connections Across Literary Texts	Grade: 8th	Subject: ELA (regular & Pre-AP)
Date: Week of 1-21-2014	Guided Question(s)/Do Now	The Teacher Will...	The Student Will...
Monday Objective: MLK Holiday	Warm Up: N/A	I Do: N/A We Do: N/A You Do: N/A	I Do: N/A We Do: N/A You Do: N/A
	Guided Question(s)– N/A	Evaluate: formative/summative N/A	
Tuesday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to make textual connections to <u>The Diary of a Young Girl</u> by Anne Frank. Pre-AP: By the time I leave, I will be able to make textual connections to the novel of my choice.	Warm Up: Practice STAAR question (per district request).	I Do: We Do: Help students with their text-connection research. You Do: Hand out a copy of the novel to each student. For regular classes, read along with students for about 8 minute intervals. For Pre-AP classes, have students form groups based on their chosen novel and read independently for 8 minute intervals. After each interval, stop students and discuss what they have read so far (whole class for regular and in-groups for Pre-AP).	I Do: We Do: In groups of 3-4 (depending on class size) students will use computers in the classroom and/or their own smart phones to search for poems and informational texts dealing with the issues going on in their novel. After about 10 minutes of research, students will email their groups' favorite texts to the teacher. On Friday, there will be a Socratic Seminar in which students will discuss the issues in the book and how the texts they have found relate to those issues. You Do: Read novel, looking for connections to the historical topics they learned from each other last week.
	Guided Question(s)– These questions (and more) will be asked throughout the week as we read our novels and have class discussions each day about what is going on in the story and how it relates to other literary works we find and how the characters are developed. How is _____ related to...? What is the theme...? What inference can you make...? What evidence can you find...? What ideas justify...? Do you agree with the actions of...? What would you recommend...? What choice would you have made...? Why was it better that...? How would you compare the ideas...? People...?		
Wednesday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to analyze intertextual links among and across texts.	Warm Up: Practice STAAR question (per district request).	I Do: Review notes over TPFLAT poetry analysis. We Do: You Do: Hand out a copy of the novel to each student. For regular classes, read along with students for about 8 minute intervals. For Pre-AP classes, have students form groups based on their chosen novel and read independently for 8 minute intervals. After each interval, stop students and discuss what they have read so far (whole class for regular and in-groups for Pre-AP).	I Do: Use a poem that they receive by the teacher to complete a TPFLAT poetry analysis (related to a theme in the assigned or choice book they are reading). They will turn this in for a grade. We Do: You Do: Read novel, looking for characterization and connections to the poems that they found yesterday and that they received today.
Thursday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to analyze literary works that share similar themes.	Warm Up: Practice STAAR question (per district request).	I Do: Review notes over types of poetry. We Do: You Do: Hand out a copy of the novel to each student. For regular classes, read along with students for about 8 minute intervals. For Pre-AP classes, have students form groups based on their chosen novel and read independently for 8 minute intervals. After each interval, stop students and discuss what they have read so far (whole class for regular and in-groups for Pre-AP).	I Do: Students will begin creating their own poem, either narrative or lyrical, that relates to the book they are reading. These are due on Monday. We Do: You Do: Read novel, looking for themes. Participate in the discussions that we have after each 8 minute interval.
Friday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to explain how the values and beliefs of particular characters are affected by the historical and cultural setting of the literary work.	Warm Up: Practice STAAR question (per district request).	I Do: Observe students working. We Do: Observe and guide students in a Socratic Seminar (regular classes) and book club seminar (Pre-AP classes). You Do: Hand out a copy of the novel to each student. For regular classes, read along with students for about 8 minute intervals. For Pre-AP classes, have students form groups based on their chosen novel and read independently for 8 minute intervals. After each interval, stop students and discuss what they have read so far (whole class for regular and in-groups for Pre-AP).	I Do: Continue working on their own poem, either narrative or lyrical, that relates their novel. These are due on Monday. We Do: Students will discuss beyond the plot of the book they are reading. Their discussion should relate to the issues in the book and how the texts they found earlier in the week relate to those issues. They will have copies of those text in front of them (provided by the teacher). You Do: Read novel, looking for how the main character is affected by the historical setting she is living in.

Weekly Instructional Plan			
Teacher: Spurlock	Unit Poetry	Grade: 10th	Subject: ELA
Date: Week of 10-7-2013	Guided Question(s)/Do Now	The Teacher Will...	The Student Will...
<p>Monday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to define and identify figurative language in a poem.</p>	<p>Warm Up: What figurative language is being used in the following statements? (Yes, these are things that I've heard you say this week.) --"That girl is thirsty!" --"He's so salty."</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Provide notes over figurative language. You Do: Help students as needed. Scaffold if students are confused on what "figurative language" is.</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Take notes over figurative language and then get in groups of 3 to develop Anchor Charts for an assigned figurative language device. (The most creative anchor charts will be hung up in class for the remainder of the year for students to refer back to.) You Do: Use their phones to identify figurative language that they have used in their texts, social media, etc. If there is a student who does not have a device, all students will pair up so that student isn't singled out and unable to participate in the activity.</p>
<p>Tuesday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to use IPFLAI to analyze a poem and infer the meaning of a poem based on figurative language.</p>	<p>Warm Up: Infer the meaning of the following allusion: --"I only break bread with those I starved with."</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Provide notes on IPFLAI as a way to analyze poetry: (Title, Paraphrase, Figurative Language, Attitude, Theme). Provide a handout with "A Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes and "Juicy" by Biggie Smalls. You Do: Either in pairs or independently (depending on class behavior), use IPFLAI to analyze Biggie Smalls' song lyrics.</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Take notes. As a class, use IPFLAI to analyze the Langston Hughes poem. You Do: Either in pairs or independently (depending on class behavior), use IPFLAI to analyze Biggie Smalls' song lyrics.</p>
<p>Wednesday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to write an original poem reflecting a chosen theme.</p>	<p>Warm Up: Listen to the lyrics to the song playing right now. Work with your table partner to write down as many examples of figurative language that you can identify in the lyrics. The team with the most correct examples get a prize!</p>	<p>I Do: Provide notes over elements of a poetry slam. We Do: Show examples of poetry slams. You Do: Help students individually and in small groups with brainstorming and writing their own poetry slam to present on Friday.</p>	<p>I Do: Take notes over elements of a poetry slam. We Do: Watch examples of different poetry slams and write down what you liked and what you disliked about the presentation of each slam. You Do: In pairs or independently, write a short poetry slam that you will present on Friday. Be sure to have all of the elements that are listed on the board.</p>
<p>Thursday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to revise my original poem for grammar, poetic devices, and oral presentation.</p>	<p>Warm Up: Write one sentence for each set of words below. Be sure they are complete sentences and that the words are being used correctly. hear/here heard/herd its/it's knot/not</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Help students individually and in small groups with editing their poems for grammar.</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Edit your poems for grammar, poetic devices, and oral presentation. If you (and your partner) would like to practice, you may go in the hallway by the stairs so you don't interrupt other classes.</p>
<p>Friday Objective: By the time I leave, I will be able to present a poem in a "Poetry Slam" and effectively use poetic and oral devices.</p>	<p>Warm Up: Use your warm-up time (5 minutes timer) to quickly prepare and practice (if needed) your poetry slam. We will begin presentations when the timer ends.</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Take real-time notes about each poetry slam to provide feedback to students. You Do:</p>	<p>I Do: We Do: Present poetry slams. You Do: List 2 positive critiques and 1 encouraging corrective critique for each slam.</p>

Daddy and the Farm

Daddy's family is from Florida. They owned a large farm with Black workers. The question of whether these Black workers were ever slaves in the family is still up for debate. While no living family member knows the exact factual answer, there are several, including my father, who remember being told that in the times before my great-great-grandfather, the farm was worked by Black slaves before they were legally freed and began working for monetary pay. These workers are described by my grandmother and my father as being like a part of the family; they visited with the family, they ate with the family, they celebrated holidays with the family including the exchange of gifts, their children played with the family's children. The Black families were in the day-to-day life of my father's White family.

Daddy tells a story about an experience he had as a young boy while sitting on the front porch, shelling peas with one of the Black women who worked on the farm. A town car was seen driving up the long driveway and the Black woman named [REDACTED] said, "Lord have mercy, I better get my Black ass to the back." My father, being an ignorant 8 year old to the social reasons behind this, stood up with her and said, "I better get my Black ass to the back, too." [REDACTED] turned and looked at him and said, "Child you are not Black. You stay up here with the other White folks."

Mr. [REDACTED]

Granddaddy's close family friend owned a ranch in central Texas. One of the ranch hands was a Black man with no more than a 3rd grade education. His name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but all of the White adult men called him ***, a name that Mr. [REDACTED] responded to and referred to himself as when around them. One day, when daddy was 17 years old, he was standing with the White men and Mr. [REDACTED] on the ranch. Daddy, following the example he had been given by the other men, addressed Mr. [REDACTED] as they did: ***. Granddaddy immediately pulled him to the side, away from the other men, and said, "You are never to call Mr. [REDACTED] that word ever again and you will apologize to him before we leave. I do not care what the other men say or how they address him, but you are to refer to him as Mr. [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED] only, do you understand, boy?"

Momma's Brother

One of Momma's brothers was never given an official special needs diagnosis, but was clearly different than the other children his age in their community. Overall, he was behind in the mental maturity levels of his classmates, often leading to him being put down and bullied. Momma, whose maturity level exceeded that of many of her classmates, found herself in a protective role of him, sticking up for his unique abilities and for his own humanity. Because of how often these experiences happened, my mother has a hard time remembering just one in particular. She explains that there were many times when she would be hanging out with her friends in a large group setting and her brother would be doing his own thing off to the side, later to be approached by a group of boys who would mock and tease him about his glasses, calling him four-eyes, and his very large size, referring to him as Moose. She describes the ridicule as more than just mean, but truly evil.

Her brother was almost always oblivious to the fact that the kids were laughing *at* him and not *with* him. For example, as someone who suffered from amblyopia (also known as lazy

eye), the other kids would encourage him to emphasize this disorder by shouting things like, "Show us how you can cross your eyes, [REDACTED]!" They would then point and laugh. His kind heart was always completely unsuspecting of the true nature of these interactions, which made Momma even more angry and frustrated. She would chastise those making fun of her brother, sometimes leading to physical fights which she says, proudly, she always won.

There was also a little girl who lived down the street from Momma's family named [REDACTED]. She was a student in the same special needs classes as [REDACTED]. The two were very close friends who had a true, loving friendship. In the middle of their high school career, [REDACTED] lost her battle with a heart condition and passed away; [REDACTED] was devastated. For Momma, this was heartbreaking because her brother had lost a friend who was like him, who didn't tease him, who enjoyed her brother's company because of their similarities.

When Momma Ran Away to Italy

Momma didn't have a bad childhood, but her relationship with her father didn't include the positive father-daughter bonding that some would expect. Because of her meticulous disposition, bright mentality, and hard-working temperament, expectations for her were always much higher than those of her siblings. While high expectations were good, they tended to create more work for Momma and more pressure on her to be perfect, causing tension between her and her father as she did not feel good enough in his eyes no matter what she did. At the end of her senior year she could no longer take the stress and pressure; she dropped out of high school and moved to Italy with a couple who she babysat for.

One of her first observations when she arrived in [REDACTED] Italy, was that her physical appearance made her a minority; a blonde haired, White woman in the 1980s was a rarity in this part of Italy. People would pet her hair, pinch her skin, and look at her oddly when she was in public, at first making her feel very uncomfortable and insecure. Eventually, however, she was told that being pinched was a gesture that someone thought you were beautiful. This helped to ease her nerves about this new culture where she was obviously not a native.

Another new part of the Italian culture that she had to adjust to was the custom of drinking alcohol with every meal. Alcoholic beverages were a daily part of eating, something that, as an American, she was not familiar. Even children would partake in having a drink during their meals, and while my mother never grew to agree with children drinking, she respected the fact that this was a part of their culture. Instead of focusing on the differences she had with the Italian culture, however, she looked for ways in which her beliefs and values were similar. One of the most powerful similarities she found was the importance of close family relationships. Momma, though she didn't have a close relationship with her father, strongly believed and valued spending time and developing tight bonds with family. The Italians made it clear that family time was essential to their daily life, including 4 hours siestas to spend with family each day. With this similarity recognized and respected, Momma was able to develop a love for the Italian culture that she carried with her throughout her adulthood.

My First Babysitter

The first babysitter I ever had, other than Momma's close friends, was an older Mexican woman, [REDACTED], who spoke no English. While this did provide some challenges because Momma spoke very little Spanish, it didn't prevent my mom from fully trusting [REDACTED] ability to care for me. Though she had several babysitter prospects for her firstborn child, [REDACTED] nurturing and loving demeanor stirred up a deep faith from Momma. Though they spoke different languages, there was a "maternal language of women" that Momma could relate to, something that developed a strong love for one another that extended into a caring atmosphere for me.

Momma tells a story about one of [REDACTED] beliefs that challenged her own. I was not a very large baby; born just 7 pounds and half an ounce, I was actually on the smaller side. Well, [REDACTED] was worried that my size was a problem and didn't think I was getting enough milk from my bottles. Momma breastfed me and only pumped enough to leave for [REDACTED] when she babysat. One day, not long after [REDACTED] began babysitting me, I began refusing to breastfeed and only wanted a bottle. Momma could not figure out why this was until she started looking closer at the bottle nipples and realized that [REDACTED] had poked extra holes in them so that the flow of the milk was faster and I would eat more.

While this was frustrating at first for Momma because she was not ready to stop breastfeeding, she was able to set aside her own cultural beliefs and realize that, for [REDACTED], I was not big enough for her to view as healthy. All of [REDACTED] children had been big, thick babies, so she genuinely was trying to help me grow.

[REDACTED] *My Gay Brother*

When I was 3 years old, Momma married the man that I consider my father. Through this marriage, I not only gained a daddy, but also two brothers, one of which came out to the family that he identified as a gay man when I was 13 years old. As a young teenager, I wasn't sure how to process this information; Would my friends think differently of me? Would any boys ever want to date me knowing that my brother was gay? It didn't take long for me to realize that these questions and these intrapersonal struggles I was having were completely revolved around myself and that I was lacking empathy for my brother and the questions that he may have and the social struggles that he may face; Would he ever get to be married? Would he miss out on the opportunity to spend eternity in Heaven? Would he be treated unfairly and unjustly by society simply because of who he was physically and emotionally attracted? *These* were the questions that I began to focus on instead of the very selfish questions I had first allowed myself to consider.

This intrapersonal experience led to a change in heart and mindset of my own views of the LGBTQ community as a whole. As someone who identifies as a Christ-follower, it was important that I viewed this group of people through the same lens as the one I claimed to follow. This led me to make the very intrapersonal decision to just love everyone, no matter their differences from myself, and let God handle the judgment and sorting in His own time. That is not my job. Loving everyone as I love myself is my job. This was probably the biggest, and most important, intrapersonal experience I had that ultimately molded me into a caring, empathetic, and loving teacher of all students later in life.

[REDACTED]

In third grade my best friend was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] family lived on the north side of town and my family lived on the south side of town, but that didn't stop us from hanging out at each other's houses on the weekends and sometimes even on the weekdays as long as it wasn't a school night. We both were new students in the elementary school we were attending; we both wore glasses; we both had shoulder-length hair; we both really loved our moms; we both were obsessed with Lisa Frank school supplies; and we both really wanted to see the movie *Titanic* that was going to come out during Christmas break, even though neither of our moms would allow us to see it. We were two peas in a pod, partners in crime, sisters separated at birth. Looking back, I think we may have genuinely thought we were twins.

[REDACTED] and I loved to talk on the phone. Back then we didn't have cellphones so we had to use our house phones. Both our parents had recently purchased cordless phones: the coolest things ever to a third-grader. We surely thought we were the coolest girls around because we could talk on the phone anywhere in our house instead of having to stand in the kitchen due to a curly cord being connected to a wall. One day, while we were on the phone, we decided we should have a sleepover because we hadn't had one since the week before, and that's a long time for an 8 year old. I was so excited, but I knew I had to ask my mom and [REDACTED] had to ask her's, so we set our phones down to receive the permission we both needed. I walked in the dining room where my mom, and my paternal grandmother and paternal step-grandfather sat drinking coffee at the table.

"Momma, can [REDACTED] come over and spend the night tonight?" I asked in the sweetest voice possible so she would just have to say yes.

"Sure, baby! Make sure she gets permission from her mom and then let me know if we need to go pick her up or if her mom is going to bring her over," my mom replied. Then my grandpa asked my mom something about Cassie that confused me.

"Is [REDACTED] that little n***let girl?"

My grandpa said that word a lot, and every time he said it, my parents would make me leave the room. They never told me that was why they suggested I go play or take the dog outside or put my clothes away, so I never thought much of it until this moment. I didn't know what the word meant. I never even knew who my grandpa was talking about when he used it. But this time he said it in reference to my best friend and I didn't understand why because I didn't understand the word itself.

"Lauren, go make sure your room is clean before she gets here," my mom immediately said to me as my grandpa ended his question. So, off I went to my room. I picked up the phone and waited for [REDACTED] to come back on the line to let me know that her mom would bring her over to my house. I looked around my room and there was nothing to clean up because when you live in a house with two Air Force veterans, well, you are born with tidiness in your blood. I walked back out to the dining room and my mom was washing the coffee mugs. Grandma and Grandpa were no longer there, so I decided it was safe to ask my mom about Grandpa's word choice.

"Momma, what's a n***let?" I asked.

"Sweetheart, don't ever say that word. It's not a nice word," she replied.

"But Grandpa uses it all the time and if it's not nice then why did he call [REDACTED] one?" I questioned. My mom rinsed the last mug, set it in the dishwasher and looked over at me. She

guided me to the living room and we sat on the couch. *"This must be serious,"* I thought to myself.

"When your grandpa was a boy, people used that word to refer to someone with skin like [REDACTED]," she explained. I'm certain I looked confused because she asked, "Do you know what I mean when I say 'skin like [REDACTED]?' I shook my head no; I never noticed [REDACTED] skin. I never knew that I should notice her skin. Wasn't her skin like mine? Wasn't it just, well, skin, like hair is hair and eyes are eyes? [REDACTED] has darker skin than you have, Lauren, but that is not a bad thing. We do not judge people based on the color of their skin, ok? [REDACTED] skin color has nothing to do with how great of a friend she is. Don't forget that," she stated. And I didn't. I never forgot.

[REDACTED] came over and everything was the same except I saw her skin. It was beautiful and I thought it looked like the Nestle powder that my mom put in my milk to make it taste like chocolate. That's when I saw the difference. My skin looked like the color of the corks in my mom's wine bottles, not like chocolate milk mix. Why was her skin colored so different than mine? Did this mean that we weren't two peas in a pod, partners in crime, sisters separated at birth?

Something changed in my understanding of the world around me that day. I became aware of all the different skin colors of every person I saw. Before that day, I was blind to the meanings that society put on skin color, but now my eyes were open to shades of colors I had never noticed before and a faint ability to determine social worth based on those shades. That day, the little 8 year old me became racially conscious. That day, I was officially infected with a social construction that my parents had worked hard to protect me from for 8 years.

Racism at School

When I was in fourth grade, my parents put me into a smaller school district whose elementary was right down the road from our home. With my dad being in the medical field and working close with many doctors at the local hospital, my parents had heard so many great things about this school district; it had smaller class sizes; it was in a smaller community with no crime; student test scores were high for the area. Little did my parents realize until I was enrolled, that the district was not racially diverse at all. In fact, the majority of students were White and lived in middle-class families. In the elementary school itself, only one Black student was a part of the entire elementary student population and he was in my class. His name was [REDACTED] and he and I were friends.

[REDACTED], like myself, was from a community outside of this school district. We were both in the "nerd" group and we both really enjoyed the swings on the playground. One day, while on the playground, a White boy in our class, [REDACTED], began to pick on [REDACTED], his skin color, his glasses, and the fact that he hung out with girls and not boys. [REDACTED] didn't say a word back. In fact, he continued to swing in an attempt to ignore [REDACTED] put down. It wasn't long until [REDACTED] pushed [REDACTED] off the swing and began beating him up. [REDACTED] laid on the ground trying his best to keep his face covered and his glasses protected. The teachers on duty came over and broke the fight up, took the boys inside the school, and requested that the rest of us on the playground go about our play.

After recess, we returned to our classrooms. [REDACTED] was there; [REDACTED] was not. Worried, I asked my teacher, [REDACTED], if [REDACTED] was okay. She quickly snapped at me saying, "He is fine.

He has been sent home. We do not condone fighting in this school.” Confused, I remained distracted by my own thoughts for the rest of the school day.

My mom picked me up from school each day and always asked how my day was as soon as I got in the car, but this day she was not expecting her question to prompt the discussion it did. “Momma, [REDACTED] beat up [REDACTED] today, but [REDACTED] didn’t do anything and didn’t even hit [REDACTED] back. But [REDACTED] got in trouble and [REDACTED] didn’t. Why? I don’t understand.” My mother was in shock. She explained to me that the school was wrong. That [REDACTED] should have been in trouble and that [REDACTED] should have been protected and comforted.

The semester’s ending was only two weeks away and my parents made the decision to transfer me back to the district I had been in the year prior. Moving me out of a school that promoted blatant racism was a necessity in their eyes to make sure that the values and morals of viewing and treating all people as humans, with respect, love, and empathy was maintained in me.

[REDACTED]

While my experiences with racism in elementary had developed an open eye to society’s treatment of people of color, I still maintained a belief that there were more similarities between people than the society’s definitions based on racial characteristics. [REDACTED] was a prime example of this. We were both active in our middle school orchestra. We both played the violin. And, perhaps most importantly, we were both really, really talented with our instrument. In fact, our talents were so high that we simply took turns at being first-chair violin during concerts and competitions. Neither of us were ever upset that the other one was first-chair because we had both experienced the intrapersonal understanding that skin color played no role in who was better at playing the violin.

Drill/Dance Team

Throughout high school, I was an active member of my school’s drill/dance team. With over 70 girls on the team in a very diverse school, I normally began and ended my school days surrounded by different cultures, religions, ethnicities, and races. However, the only thing that ever truly stood out to me was how much each of us loved to dance and the connections it created within and between each of us. I watched my dance director love on every single one of us, providing equal support and constant motivation no matter our individual differences.

[REDACTED]

My niece, [REDACTED], had just been born when my husband, [REDACTED], and I began dating. She was just turning three months old when I first met her. That day will forever mark the first time I experienced a man holding a very gender-stereotyped role of me as a woman. [REDACTED] mother was at work, so [REDACTED], [REDACTED] brother, and [REDACTED] father, [REDACTED], were watching her. [REDACTED] and I walked into the house and [REDACTED] immediately handed [REDACTED] to me. I thought nothing of it, simply assuming that he knew how much I loved babies and would want to hold her anyway. I noticed a very strong smell coming from her diaper and stated, “Oh, I believe someone has made a gift in their diaper!” I looked at [REDACTED] with the expectation that he would take her from me to change her, after all he is her dad and I’ve never been around her before.

"Well, change her," he stated to me. I looked at [REDACTED] in confusion. He looked embarrassed. "You're the woman in the house right now. It's your responsibility to change diapers," [REDACTED] continued.

"Excuse me?" I asked.

"Women change diapers. Not men," he said.

"I'm sorry, but you are her father, and expecting me to change her diaper simply because I am a woman is not going to fly with this lady," I said, attempting to sound a light-hearted and not angry, as I placed Brylee in his lap. He looked at me in shock, with an expression of *how dare you disrespect me, woman* look on his face.

Thankfully [REDACTED] had already developed a much more culturally competent ideology because Tommy looked at him with an expectation that he correct me, the woman, for not following his orders. [REDACTED] stated, "Lauren doesn't put up with misogyny. If you want your daughter's diaper changed then change it yourself. You wanted a child. You got a child. Now be a father." It was seconds later when we left, and I realized that being with [REDACTED] meant that my values, beliefs, and morals surrounding equity, diversity, and empathy might be challenged by some of his family members.

[REDACTED] My father-in-law was a bus driver for his town's school district as well as the teacher aid that maintained the in-school-suspension classroom of all the schools. He was familiar with the common school holidays, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. During my first year of teaching, the school district I taught recognized MLK Day by marking it as a school holiday for both students and teachers. My husband and I were visiting his parents and I happened to mention that I was off the next day for MLK Day. Thomas' response came as a complete shock to my ears: "Oh, y'all get out for N**** Day, huh?"

My brain went into overload and confusion; What did I just hear? Did that really just happen? How do I respond to this without ruining my relationship with my father-in-law but still maintaining and supporting my very deeply embedded belief system and values? "I'm sorry, [REDACTED]," I started, "but what did you just refer to tomorrow's holiday as?"

"N**** Day," he responded in a very unequivocal demeanor. "That's what it is. It's just a day for Black people."

My husband spoke up quickly as he could see me boiling with frustration and anger, not just at [REDACTED], but with my own inability to find an efficient way to defend my own beliefs in an adequate manner that would not force [REDACTED] to throw a wall of defense in my face. "Dad, that is not ok to say," my husband stated very firmly. "It's a celebration for all rights fought for during the Civil Rights Movement." I was still in shock. I didn't know what to say. I mean, I knew what I wanted to say, but this was my father-in-law so things were now complicated because I began to struggle with the importance of correcting beliefs such as these with the necessity of maintaining positive familial relationships with my in-laws for the sake of my husband and our family.

"[REDACTED]," I stated, "do not ever use that word around me again, please. It makes me very uncomfortable and I don't agree with its usage to refer to people who simply have darker skin than you." He didn't respond, simply sat in his chair and continued to watch the television.

Again, like we did when [REDACTED] had used a gender stereotype against me, we left seconds later. For my entire childhood I had been sheltered from this blatant hatred and racism and told that these types of beliefs were wrong. Now I was a part of a family that truly believed

these things. I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders as I realized that my students probably experienced this same type of rhetoric either about themselves or about others from their own families and friends as well as the world around them.

My first year of teaching as a 10th and 11th grade English/Language Arts and Reading teacher, I was assigned a mentor who taught 12th grade Biology. We were in opposite wings of a very large high school and, though I attempted to schedule meetings for help with questions about classroom, instructional, and content issues, we met only twice throughout that entire year. If you asked me to pick her out of a crowd, I would probably fail. Thankfully, one of the 9th and 12th grade English/Language Arts and Reading teachers saw my struggle and swooped in to help me by taking me under her wing as an unofficial mentor. Without her, I probably would not have been able to effectively process the equity and diversity issues I faced as a White, middle-class teacher in a school with the majority of students being of color and from low-socioeconomic status family situations. While I had a desire and a passion to love my students and to give them anything and everything they needed to succeed, I failed at having a deep enough understanding of the different types of needs my students had individually. This is where [REDACTED] really provided me with a safe space to gain cultural competency and raise my efficacy to something more positive and meaningful for my goals and aspirations, my attitude towards my students and their individual needs, and my willingness to adjust as needed based on the environment of my classroom.

The first time it happened, I took it very personally; a Puerto Rican student said, "I went to tutoring with Mrs. [REDACTED] and she explained this in a way I understood better. Can I go work in her room on this assignment?" I let the student go after checking with Mrs. [REDACTED] (a Puerto Rican English/Language Arts and Reading teacher across the hallway) to make sure it was fine with her, but I had a very bitter and angry feeling brewing inside me. I was so uncomfortable. Why did this bother me so much? The student wasn't rude when she asked to go to another teacher to help. In fact, she was very sweet in her demeanor and tone. Her leaving didn't disrupt the classroom; in fact, I was genuinely glad that she was finally able to understand the material because, as a teacher with no Spanish language acquisition, I struggled to help her like I could with my native English speaking students. But, the self reflection continued to brew into more frustration throughout the day.

When the dismissal bell finally rang, I went to [REDACTED] classroom, sat down in a desk with a heavy sigh, and I said, "What's wrong with me?"

She laughed and said, "What do you mean? What happened?"

"My ELL student asked to go to Mrs. [REDACTED] to do her assignment today and didn't even ask me for help first," I told her.

"So?" she questioned.

"Why do I feel like I'm a terrible teacher because she couldn't rely on me to teach her?" I asked in a shaky voice that was about ready to crack under the pressure of a waterworks show developing in my eyes.

"Did you let her go to Mrs. [REDACTED]?" she inquired.

"Yes, of course I did. That's what she needed. She was able to gain an understanding from Mrs. [REDACTED], so of course I let her go where her learning was best influenced," I stated.

"Then you just answered your own questions," she replied. "A good teacher cares about her students' learning and not about her own ego. You let her go to [REDACTED] because you knew that was what she needed to be successful, and her success and learning is the most important part of helping her to become confident as a student in this new country she is living. If you didn't care about her success as a student, as an individual, or as a human being, then you would have made her stay in your classroom and struggle through without the resources you knew were available just across the hall."

This was the moment when I realized that the interpersonal communication of care that I had developed from a young age and the intrapersonal decisions made based on that care had come crashing into my professional career as a teacher. My love for my students and their success enhanced my desire to provide this student what she needed, but the struggle to process the feelings of not being the best for all students brought me to [REDACTED]. Without this type of relationship with her, I may never have been able to positively handle the very real fact that every student has unique academic needs that are partially defined by their cultural backgrounds. From this moment on, I never had to take student requests for help as a personal attack because I was often able to identify their needs based on my interactions with them. This was a lesson that I took to the next school district I taught.

When I transferred to a new school district, I also changed the grade level that I was teaching. This time, instead of high school, I was an 8th grade English/Language Arts teacher in the smaller setting of a middle school. There were about 250 students in the 8th grade and two teachers for each required content area (ELAR, Math, Science, and Social Studies). At first, I was worried because that meant I only had one other person that I would be able to count on to be a partner teacher. Thankfully, I was blessed with [REDACTED], an African-American woman who had been teaching for 7 years when I first arrived at the school. We cliqued immediately and developed a relationship that continues to this day. She was always there as a partner to help with lesson planning, processing student struggles and successes, and provided loving advice that both supported my initial beliefs when I was right, or redirected my understanding of a situation through a different lens when I was wrong.

We were the dynamic duo of the school, two partners-in-crime, often getting into "trouble" because of our instructional practices and classroom management techniques, which were typically untraditional and not necessarily what was requested of the teachers by the administration. One example of this was an issue with a dress-code policy that seemed like a good idea on the surface, but actually caused many more problems than they prevented. Thankfully, the professional relationship we had provided us with an internal support system of each other to actually do our job: protect our learners and their learning success.

Sagging of pants had become a very, very common occurrence in our school among our male students. At a faculty meeting one week, many teachers voiced a loud concern about this, so our principal and assistant principals developed a mandate for all students with sagging pants to be written up and sent to in-school suspension (ISS) for the remainder of the day. Next, they expanded this mandate to include a stipulation that for every number of days a student sagged their pants, they would receive an equal number of days in ISS. [REDACTED] and I went back to my room after this meeting to ponder the repercussions this would have on, not only us as teachers, but our students and their school experiences.

We made a list of students we knew sagged nearly every single day. There were about 75 boys on our list, no girls. Then we went down the list and discussed each student's individual experiences both at home and in school. What we found was that the majority of our students who sagged came from very poor families, no surprise considering that 79% of the students that our school served came from low-SES households. The next day we decided to talk with these students individually and see what their reasoning for sagging was.

"These are my older brother's pants and he is fatter than me, Miss. We can't afford for me to go get new pants so I always have to wear his hand-me-downs."

"My mom hasn't been able to buy me new pants since 6th grade, Miss. Luckily I grow taller but not fatter, so the pants still fit around, they're just too short."

"No way am I going to pull my pants up and wear high-waters. I'd rather get in trouble with him [the principal] than get made fun of all day and beat up after school for my ankles showing."

"I sag so people don't know that I'm wearing pants that are my cousin's whose 2 years older and they don't actually fit me. They just keeping falling down and I can't afford to go buy a belt."

Over and over and over again we heard our boys explain that they were sagging because of issues outside of their control. So, [REDACTED] and I made a decision to look at the sagging issue as a problem the student is having instead of a problem the student is causing. We got onto Amazon and purchased a few boxes of zip-ties. The students whose pants were too big came to us every morning to get a zip-tie or two to hold their pants up. The students whose pants were too short, they received a zip-tie to help hold their pants in place where they didn't cause them to have "high waters," allowing them to walk down the hall without bringing attention to themselves that their pants were sagging by holding them up all day. However, the deal was that these students would do their best to wear basketball shorts instead of just underwear beneath their pants as well as longer shirts that covered the top of their pants, hiding the sagging some.

To say that our administration and other teachers were annoyed is an understatement. We received so much backlash for providing zip-ties to our students. One of our favorite comments from other teachers was, "How will they learn how to dress right in society if they are always given a way out of having to dress right for school?" Thankfully, [REDACTED] and I knew that the bigger lesson learned here was that there are caring, empathetic teachers out there who do want the best for them, who don't want to see them sitting in a silent classroom receiving no instruction day in and day out because of a social problem they had no control over. That year, we had a 96% growth rate of our students' standardized test scores; nearly every single student in our classes did better on their ELAR state test than they had done the year before.

My interactions with [REDACTED] helped her and me, together and individually, keep our students in class, provided them with a safe environment to focus, and showed them what it was like to be viewed as an asset to the classroom and their peers, not as a behavior problem that brings liabilities into their school.

██████████

If there was one colleague who taught me the importance of loving my students unconditionally, it was ██████████. The students hated her. "Hate" is a strong word, but that was the students' word. According to them she was rude, mean, thought they were stupid, and didn't care about them. While I don't think that was actually the true core of her character, she definitely displayed characteristics of someone completely unempathetic and totally lacking cultural competency.

We shared a mutual student: ██████████. She was an African-American student, identified as bi-sexual, and came from a single-parent household where her mother held several jobs to support their family of 8. ██████████ was a White, heterosexual teacher who came from a two-parent household with a stay-at-home mom and a father who was a medical doctor. Their experiences and circumstances were different to say the least, and those differences caused a lot of tension in their interactions.

██████████ was often labeled as a "behavior problem" with her teachers, mostly because she got frustrated when she did not understand a topic or assignment; she would become distracting to her classmates by getting off task and encouraging them to do the same, simply so her inability to understand the content would be hidden by disruptive behavior instead. She and I worked hard to develop ways that she could avoid getting in trouble and get the help she needed on her work without her friends thinking that she wasn't "cool." One of those ways was removing herself from situations where she felt embarrassed by her lack of understanding and moving to a place where she could concentrate without distractions and without becoming a distraction herself. She was doing great with this in my class, often asking to sit in the hallway to work or to put her headphones in to listen to music while she worked.

One day, between class periods, ██████████ asked me if she could come work on her math assignment in my room. Students' math classes were two class periods long, so her question was really in relation to removing herself from ██████████ classroom for the second half of her class time. Before I could tell her that she would need a signed pass from her math teacher, ██████████ came storming down the hall, yelling at ██████████. I guided ██████████ into my classroom and told her to sit at my desk while I spoke with her teacher.

"Don't you dare hide that little brat!" ██████████ yelled at me. "She does nothing but cause problems in my classroom, she always wants to sit in the hallway or listen to music! She needs to learn how to sit quietly and do her work in her desk like she's expected!"

"First of all," I began, "have you ever asked her why she wants to sit in the hallway or listen to music while she's working on an assignment?"

"No, but her reasoning doesn't matter because it's against my rules!" she exclaimed.

"Second of all," I continued, "you will not raise your voice and speak to my student in that tone; you will not call her negative names; and you for certain will not disregard her needs as a learner, failing to recognize that she is doing her best."

██████████ stared at me for a moment, then said, "You can't just let students come to your classroom whenever they want, especially when they don't have their assigned teacher's permission!"

"I was just about to send her to you to ask for permission until you decided to verbally attack her at the doorway of my classroom," I responded. "In my room, student learning and growth is protected. Right now, that means protecting ██████████ from your negative and unhealthy

criticism and protecting you from having any more students see you as someone they cannot take seriously with their education." I went into my room, shut the door, and emailed the attendance office to let them know that [REDACTED] was in my room for the class period in case Barbara tried to put another discipline mark on her record with an absence.

[REDACTED]

During my second year of teaching 8th grade English/Language Arts & Reading, I had a group of English Language Learner (ELL) students placed into one of my class periods not long after Thanksgiving break ended. Out of these 7 ELLs, the one that struggled the most with his English language proficiency was [REDACTED]. He had only been in the United States for 2 years and brought just his Spanish language with him, so his English language learning acquisition had started from the very beginning. He struggled academically in my class because so much of the content was very language-specific, requiring him to not only read English texts but to also identify and analyze literary devices within those texts.

One day before Christmas break, I took all the students to the library to pick out any book they wanted to read while they were out of school. [REDACTED] sat on a couch in the library with a look and demeanor of discouragement. I went and sat next to him.

"You don't want to take a book home for the holiday break?" I asked him.

"I can't," he replied.

"What do you mean you can't?" I questioned.

"I don't get English. English makes me stupid," he said in a voice of despondency.

"You aren't stupid," I encouraged. "You can get a book in Spanish if you would like. You don't have to get one that is in English. I want you to have something you enjoy."

His face lit up and he smiled and walked over to the ELL section of the library. I went and checked on some other students and then announced that it was time to make a decision on a book and get it checked out at the librarian's desk. I stood by the exit so students could line up after they finished. [REDACTED] was the first in line. I noticed it was really a thick book for an 8th grader in a regular level English class. It was titled *La Marca del Escorpión* (The House of the Scorpion).

"That book looks really interesting!" I said to him.

"It's one of my favorite. I love it," he said. "Thanks for letting me read in Spanish. I really like to read, just not in English."

"Did you read a lot in school when you were in Mexico?" I asked him.

"I was the best!" he said laughing. "I'm really smart, Ms. Spurlock (my maiden name at the time). Just not in America; only in Mexico."

"What do you mean not in America?" I questioned.

"Here, everyone thinks I'm dumb, that's why I'm in dumb American classes. If I was in Mexico, I would be in your smart classes," he replied.

It was this moment that I realized [REDACTED] was a gifted learner who had not been identified as gifted since he had moved to the United States. Because he didn't speak English well, he was immediately labeled ELL and given special education resources. I was heartbroken because I knew that his abilities and potentials were being completely neglected. His knowledge and growth were being suppressed due to one cultural difference between himself and the American school system.

My instruction for him began to change as I differentiated using Spanish alternatives that the Spanish teacher and ELL director helped me to obtain. He began to excel in class and even became like a teacher aid with the other 6 ELL students during literature circles and test reviews. His entire demeanor went from completely discouraged and pessimistic to emboldened and confident. Having this interaction with him allowed me to see a part of who he was as a student and help him to grow, ultimately helping students from his same culture to grow as well.

One day during the second semester, [REDACTED] came into class, sat down on the couch at the back of the room, and fell asleep before the bell for class to begin had even rang. As the other students worked on their warm-up assignment, I quickly took attendance at my desk and noticed an email from [REDACTED] science teacher that said, "[REDACTED] has had a bad attitude all morning. He continues to try to put his head down in class to sleep and when I tried to wake him up, he just called me a b****, threw his hood of his sweatshirt over his head, and went back to sleep. He has detention for me after school. Is there anything you need him to work on for your class this afternoon that I can have him do once he's done with my assignment?"

I looked over at [REDACTED] on the couch, sound asleep. He was wearing the same clothes he had worn the previous day. I glanced over at the cell phone charging station I had for students in my room and his cell phone was not there, something strange because he always charged his phone in my class. Something was unusually off about him today, so I let him sleep and I responded to his science teacher:

"Actually, I have quite a bit for him to do for my class. I know your daughter has a swim meet today, so why don't I keep him in my room for detention so you can go watch her and not have to worry about being here for him. If that's fine with you, send me your assignment for him and I'll be sure to have him work on that, too." She pleasantly agreed to the arrangement and thanked me for "taking him off [her] plate."

My class was [REDACTED] last of the day. When the release bell rang for school to end, [REDACTED] didn't budge an inch. Once all the other students had left the room, I went and sat on the couch next to him, gently trying to wake him. As he awoke and realized that no one else was in the classroom he said, "Why did you let me sleep the whole time?"

"You were obviously very tired, [REDACTED]. I noticed that you didn't even have the energy to put your phone on the charger like you always do, so I figured your body needed some rest," I explained. "You're a smart boy, so I know you'll be able to get caught up with today's assignment before you head home."

"Oh, yeah, I can do it in my science teacher's room," he stated. "I have detention this afternoon with her anyway."

"Well, I emailed her at the beginning of class to see if I could just let you serve your detention in my class instead," I told him. He had a look of relief as he smirked and laid his head back on the couch.

"Thanks, Miss," he stated. "I work better in here anyway."

I handed him his science assignment and told him that once he finished, I would go over today's lesson and assignment for my class. He got to work right away and after about 20 minutes brought his completed work to my desk. "Mrs. Williams," he started, "can I talk to you?"

"Sure," I said and I turned away from my computer to give him my undivided attention. I had hoped he would open up to me about why he was so tired today. He wasn't the type of student that was comfortable being approached by others, but if he was the one doing the approaching, he would open up his vulnerability and ask for help.

"My brothers are in a gang," he started, "and I am having to join to keep my sister safe from what she's always having to do to help our family."

This was when I learned about all the ins and outs of █████ family dynamics.

With 3 older brothers and 1 younger sister, his single-mother carried a very heavy burden of raising 5 children on her own, often leaving her absent from the home in order to provide financially the best she could. However, even with the multiple jobs she held, his mother's income was never enough for a 6 person household. Each of her children had to also take on the role of provider in order to meet the basic needs of the family. Because of this, █████ regularly witnessed adversities that no child should have to see; his brothers meddling in drug-related exchanges that often led to violent occurrences, his 11-year-old sister coming home daily after exchanging sexual favors to gang members for monetary pay, and now his own similar obligations to this lifestyle.

"The OG [*original gangster, leader of the gang*] said that he'll make sure the amount of money my sister gets for her night walks [*prostituting*] will be given to our family without her having to do the actual work," he started, "as long as I agree to join and do all the bagging [*preparing drugs for sale*] and exchanges."

I sat in shock and anger as my empathy and grace grew for █████ while I listened to him tell me everything he and his family dealt with on a day-to-day basis. This was why he was so tired; he had taken on extra work for the gang in order to protect his little sister from the torture of child sex trafficking.

"Mrs. Williams," he ended, "please don't tell anyone. No one can know. I just wanted to tell you because I know you care and you always find ways to help people during school."

"█████," I started, "what can I do? What do you need from me?"

"I need a safe place for my sister to be until my mom can get off work every day," he stated. "She's in 6th grade and goes here, but she's such a good kid so she never gets in trouble or has to stay after school for detention. Can she stay in your room after school just until 5:30 when my mom can come get her? That way she doesn't have to walk home alone. I can't walk with her after school anymore because I have to go to the OG's house every single day."

"Yes," I said. "She can come to my room. And if I'm ever not here, she can go to Mrs. █████." █████ knew that my relationship with Mrs. █████ was strong enough and built on so much trust, that she wouldn't ask questions. We continued the afternoon with a quick review of that day's lecture and assignment for my class, and as he left my room, I cried. He didn't want me to tell anyone, but there was a legality issue requiring me to report this to Child Protective Services (CPS), so that's what I did. Filling out that report was hard and scary. I worried about the safety of this family from the gang if they found out that someone knew what was happening. Thankfully, I could file the report anonymously so there was no paper trail

of where the information actually came from, hopefully protecting [REDACTED] from being hurt for telling.

This interaction proved to me the importance of knowing your students and their unique habits in order to recognize when something is wrong and provide the help they need to the best of your ability as a teacher. [REDACTED] science teacher saw his behavior of sleeping and aggravated spirit as a burden on herself and a blatant display of disrespect, though she failed to recognize that these characteristics of [REDACTED] stemmed from something outside of school and more important in his current situation than the science content he was receiving.

[REDACTED]

During my second year of teaching, I had a Mexican-American, female student in my 5th period class named [REDACTED]. For the first 2 months of school, she was “impossible.” No matter how I adjusted my instruction, where I sat her in the room, or what accommodations I gave her, she always talked back to me, disrupted class, and refused to do her work. I began to feel like, if I didn’t figure out a way to reach her, she would become a part of the achievement gap statistics, something that truly made me cringe. Underneath that angry and mean-spirited exterior, [REDACTED] was a kind, sweet, and smart young lady. However, even when I would show her how much I believed in her, she would express an anger towards me for even having positive feelings about her, until the day I had to give her lunch detention for the number of tardies she had to my class.

During her detention, she said, “You’re never going to fix me. I’m just an angry person and that’s all there is to me. You have no idea what that’s like.”

“I get it,” I responded as I continued to eat my lunch and work on some emails at my desk. “I’m angry today, too. You’re not the only one who has moments of anger.” I thought that maybe by telling her I had a similar feeling, she would open up about *why* she was so angry.”

“What could you possibly be angry about?” she asked. “You White people always think you have it so bad, but really you have perfect families with all the money and no real problems in the world.”

“Well, today I’m angry because it’s the anniversary of my older brother’s death,” I told her. “He died of cancer three years ago and it’s something that still makes me mad.”

There was a silence for about 5 minutes. Then [REDACTED] said in a soft voice, a sound I had never heard her use before, “My brother died of cancer three years ago, too.”

It was this moment that the wall of protection she had built finally fell. Her anger and grief towards her brother’s death was something that I could relate to, which gave me a purpose in her life as someone that provide a safe space for her to finally work through those emotions and experience the waves of grief without being judged. While she still continued to be a difficult student for her other teachers, she became a totally new student in my room. No longer was she ever tardy, she participated effectively in class assignments and discussions, and she began to show her true academic potential. At the end of the school year, in a letter she wrote to me, she stated:

Remember the day we started to talk about our brothers and you told me that my brother would love to see me graduate and how happy he was going to be? Thank you for telling me that because I really never thought about it. I always told myself I was going to drop out of school and work at McDonalds. I

remember how we had talks about it every day and every single day I wanted to come to school because of you. Well now I want to finish school and be a probation officer thanks to you.

And she did just that: she finished school, something that most of her other teachers told her would never happen. In fact, she graduated early at the age of 16, an event I did not fail to attend.

One of my student athletes, [REDACTED], was a basketball star. His love and passion for basketball was a driving force for nearly every aspect of his life. I never had any issues with him doing his work or paying attention in class because he knew that if he didn't pass or if he got in trouble with his teachers, he wouldn't get to play in the game that week. Even his relationships with the other students was directly influenced by basketball; he refrained from hanging around students that were often in trouble at school because he really did not want to take on that same type of behavior or get in trouble simply because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. His focus was totally and completely on doing all he could to do well in basketball so that he could someday get a basketball scholarship.

One day, [REDACTED] came into class without his usual happy smile and he didn't participate in class activities like normal. Towards the end of the class period, I gave students time to work on their current story-writing assignment and pulled [REDACTED] to my desk for a "writing conference," which was simply a code word so that the other students wouldn't know I was really calling him up to see what was wrong.

"[REDACTED]" I began, "what's going on? Are you feeling ok today?"

"Mrs. Williams," he said in a really frustrated tone, "my mom said I can't be in the city basketball tournament because she doesn't have the \$40 fee."

"I'm sorry, [REDACTED]" I told him. "When is the \$40 due for you to be able to play?"

"On Friday," he told me. It was currently Wednesday and the district pay-day was the very next day. I had an idea, but I didn't want to get his hopes up until I knew it was for sure possible.

"Well, I really enjoyed watching your game last week!" I told him. I tried my best not to miss athletic events because so many of my students were athletes and many of them had parents with multiple jobs who couldn't make it themselves. Every child deserves to have someone there cheering them on, so I tried to be that person for as many kids as I could. He cheered up a little and talked to me about how he felt the game the week before had gone.

After school, I went to visit with [REDACTED] about [REDACTED] situation. I told her what was going on and asked if she thought she could split the \$40 fee with me. She was more than welcome to help. We called the city parks and leisure office and made the payment in [REDACTED] name. The next day, as he came into class, [REDACTED] said, "You'll never believe what happened last night, Mrs. Williams! I got a call from the city saying that my payment had been fulfilled by someone and I am being put on a team!"

"That's awesome!" I told him. "What day is the game? I definitely want to come!"

"The game is Saturday," he replied. I got all the details on location and time, told Mrs. [REDACTED] and we both made plans to be there.

After his game, [REDACTED] came up to us and gave us a huge hug. "I know it was you, Mrs. Williams, who paid my fee. I asked the coach who made the payment and he told me."

“Well, I didn’t do it alone. Mrs. ██████ paid for half,” I admitted.

“Thank you so much. I’ve never had teachers who actually loved me enough to help me out with something that wasn’t school-related,” he said.

██████ Relationships built with students should not come to an abrupt ending on the last day of a school year. I strongly believe that teacher-student relationships are a necessary and natural human link that goes beyond the classroom and into the future, not only for students, but also for teachers. The first year after leaving the K-12 classroom, my husband and I experienced the tragedy of pregnancy loss when I delivered our first daughter as a stillborn. Just five days later, countless former 8th grade students of mine were checked out of school in order to be in attendance at her funeral that took place in my hometown where I had taught. Though the funeral was in our hometown, she was buried in the same town we lived for me to work on my doctorate at Texas A&M University. Students from my first year of teaching were already in college, a few who went to Texas A&M University. Those in my college town made time to come to her burriel, one of which was ██████.

██████ was in the first class period of my first year of teaching, one of the very first students of my own that I ever met. She was smart in her studies, sharp with her wit, and steadfast in her beliefs. We bonded during that first year of teaching, something that continued into the present. When ██████ was a sophomore in college at Texas A&M University, I began working on my doctorate and we, once again, were in the same school but this time both as students. One evening, ██████ reached out to me for a suggestion on a church she could start attending. I told her about the church my husband and I are members of and she began to come with us every Sunday, something that continues to this very day. Outside of Sunday church service, is a women’s Bible study every Wednesday that I also attend. I decided to invite ██████ to join our group as well and she has not missed a day since.

Our relationship went from a student-teacher connection to a strong friendship during my own grief to a spiritual family bond that she was seeking during her own personal struggles. The natural growth of a relationship is an important part of the human experience. Students and teachers are given the gift of a perfect pairing as they learn with and from each other in the classroom.

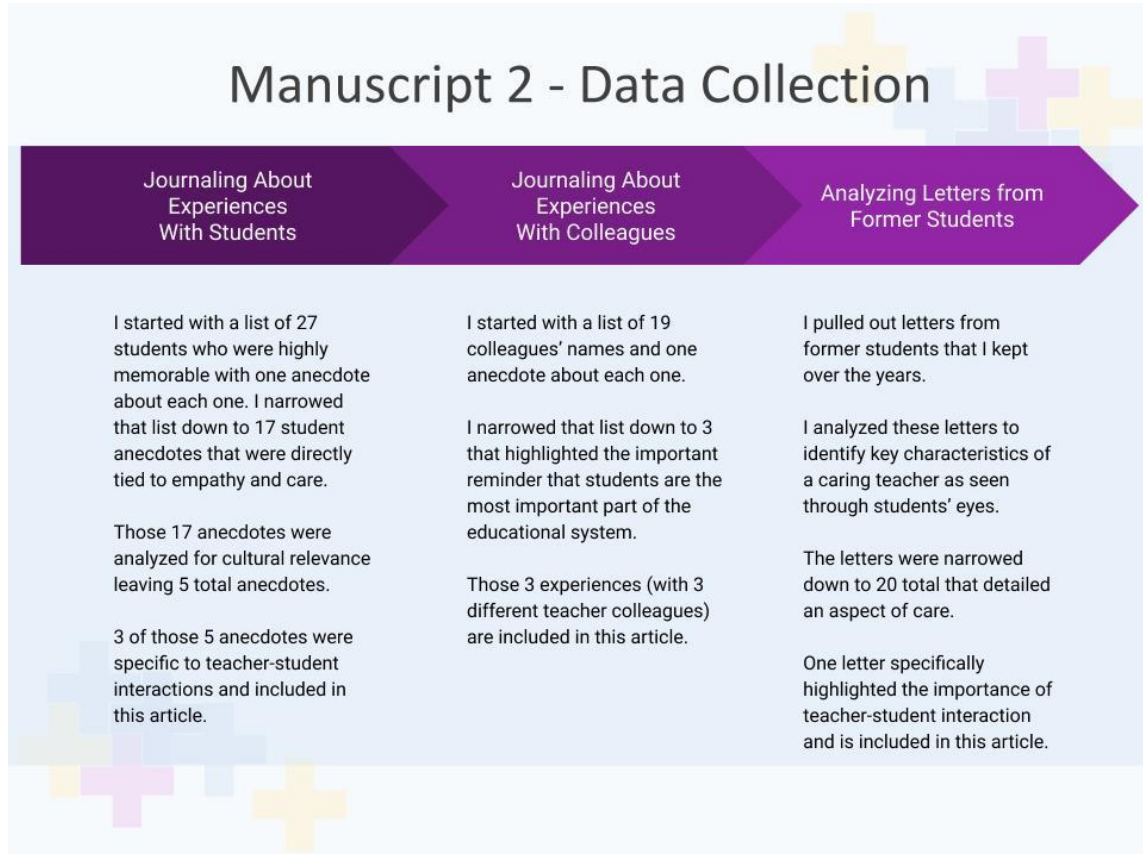
APPENDIX B

MANUSCRIPT 1 – DATA COLLECTION



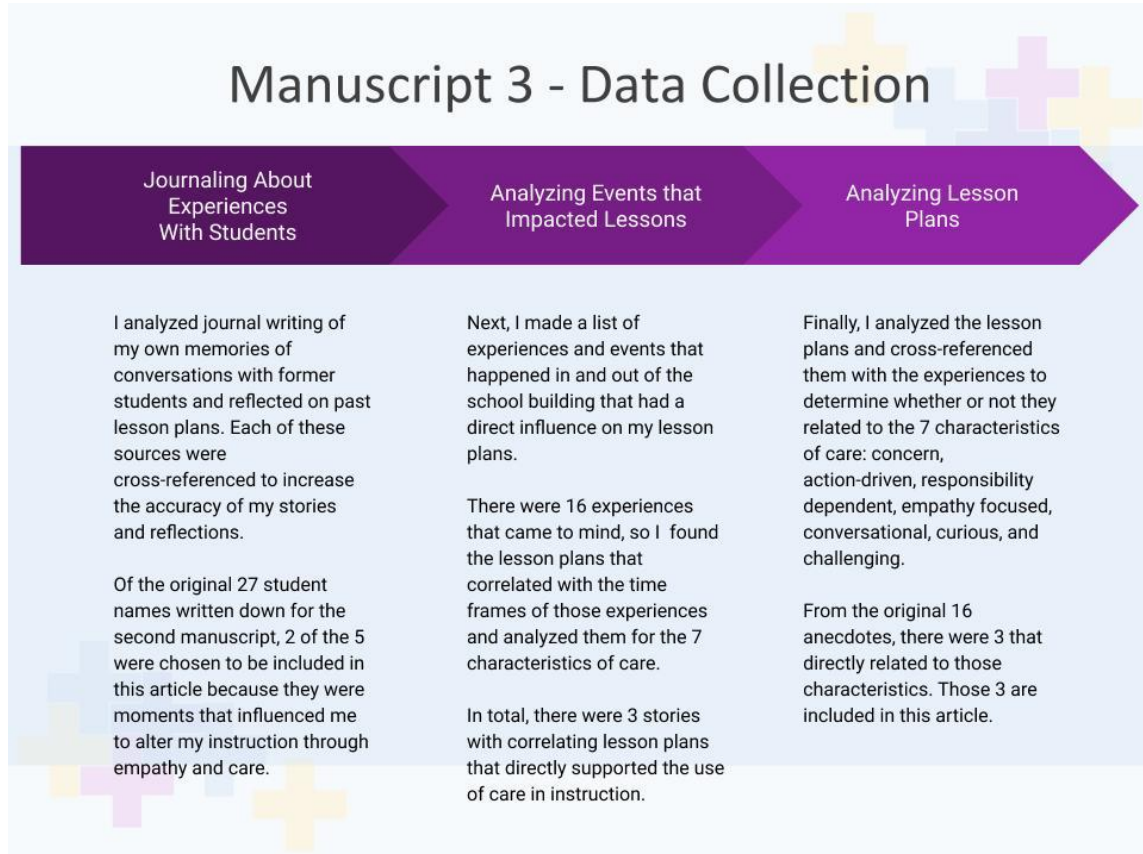
APPENDIX C

MANUSCRIPT 2 – DATA COLLECTION



APPENDIX D

MANUSCRIPT 3 – DATA COLLECTION



APPENDIX E

THE HEART OF TEACHING: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNEY OF YOUR SOCIALIZATION TO CARE

Stage 1 -- Desired Results

In order for empathy to be evident in teachers with culturally responsive knowledge, there has to be a deliberate/conscious awareness of their own funds of knowledge, perceptions, and biases and how each of those impacts their teacher identity and relationships in the classroom. Bouton (2016) affirms that the socio-emotional trait of empathy is a necessary skill for all teachers, a disposition that is “a personal and emotional trait that occurs inside of a person’s mind and being” (p. 17).

The Socialization to Care is conceptualized as the symbiotic relationship connecting intrapersonal self-reflection with interpersonal experiences. It is the lifelong process of developing social awareness, critical consciousness, and social advocacy to resist bigotry in one’s personal and professional life. This ability to see everyone as equally human should be considered a requisite disposition for teachers because the Socialization to Care promotes the integration of care as a central praxis of teaching diverse learners. Empathy is an ongoing process that is not just an internal phenomenon, but trans-relational of external experiences interpreted through critical self-reflection yielding the actualization of care in the classroom.

Teachers who embody care tend to have students who perform well holistically- academically, socially, morally, and culturally- therefore empathy education is a necessary element to include in the development of teachers (Gay, 2000). Through this reflective course, you will experience an autoethnographic journey of empathy and be given the space to recognize and address both positive and negative influences on your own ethic of care and empathetic capacity in order to consciously develop your interactional and instructional care of students in the classroom.

Established Goals According to the Texas Administrative Code:

Title 19 -- Education

Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification

Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs

Rule §228.30 -- Educator Preparation Curriculum

(c)(4) the skills that educators are required to possess, the responsibilities that educators are required to accept, and the high expectations for students in this state;

(c)(5) the importance of building strong classroom management skills;

(c)(7) appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students.

Title 19 -- Education

Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification

Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs

Rule §228.35 -- Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training

(a)(2)(A) designing clear, well-organized, sequential, engaging, and flexible lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and related content, are appropriate for diverse learners and encourage higher-order thinking, persistence, and achievement;

(a)(2)(C) ensuring high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement for all students through knowledge of students, proven practices, and differentiated instruction;

(a)(2)(I) reflect on his or her practice;

(a)(2)(J) effectively communicating with students, families, colleagues, and community members.

Understandings: *Teachers will understand...*

- the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences. (W1)
- the ways in which interpersonal communication and intrapersonal reflection affects the development of care and empathy. (W1)
- the importance of active and conscious reflection of all experiences to adjust their beliefs and attitudes about and towards students. (W2, W3)
- the interconnectedness of interactional care and instructional care in the classroom. (W2, W3, W4)
- the impact that interactions with other teachers and with students have on the continued growth of their empathetic capacity. (W2)
- the types of instruction that are most driven by teacher care towards students. (W3, W4)
- the influence that prejudice and bigotry have on their empathetic capacity. (W1, W2, W3)

Essential Questions:

- What is the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal communication and care? (W1)
- What experiences informed my development of social and cultural awareness in my formative years? (W1)
- How did my family address issues of equity in my childhood? (W1)
- To what extent does the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge construct my empathetic capacity? (W1, W2, W3)
- In what ways do interactions with other teachers foster care-centered relationships? (W2, W4)
- How do my interactions with students contribute to the development of my ethic of care and the empathy I provide in the classroom? (W2, W4)
- How do instructional practices affect the social and academic development of my students? (W3, W4)
- Does my classroom instruction display the 4 components of a relational disposition (Concern,

	<p>Action, Responsibility, and Empathy)? (W3, W4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is my classroom instruction informed by the 3 C's of a highly empathetic teacher (conversational, curious, and challenging)? (W3, W4)
<p>Teachers will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how examples of care shown to them throughout their formative years developed their ability to accept care as well as care for others. (W1) • the biases and prejudices they harbor. (W1, W2) • the importance of reflection in their professional teaching career. (W2, W3, W4) • the types of instructional practices that demonstrate care: use of community references, having high expectations for all students, and celebrating uniqueness and growth as evidence of student success. (W3) 	<p>Teachers will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address and deconstruct the biases and prejudices they harbor. (W1, W2, W3) • actively seek understanding of their students' cultural and personal backgrounds and identities. (W2, W3, W4) • identify the 4 components of a relational disposition in teachers (Concern, Action, Responsibility, and Empathy). (W3, W4) • identify the 3 C's of a highly empathetic teacher (conversational, curious, and challenging). (W3, W4) • think, respond, and react consciously in future experiences in and out of the classroom. (W4)
<p>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</p>	
<p>Performance Tasks: <i>Teachers will be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>reflect</u> on their own interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences through autoethnographic research. (W1) • <u>appraise</u> their self reflections specifically on their beliefs and attitudes towards students. (W2, W3) • <u>construct</u> (preservice) or <u>reconstruct</u> (in-service) lesson plans to implement a culturally relevant, caring, student-centered pedagogy in their classroom. (W3) • <u>create</u> an autoethnographic documentary that maps their journey of empathy development. (W4) 	
<p>Key Criteria and Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses reflection and narrative inquiry to gather and analyze experiences to understand their empathy capacity. (W1, W2, W3, W4) • Judges personal experiences as positive or negative in their empathy development. (W1, W2) 	

- Develops critical consciousness of the interactions they have with others and how those interactions affect their empathy capacity. (W2, W3, W4)
- Creates an autoethnographic documentary that details their preparatory and pedagogical experiences of empathy development. (W1, W2, W3, W4)
- Evaluates current instructional practices for evidence of a care-centered pedagogy. (W3)
- Compose lesson plans that implement the elements of a care-centered pedagogy. (W4)

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Describe the Learning Structure:

This non-traditional teacher workspace is a hybrid model extracurricular experience.

Each week is comprised of:

- 2 hours of face-to-face whole group instruction on the *Socialization to Care* model;
- 30 minute one-on-one intensive guided-reflection between teacher and the PD facilitator, and;
- online peer discussion.

During weeks 1 and 3, teachers will be expected to participate in a cultural plunge as a field-based experience to actively seek and reflect upon the socialization they experience in those interactions.

At the end of each week, teachers will be encouraged to develop a piece of their autoethnographic documentary correlating to the *Socialization to Care* topic focused on during that week.

The final assessment of understanding is a full autoethnographic documentary that describes the integration of the *Socialization to Care* into their personal and professional lives, ultimately leading to a discussion of changes made in their lesson plans and pedagogy. This assignment is differentiated with a choice of channel for how the documentary is presented: written or video-based. The autoethnographic documentary presentation should be 20-30 minutes long, broken into four sections:

- Preparatory Care -- Interpersonal & Intrapersonal Experiences
- Pedagogical Care -- Interactional
- Pedagogical Care -- Instructional
- Implementation of a culturally relevant, caring, student-centered pedagogy in the classroom.

Week 1 Objective: *Preparatory Care-- Interpersonal & Intrapersonal Experiences*

The teacher will examine the social and familial experiences that directly influenced their belief system (including biases, prejudices, and stereotypes) and enhanced or compressed their empathetic capacity towards social awareness, critical consciousness, and social advocacy. These experiences will be categorized as either

interpersonal or intrapersonal based upon the type of communication (interpersonal or intrapersonal) that caused the experience to be influence their ethic of care and empathy.

Week 2 Objective: *Pedagogical Care-- Interactional*

The teacher will critically analyze the interactions they have with others and how those interactions affect their empathy capacity. These interactions should be specific to the classroom environment involving students as well as other teachers.

Week 3 Objective: *Pedagogical Care-- Instructional*

The teacher will appraise their current instructional practices to determine if they demonstrate care towards their students through the use of community references, high expectations for all students, and the celebration of uniqueness and growth. As they reflect and analyze their current teacher practices, they will determine ways to implement these elements of care-centered instruction into their own pedagogy.

Week 4 Objective: *Care-Centered Lesson Planning and Pedagogy*

The teacher will compose lesson plans that implement the elements of a care-centered pedagogy to indicate their understanding of the *Socialization to Care* and its ability to transform a classroom into one that is culturally relevant.

APPENDIX F

WEEK 1 LESSON PLAN: PREPARATORY CARE (INTERPERSONAL & INTRAPERSONAL EXPERIENCES)

<p>Week 1 Lesson Plan <i>Preparatory Care-- Interpersonal & Intrapersonal Experiences</i></p>	
<p>Stage 1 -- Desired Results</p>	
<p>Established Goals According to the Texas Administrative Code: <i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.30 -- Educator Preparation Curriculum</i> (c)(4) the skills that educators are required to possess, the responsibilities that educators are required to accept, and the high expectations for students in this state; (c)(5) the importance of building strong classroom management skills; (c)(7) appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students.</p> <p><i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.35 -- Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training</i> (a)(2)(A) designing clear, well-organized, sequential, engaging, and flexible lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and related content, are appropriate for diverse learners and encourage higher-order thinking, persistence, and achievement; (a)(2)(C) ensuring high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement for all students through knowledge of students, proven practices, and differentiated instruction; (a)(2)(I) reflect on his or her practice; (a)(2)(J) effectively communicating with students, families, colleagues, and community members.</p>	
<p>Understandings: <i>Teachers will understand...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences. • the ways in which interpersonal communication and intrapersonal reflection affects the development of care and empathy. 	<p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal communication and care? • What experiences informed my development of social and cultural awareness in my formative years?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the influence that prejudice and bigotry have on their empathetic capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did my family address issues of equity in my childhood? To what extent does the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge construct my empathetic capacity?
<p>Teachers will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how examples of care shown to them throughout their formative years developed their ability to accept care as well as care for others. the biases and prejudices they harbor. 	<p>Teachers will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> address and deconstruct the biases and prejudices they harbor.
Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence	
<p>Performance Task: <i>Teachers will be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>reflect</u> on their own interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences through autoethnographic research. 	
<p>Key Criteria and Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses reflection and narrative inquiry to gather and analyze experiences to understand their empathy capacity. Judges personal experiences as positive or negative in their empathy development. Creates an autoethnographic documentary that details their preparatory and pedagogical experiences of empathy development. 	
Stage 3 – Learning Plan	
<p>Objective: The teacher will examine the social and familial experiences that directly influenced their belief system (including biases, prejudices, and stereotypes) and enhanced or compressed their empathetic capacity towards social awareness, critical consciousness, and social advocacy. These experiences will be categorized as either interpersonal or intrapersonal based upon the type of communication (interpersonal or intrapersonal) that caused the experience to be influence their ethic of care and empathy.</p> <p>Describe the Learning Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 hours of face-to-face whole group instruction on the preparatory care part of the <i>Socialization to Care</i> model; 30 minute one-on-one intensive guided-reflection between teacher and the PD facilitator to discuss formative experiences throughout childhood and into early adulthood that may have influenced the internalization and actualization of care towards others; 	

- online peer discussion of the ways in which preparatory years may predispose a teacher to be effective in diverse classrooms;
- reflective journal (either written or video) guided by the essential questions:
 - What is the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal communication and care?
 - What experiences informed my development of social and cultural awareness in my formative years?
 - How did my family address issues of equity in my childhood?
 - To what extent does the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge construct my empathetic capacity?
- participate in a cultural plunge by choosing a situation, event, place where you are the “other” or the “visitor” in order to challenge yourself and the conceptions of yourself and others.

APPENDIX G

WEEK 2 LESSON PLAN: PEDAGOGICAL CARE (INTERACTIONAL)

Week 2 Lesson Plan <i>Pedagogical Care-- Interactional</i>	
Stage 1 -- Desired Results	
<p>Established Goals According to the Texas Administrative Code: <i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.30 -- Educator Preparation Curriculum</i> (c)(4) the skills that educators are required to possess, the responsibilities that educators are required to accept, and the high expectations for students in this state; (c)(5) the importance of building strong classroom management skills; (c)(7) appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students.</p> <p><i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.35 -- Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training</i> (a)(2)(A) designing clear, well-organized, sequential, engaging, and flexible lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and related content, are appropriate for diverse learners and encourage higher-order thinking, persistence, and achievement; (a)(2)(C) ensuring high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement for all students through knowledge of students, proven practices, and differentiated instruction; (a)(2)(I) reflect on his or her practice; (a)(2)(J) effectively communicating with students, families, colleagues, and community members.</p>	
<p>Understandings: <i>Teachers will understand...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of active and conscious reflection of all experiences to adjust their beliefs and attitudes about and towards students. • the interconnectedness of interactional care and instructional care in the classroom. 	<p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge construct my empathetic capacity? • In what ways do interactions with other teachers foster care-centered relationships? • How do my interactions with students contribute to the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact that interactions with other teachers and with students have on the continued growth of their empathetic capacity. the influence that prejudice and bigotry have on their empathetic capacity. 	<p>development of my ethic of care and the empathy I provide in the classroom?</p>
<p>Teachers will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the biases and prejudices they harbor. the importance of reflection in their professional teacher career. 	<p>Teachers will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> address and deconstruct the biases and prejudices they harbor. actively seek understanding of their students' cultural and personal backgrounds and identities.
<p>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</p>	
<p>Performance Task: <i>Teachers will be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>appraise</u> their self-reflections specifically on their beliefs and attitudes towards students. 	
<p>Key Criteria and Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses reflection and narrative inquiry to gather and analyze experiences to understand their empathy capacity. Judges personal experiences as positive or negative in their empathy development. Creates an autoethnographic documentary that details their preparatory and pedagogical experiences of empathy development. 	
<p>Stage 3 – Learning Plan</p>	
<p>Objective: The teacher will critically analyze the interactions they have with others and how those interactions affect their empathy capacity. These interactions should be specific to the classroom environment involving students as well as other teachers.</p> <p>Describe the Learning Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 hours of face-to-face whole group instruction on the pedagogical interactional care part of the <i>Socialization to Care</i> model; 30 minute one-on-one intensive guided-reflection between teacher and the PD facilitator to discuss formative experiences throughout childhood and into early adulthood that may have influenced the internalization and actualization of care towards others; online peer discussion of the ways in which preparatory years may predispose a teacher to be effective in diverse classrooms; reflective journal (either written or video) guided by the essential questions: 	

- To what extent does the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge construct my empathetic capacity?
- In what ways do interactions with other teachers foster care-centered relationships?
- How do my interactions with students contribute to the development of my ethic of care and the empathy I provide in the classroom?

APPENDIX H

WEEK 3 LESSON PLAN: PEDAGOGICAL CARE (INSTRUCTIONAL)

Week 3 Lesson Plan <i>Pedagogical Care-- Instructional</i>	
Stage 1 -- Desired Results	
<p>Established Goals According to the Texas Administrative Code: <i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.30 -- Educator Preparation Curriculum</i> (c)(4) the skills that educators are required to possess, the responsibilities that educators are required to accept, and the high expectations for students in this state; (c)(5) the importance of building strong classroom management skills; (c)(7) appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students.</p> <p><i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.35 -- Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training</i> (a)(2)(A) designing clear, well-organized, sequential, engaging, and flexible lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and related content, are appropriate for diverse learners and encourage higher-order thinking, persistence, and achievement; (a)(2)(C) ensuring high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement for all students through knowledge of students, proven practices, and differentiated instruction; (a)(2)(I) reflect on his or her practice; (a)(2)(J) effectively communicating with students, families, colleagues, and community members.</p>	
<p>Understandings: <i>Teachers will understand...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of active and conscious reflection of all experiences to adjust their beliefs and attitudes about and towards students. • the interconnectedness of interactional care and instructional care in the classroom. • the types of instruction that are most driven by teacher care towards students. 	<p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge construct my empathetic capacity? • How do instructional practices affect the social and academic development of my students?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the influence that prejudice and bigotry have on their empathetic capacity. 	
<p>Teachers will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the importance of reflection in their professional teacher career. the types of instructional practices that demonstrate care: use of community references, having high expectations for all students, and celebrating uniqueness and growth as evidence of student success. 	<p>Teachers will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> address and deconstruct the biases and prejudices they harbor. actively seek understanding of their students' cultural and personal backgrounds and identities. identify the 4 components of a relational disposition in teachers (Concern, Action, Responsibility, and Empathy). identify the 3 C's of a highly empathetic teacher (conversational, curious, and challenging).
Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence	
<p>Performance Tasks: <i>Teachers will be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>appraise</u> their self-reflections specifically on their beliefs and attitudes towards students. 	
<p>Key Criteria and Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses reflection and narrative inquiry to gather and analyze experiences to understand their empathy capacity. Develops critical consciousness of the interactions they have with others and how those interactions affect their empathy capacity. Creates an autoethnographic documentary that details their preparatory and pedagogical experiences of empathy development. Evaluates current instructional practices for evidence of a care-centered pedagogy. 	
Stage 3 – Learning Plan	
<p>Objective: The teacher will appraise their current instructional practices to determine if they demonstrate care towards their students through the use of community references, high expectations for all students, and the celebration of uniqueness and growth. As they reflect and analyze their current teacher practices, they will determine ways to implement these elements of care-centered instruction into their own pedagogy.</p>	

Describe the Learning Structure:

- 2 hours of face-to-face whole group instruction on the pedagogical instructional care part of the *Socialization to Care* model;
- 30 minute one-on-one intensive guided-reflection between teacher and the PD facilitator to discuss formative experiences throughout childhood and into early adulthood that may have influenced the internalization and actualization of care towards others;
- online peer discussion of the ways in which preparatory years may predispose a teacher to be effective in diverse classrooms;
- reflective journal (either written or video) guided by the essential questions:
 - To what extent does the excavation of my culturally relevant knowledge construct my empathetic capacity?
 - How do instructional practices affect the social and academic development of my students?
 - Does my classroom instruction display the 4 components of a relational disposition (Concern, Action, Responsibility, and Empathy)?
 - Is my classroom instruction informed by the 3 C's of a highly empathetic teacher (conversational, curious, and challenging)?
- participate in a cultural plunge by choosing a situation, event, place where you are the “other” or the “visitor” in order to challenge yourself and the conceptions of yourself and others.

APPENDIX I

WEEK 4 LESSON PLAN: CARE-CENTERED LESSON PLANNING AND

PEDAGOGY

Week 4 Lesson Plan <i>Care-Centered Lesson Planning and Pedagogy</i>	
Stage 1 -- Desired Results	
<p>Established Goals According to the Texas Administrative Code:</p> <p><i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.30 -- Educator Preparation Curriculum</i> (c)(4) the skills that educators are required to possess, the responsibilities that educators are required to accept, and the high expectations for students in this state; (c)(5) the importance of building strong classroom management skills; (c)(7) appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students.</p> <p><i>Title 19 -- Education</i> <i>Part 7 -- State Board for Educator Certification</i> <i>Chapter 228 -- Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs</i> <i>Rule §228.35 -- Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training</i> (a)(2)(A) designing clear, well-organized, sequential, engaging, and flexible lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and related content, are appropriate for diverse learners and encourage higher-order thinking, persistence, and achievement; (a)(2)(C) ensuring high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement for all students through knowledge of students, proven practices, and differentiated instruction; (a)(2)(I) reflect on his or her practice; (a)(2)(J) effectively communicating with students, families, colleagues, and community members.</p>	
<p>Understandings: <i>Teachers will understand...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the interconnectedness of interactional care and instructional care in the classroom. • the types of instruction that are most driven by teacher care towards students. 	<p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do interactions with other teachers foster care-centered relationships? • How do my interactions with students contribute to the development of my ethic of care and the empathy I provide in the classroom?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do instructional practices affect the social and academic development of my students?
<p>Teachers will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of reflection in their professional teaching career. 	<p>Teachers will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actively seek understanding of their students' cultural and personal backgrounds and identities. • identify the 4 components of a relational disposition in teachers (Concern, Action, Responsibility, and Empathy). • identify the 3 C's of a highly empathetic teacher (conversational, curious, and challenging). • think, respond, and react consciously in future experiences in and out of the classroom.
Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence	
<p>Performance Tasks: <i>Teachers will be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>create</u> an autoethnographic documentary that maps their journey of empathy development. • <u>compose</u> lesson plans that implement the elements of a care-centered pedagogy. 	
<p>Key Criteria and Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses reflection and narrative inquiry to gather and analyze experiences to understand their empathy capacity. • Develops critical consciousness of the interactions they have with others and how those interactions affect their empathy capacity. • Creates an autoethnographic documentary that details their preparatory and pedagogical experiences of empathy development. • Compose lesson plans that implement the elements of a care-centered pedagogy. 	
Stage 3 – Learning Plan	
<p>Objective: The teacher will compose lesson plans that implement the elements of a care-centered pedagogy to indicate their understanding of the <i>Socialization to Care</i> and its ability to transform a classroom into one that is culturally relevant.</p> <p>Describe the Learning Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours of face-to-face whole group instruction on the use of the <i>Socialization to Care</i> to guide culturally relevant instruction in the classroom; 	

- 30 minute one-on-one intensive guided-reflection between teacher and the PD facilitator to discuss formative experiences throughout childhood and into early adulthood that may have influenced the internalization and actualization of care towards others;
- online peer discussion of the ways in which preparatory years may predispose a teacher to be effective in diverse classrooms;
- reflective journal (either written or video) guided by the essential questions:
 - In what ways do interactions with other teachers foster care-centered relationships?
 - How do my interactions with students contribute to the development of my ethic of care and the empathy I provide in the classroom?
 - How do instructional practices affect the social and academic development of my students?
 - Does my classroom instruction display the 4 components of a relational disposition (Concern, Action, Responsibility, and Empathy)?
 - Is my classroom instruction informed by the 3 C's of a highly empathetic teacher (conversational, curious, and challenging)?
- produce the final autoethnographic documentary project;
- present care-centered lesson plans.