THE PROMISE OF SPRING: CULTIVATING RESILENCE IN GROWING EDUCATORS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Teacher turnover continues to plague the US, particularly in urban school districts where up to 60% of new educators leave within the first few years of their careers. Often, White, newly-hired teachers arrive in urban school districts with significant gaps in their learning. Many of the lessons learned in undergraduate classrooms and programs do not always translate to real-world environments. Effective teacher preparation is a critical factor to ensure that teachers are prepared and retained in the profession. This body of work explores transformative experiences of educators who thrived in unexpected arenas and grew despite harsh conditions. The importance of dissemination of research results as an integral part of the research process is well established. It follows that one of the purposes of the dissertation is to serve as a vehicle to carry the results of independent investigation undertaken by the graduate student. This manuscript will employ autoethnography, mixed-methods, narrative analysis and photo elicitation research in three separate but related journal-style articles concluding with a chapter proposing a research-based teacher induction program and professional learning cycle for urban school systems.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all past, present, and future first-year teachers. I see you. Know that no winter lasts forever, and there is always the promise of spring.

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Contributors

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Professor Marlon James, Advisor and Chair, and committee members Professors Cheryl Craig and Sharon Matthews of the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture in addition to Professor Gwendolyn Webb of the Department of Educational Administration and Human Development. All work was completed by the student independently.

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NOMENCLATURE

USTAR	Urban Student Teacher Advanced Residency
URP	Urban Residency Program
PLC	Professional Learning Community
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the Problem

What characteristics encompass a competent and effective educator? What level of preparedness seems adequate for teachers entering the workforce for the first time? How can schools and stakeholders reduce teacher turnover and maintain a healthy workforce within urban schools? Practitioners have woven through the education literature and education communities for years, but in today's ever-changing society, these questions are more prevalent than ever before.

Teacher turnover continues to plague the US, particularly in urban school districts where up to 60% of new educators leave within the first few years of their careers. (Papay et al, 2017). Byrne (1994) states that teachers have "feelings of diminished personal accomplishment when they perceive themselves as ineffective in helping students to learn, and in fulfilling other school responsibilities" (p. 646). Severe levels of emotional exhaustion can further lead to job burnout and turnover (Zhongying, 2008). Increased demands from local, state, and federal governments regarding teacher performance and student achievement only add to the pressures on our nation's educators (Gu & Day, 2013). Higher levels of stress are reported in lower socioeconomic environments, particularly among White teachers serving in urban schools navigating cultural differences and nuances (Bottiani et al, 2019).

Often, White, newly-hired teachers arrive in urban school districts with significant gaps in their learning. Many of the lessons learned in undergraduate

classrooms and programs do not always translate to real-world environments (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001). These novice educators enter into a vastly different world from their previous life experiences and with limited abilities needed to reach their diverse student population (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017). Within complex and often dynamic urban schools' environment, new challenges surface that may not always be addressed during preservice education (Delale-O'Connor et al, 2017). When teachers become overwhelmed by the job demands and ultimately leave the profession, the vacancy is not the only negative side effect. Of course, there is the cost of hiring and replacing teachers to consider (Papay et al, 2015). Additionally, when teachers leave the profession, urban schools have a hard time attracting new talent to the district, and schools are in a continuous state of starting over that is problematic for students and staff (Ronfeldt et al, 2013). Guha and Darling-Hammond (2017) confirmed, "Under these circumstances, everyone loses: Student achievement is undermined by high rates of teacher turnover and by teachers who are inadequately prepared for the challenges they face" (p. 31).

Effective teacher preparation is a critical factor to ensure that teachers are prepared and retained in the profession (Andrews & Donaldson, 2009). Like myself, many teachers enter the workforce unprepared on emergency permits or with special waivers lacking formal preservice education (Darling-Hammond et al, 2005). Mimicking a medical residency for doctors, teacher residency programs offer lengthened, immersive experiences in classrooms, exposure to high-needs school systems, and extensive support from school-university partnerships (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Although immersive, residency-style programs have existed since the 1960s, there is a lack of longitudinal research concerning the extent of preparation student teachers receive from extended experiences in urban schools. The more exposure to school environments a novice educator can receive the better prepared they will be when they are the teacher of record (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017, Heldfelt, et al 2009;).

1.2. **Structure of the Dissertation**

The metaphor of a long winter followed by the promise of spring weaves throughout my dissertation. As culturally responsive individuals we may weather storms, spending long days digging into and pruning our past selves. This body of work explores transformative experiences of educators who thrived in unexpected arenas and grew despite harsh conditions. In my reading, I noticed a significant gap in the topics of cross-racial mentorships, teacher resilience in urban schools, and teacher residencies. It is essential that I add to the body of knowledge for novice teachers, and urban districts and universities partnerships. The journal article format for dissertations is well established, and Thomas et al (1986) stated,

> The importance of dissemination of research results as an integral part of the research process is well established. It follows that one of the purposes of the dissertation is to serve as a vehicle to carry the results of independent investigation undertaken by the graduate student. (p. 117)

My dissertation will include this introductory chapter, three separate but related journal-style articles, and a concluding chapter proposing a research-based teacher induction program and professional learning cycle for urban school systems.

In my first article, I examine my personal and professional journey as a White, first-year teacher in an urban school district through autoethnography to guide future educators considering a career in urban schools. In autoethnography, writers combine autobiography and ethnography into one product, adding to qualitative research in various fields (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). In her preface for the *Handbook of Autoethnography*, Ellis (2016) expresses "I saw and felt the power of autoethnography as an open-ing to honest and deep reflection about ourselves, our relationships with others, and how we want to live." (p. 10). Although parts of my journey are unique, many of the nuances and experiences I encountered relate to many other first-year educators just entering Urban schools. My initial steps into the education world were shaky and unsettling. The winter was very dark. I was absolutely not prepared for the environment in which I was beginning to teach. I sought cultural confidants to help guide me through a process of emptying myself of implicit bias, growing as an independent thinker, and reflecting on my classroom and cultural experiences to inform my continuous development. Beginning with certain career "epiphanies" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011), personal reflection, timeline creation, and an interview with my cultural mentor, I develop a story of my journey to the culturally responsive educator I am today. Frankly, after my transformative first year in education, I was never the same. In that story of my year-one journey, I also develop a process that I am calling Cultural

Kenosis, which describes the components of the transformation one endures to become a more culturally responsive individual. My autoethnography will conclude with guidance to administrators needing to implement culturally responsive mentoring in schools.

The second article will investigate the developmental benefits of a student teaching residency model, and argues for a wider use of such programs supported by heathy partnerships among higher education institutions and urban school districts. This published article will introduce the reader to the Urban Student Teacher Advanced Residency (USTAR) program, a partnership between an urban school district and a large university located in the Southwestern region of the US. In 2017, I surveyed the four initial student residents who participated in the pilot program for USTAR. This survey addressed matters including the students' perception of preparedness for urban schools before beginning USTAR and how their readiness was impacted in their first year of teaching post-USTAR. I also conducted a series of follow-up interviews with three of the former residents, then first-year teachers in an urban school. These qualitative interviews allowed me to explore patterns found in the survey, and to add their voices concerning their personal experiences with the USTAR program and the preparedness it offered. This clinical residency article in the third chapter of this manuscript has been published in the University of North Carolina Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals Journal (https://journals.uncc.edu/urbaned/article/view/789).

Furthermore, my fourth chapter will include a more in-depth qualitative study of extended residency students and their experiences in the same urban school residency program, USTAR. The USTAR program placed university seniors with a culturally

responsive mentor in an urban elementary school for one whole academic year. Rather than a traditional, 14-week clinical teaching assignment, residents spent each week of their last year before graduation observing master teachers and putting their coursework into action. In this final article, I will explore the experiences and the perceptions of three residents who participated in three separate years of USTAR.

Moreover, resilience has been widely researched, but much like the research concerning residencies, longitudinal data is needed to define and conceptualize resilience in educators more robustly (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). For this inquiry, I seek to understand the concept of teacher resilience, a phenomenon that includes the contextual and individual factors resulting in teachers thriving in education (Gu & Day, 2013), and whether the teacher residency model and exposure to Urban schools lead to a refinement of teacher resilience among these three novice educators. I investigate their family histories and journey with them through their year of residency as well as their current station in their education careers. Additionally, employing photo elicitation using participant-generated photos, participants will lead me through their own photographic representation of resilience (Harper, 2002). This study provides evidence that residencies can support the development of teacher resilience, and thus universities and districts concerned with redressing high rates of teacher attrition should consider implementing a residency program as a component of their undergraduate teacher preparation program and new teacher induction processes. I will conclude with direction for universities and school districts across the nation to implement effective partnerships between schools and universities, execute quality residency programs within urban schools, and guide

first-year educators through valuable induction programs in order to build teacher resilience.

1.3. Chapter II (Manuscript I)- No Winter Lasts Forever: A White Educator's Journey through Cultural Kenosis

In my first article, I will explore how teachers can apply the spiritual concept of kenosis, or the emptying of one-self to prepare for a refilling (Ford, 1928; McCall, 2018), through a critical autoethnography. My autoethnography is an enriching as well as accessible description (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) of my journey through my years as a White female teacher in urban schools. In those years, I experienced what I am naming Cultural Kenosis, which led me to my successes in an urban district in the southwestern US. Cultural Kenosis enables me to become aware of the White racial frames that shaped my childhood and college years (Faegin, 2013). To the best of my ability, I continue to empty myself of implicit biases, question the White racial frame each day, and addressed my shortcomings and character defects with the help of an inclusive group of loving, Black educators.

1.3.1. Research Questions

1. How did I foster authentic relationships with cultural confidants?
2. How did we build communalism and a type of cultural accountability in my professional setting and personal life?
3. How has my cultural pupillage transformed my professional practices to serve as an urban educator?

1.3.2. Selected Journal for Submission

For this manuscript, I will submit to the International Journal of Multicultural Education, which is "committed to promoting educational equity for diverse students, cross-cultural understanding, and global justice for marginalized people in all levels of education, including leadership and policies " (https://ijme-journal.org/index.php/ijme) This journal has an acceptance rate of 13% with a growing impact factor of .88. My manuscript will fit well with the scope of this journal as it is qualitative and aligned with multicultural teacher experiences.

1.4. Chapter III (Manuscript 2)- Closing the Revolving Door: Year-Long Residency Prepares Preservice Teachers for Urban Schools

Abstract: The Urban Student Teacher Advanced Residency (USTAR) Program is a partnership between Texas A&M University (TAMU) and Spring Independent School District. Four undergraduate students in the Early Childhood through 6th grade certification program were selected to participate in the pilot year of the USTAR program. Rather than engaging in their traditional senior year at TAMU, these four education students relocated to Houston, Texas, to experience a full year of student teaching in an urban, multicultural environment during the 2016-2017 academic school year. A survey and follow up interviews near the end of the 2017-2018 school year determined ways in which the USTAR program prepared these teachers for their first year of employment at a Title I school.

1.4.1. Research Questions

1. What was the overall level of preparedness for teaching in an urban/multicultural environment that the participants possessed at different points in the USTAR program?
2. In what ways was the USTAR program successful in increasing the preparedness of novice educators?

1.4.2. Selected Journal for Submission

This manuscript was submitted to the *Urban Education Research & Policy Annuals* (UERPA), "a graduate student journal that is published annually by the Urban Education Collaborative at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. This double-blind peer-reviewed journal will consist of empirical and theoretical research written by masters and doctoral-level students in the areas related to urban education." (*About the Journal*, 2019) I submitted this manuscript to this journal in the Fall of 2018, and my manuscript was accepted with minor revisions. I added Dr. Amy Rector-Aranda at that time as a co-author and Texas A&M University academic advisor for this project. The final manuscript was published in July 2019 in the second issue of the sixth volume. There is no impact factor for this journal, but the acceptance rate was 15%.

1.5. **Chapter IV (Manuscript III) "The Hardest Thing I've Ever Done": Establishing Roots of Resilience Through an Urban Teacher Residency**

With teacher turnover a continuing issue in education today, some universities are developing alternate forms of preservice training for education preparation. One such program was the Urban Student Teacher Advanced Residency, USTAR which operated

from August 2016 to May 2019. Undergraduate teaching candidates from Texas A&M University learned the complicated dynamics of teaching in an urban school during their entire Senior years, which included the state required clinical teaching experience. This study considers how three novice educators from different backgrounds experienced a year-long student teaching residency program. I will build a framework for teachers informed by the American Psychological Association's (APA, 2008) report Resilience in African American Children and Adolescents and the resilience factors identified for student of color. APA (2008) offers a comprehensive and culturally responsive framework for promoting resilience among African American learners. Yet, teacher resilience remains underdeveloped as a construct; thus, I will interweave Martin Haberman's (1995) dispositions of effective teachers in urban schools with some of the concepts identified by the APA Taskforce to redress this gap in research. I will employ Narrative Inquiry styles (Craig, 1995; 2013), I will further explore and complicate the concept of teacher resilience through these novice teachers' journeys.

1.5.1. Research Questions

1. How has the lived experiences (personal, classroom, professional) of resident teachers contributed their development as novice educators?
2. How does the experiences within a year-long urban teacher residency inform how residents develop teacher resilience?

1.5.2. Selected Journal for Submission

For this manuscript, I will submit to *Teaching & Teacher Education*, "an international journal concerned primarily with teachers, teaching, and/or teacher

education situated in an international perspective and context." (p. 1) This manuscript will fit within the journal's scope, providing insight into preservice teacher experiences as well as direction for school/university partnerships. The impact factor for this journal is steadily increasing at 2.686. This blind, peer-reviewed journal has an acceptance rate of 10-20%.

1.6. **Conclusion**

This dissertation will conclude with a synthesis of ideas merging the themes of teacher preparation, identity development, and mentorship. This will lead to an induction model for urban school districts. The induction model will include guidance for local school and university partnerships as well as a year-long, culturally responsive professional development curriculum.

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2. NO WINTER LASTS FOREVER: A WHITE EDUCATORS JOURNEYTHROUGH CULTURAL KENSOSIS

As a first-year teacher, I was hired in a predominately Black and Latinx urban school just outside of Houston, Texas in 2012. After only a few months of employment, I was walking through the halls of this elementary school with two Black women with whom I worked. We left our playground duty and were making our way to lunch. These women had only known me for a few months and were professionally cordial as we chatted about life. Through the course of our short chat, we began discussing Black sororities. I had never been in a sorority, and I was asking about admission requirements. We were laughing and joking. I do not remember what exact sequence of words led to my following statement, but I inserted a phrase I will never forget. I casually said, "I keep telling you people I would make a great sorority sister." The term "you people" had been used in my family, my school, and my home region of East Texas not necessarily to describe a non-White ethnic group but to reference a group of people other than yourself. I meant no harm and was wholly ignorant of the historical connotations that came from that phrase. But Nicole replied, and I'll never forget what she said. "I know what you meant, but you're not going to say it like that again. And, here's why." Nicole then explained the microaggression I had been guilty of using God knows how many times in my past. She didn't have to do that. She could have written me off as an arrogant White woman and never spoken to me again. And that would have been appropriate;

however, Nicole saw it in her heart to guide me through her culturally conscious response.

Since that conversation, I have told that story every year to at least one White female educator who was beginning to recognize her privilege and place in the dominant culture. It seems more relevant than ever to share my journey through this manuscript. This critical autoethnography will explore my experiences as a White female educator during my first years teaching in a diverse, urban school setting. Ellis et al. (2011) asserts that autoethnography "expands and opens up a wider lens on the world, eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research" (section 1). Using storytelling narrative analysis (Adams et al., 2014), I will analyze my experiences with Black colleagues and administrators in a school environment vastly different from the one in which I was trained. I will provide my unique perspective as a White teacher surrounded by a predominantly Black faculty, staff, and students. As a result of this analysis, an emergent framework is presented in this autoethnography entitled Cultural Kenosis model. My aim is to offer a guide for White female educators who desire to evolve their teaching practice, professional dispositions, and personal commitments to cultural sensitivity.

Cultural Kenosis requires one to be open to learning aspects of other people's lives that have been previously unknown or misunderstood. Cultural Kenosis requires a recognition that not all people who live in my country or state, or even city, have shared experiences. This growth is achieved through ongoing critical self-reflection that centers understanding other people's experiences and perspectives and how their cultures,

religions, socio-economic status and political ideologies make them a unique individual. Moreover, this insight creates points of connection for developing relationships, and discovering common experiences and educational philosophies. This intentional undoing of the White Racial Frame (Feagin, 2015) requires persistent effort and attention so as to avoid prioritizing and normalizing the experiences of people who share my culture, religion, socio-economic and political status while marginalizing the "other." Cultural Kenosis is an evolutionary process not a linear progression, and necessitates an ongoing commitment to reflexive learning and unlearning the White Racial Frame.

2.1. **Statement of the Problem**

Much of the recent research on White teachers in urban schools predominantly focuses on White teachers educating children of color and the academic outcomes or job satisfaction with teaching a diverse student population (citations here 2020). Additionally, researchers have concluded that both internal and external factors determine whether an educator can reach a strong sense of efficacy, particularly White teachers in urban school settings (Gu & Day, 2013; Drew & Sosnowski, 2019; Beltman et al., 2011). While these topics are necessary to understand retention in urban schools, research lacks a critical focus on the evolutionary process one undergoes when becoming a socially conscious and culturally responsive educator.

Therefore, this autoethnography unpacks an evolving concept I termed Cultural Kenosis by using my personal journey as an educator. I posit that for White teachers to become dedicated, culturally responsive educators, they must first embrace this transformative process by recognizing and emptying themselves of old beliefs,

perspectives, dispositions, patterns of interaction, and professional practices informed by the White Racial Frame. The White Racial Frame suggests that much of what we do as White people actively or passively sustains systemic racism in America. Cultural Kenosis is an emptying evident by a teacher's willingness and persistence in addressing inequities in the classroom, school, and community. Moreover, a critical support and accountability agent is needed as one evolves through a continuous learning process with the support of a culturally responsive mentor.

Moreover, the concept of kenosis is used in the Christian faith to describe how Jesus emptied himself of divine qualities and nature so that he could walk among men (McCall, 2018). In Christian doctrine, Christ submitted to the process of kenosis as an act and expression of God's love for humanity. This act of humility made it possible for a divine being to relate to the suffering, fear, anxiety, and mortality of humans whom he came to Earth to serve. Borrowing loosely from this concept, I share how I initiated and continue to sustain a type of cultural emptying to free myself from the racialized ideologies that informed my membership in White American culture. Continuing this line of thought, teaching through the White Racial Frame is detrimental to the social, emotional and academic development of youth, thus emptying oneself repeatedly is requisite for service in diverse schools and communities. This autoethnography begins with a review of literature related to Whiteness, teacher mentorship, and racial identity development. Then the concept of Kenosis is developed by applying White racial identity development theory to reflexively analyze my racial socialization, early teaching experiences and my continued evolution as an experienced education. I present my

analysis through the four ongoing evolutionary moments of Cultural Kenosis, which are Cultural Cleanse, Cultural Pupillage, Critical Self-Reflection, and Continuous Learning. I conclude with implications for White teacher development with insights on how each of the iterations of Cultural Kenosis can be enacted by educators.

2.2. **Literature Review**

2.2.1. A Brief History of Whiteness

What is "White"? Nell Irvin Painter (2010) defines the White race as "the leavings of what is not Black" (p. 123). Race in modern-day America is a social construct. The label "Caucasian" was a linguistic derivative of Mount Caucasus, where "the most beautiful men," according to a 1790's German physician named Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, were said to reside. Blumenbach and other European scholars used such justifications for placing lighter-skinned Western European groups at the top of the racial hierarchy (Painter, 2010). Furthermore, Painter (2010) discusses Blumenbach's obsession with skull shape and size, and to the physician, the Georgian/Caucasian skulls were the most visually appealing, thus providing a jaded typed of evidence for European racial superiority.

Additionally, this racialized thought was further actualized in the British colonies and in early America as Whiteness (Eagan, 1999). Allen (1994) asserted that the White race was established by a Virginian law passed in 1691 in that no other mention of the White race existed before then. Allen goes on to describe the creation of the present-day racial hierarchies following Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 and how race became a means to facilitate and sustain discrimination, slavery, and oppression. Adding to this, Painter

(2010) details the options for the first American Census: White males, White females, all other free persons by sex and color, and slaves. Although there is so much more to a culture than its racial government label, for this manuscript, I will address myself and other members of the dominant American culture as White to align with literature vocabulary and our shared understanding of race as we see it in present-day society in the United States.

2.2.2. Whiteness in Urban Schools

When leading culturally responsive classrooms and existing in diverse, urban school workplaces, White educators must understand the impacts of their race and the implications their Whiteness brings into the classroom. White racial frames are still deeply rooted in American society. Feagin (2013) stated, "Where and when whites find it appropriate, they consciously or unconsciously use this frame in evaluating and relating to and in accenting the privileges and virtues of whiteness" (p. 92). Feagin insisted children learn these frames through their social network and the communities in which they are raised, just as children make sense of their world based on the knowledge base presented to them at an early age. Hines (2017) stated that "the dominant White teaching frame holds that Whiteness is the frame upon which White teachers make sense of their teaching practices" (p. 27). Utt and Tochluk (2020) stated that "a positive, anti-racist White racial identity supports White teachers to implement more effective, culturally responsive, anti-racist teaching practices" (p. 126). All too often, teachers do not arrive in urban schools with this disposition. Utt and Tochluk (2020) explored the narratives of White educators in urban school spaces. Grounding their exploration in

critical hermeneutics, the authors dissect the experiences of White, urban school teachers developing anti-racist practices. Utt and Tochluk (2020) concluded that building these anti-racist practices begins not with White educators distancing themselves from their own cultures but with building relationships with people in other cultures that offer support and feedback. Additionally, White teachers must continue their self-reflection and engage in open, accountable discussions to enable them to positively influence urban school environments (Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

White educators, particularly those who teach in diverse schools, unknowingly bring their dominant culture to the classroom (Castagno, 2017; Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019; Pimentel & Milner, 2017). White supremacy continues into the school in subtle ways like discrimination against "black-sounding" names (Hines, 2017) or lowering expectations for students of color (Maddamsetti, 2019). White teachers have lowered their expectations for students of color based on their lack of experience and culturally responsive pedagogy in their preservice practice (Camacho & Parham, 2019).

Research has shown that most White teachers want educational equity in the classroom; however, their pedagogical competency towards such equity is often lacking (Costagno, 2017; Lewis & Landsman, 2006; Pimentel & Milner, 2017). In the quest to bring equity into the classroom, Castagno (2014) stated that "a clear understanding of the way race, power, and whiteness form the foundation of our educational system and, indeed, our society" (p.2) is lost to the surface-level portraits of diversity. Castagno (2014) highlighted the Zion School District's actions after pressure from the community, which was growing in diversity. As a district with an overall "investment in

Whiteness"(p. 27) administration was not ready to embrace equity, and school leadership was not willing to take responsibility, so their actions ultimately led to harming student outcomes whether intended or not (p. 27-28). Castagno (2014) further stated, "good intentions mean very little if we do not take responsibility and cannot be held accountable" (p. 44). If teachers, particularly novice educators, do not have adequate support from policymakers and district leadership, their efforts for an equitable classroom are often inadequate or ineffective.

Not only is there an issue between White teachers and students of color, but there is also a concern for multicultural workplaces and the relationships between Black teachers and White teachers. While much research exists surrounding White teachers and Black students (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Maddamsetti, 2019; Utt & Tochluk, 2020), little is published regarding White teachers employed in schools where they are the numerical minority and outranked by Black teachers and administrators (Nelson, 2019). Without compassionate direction from those teachers from non-dominate cultures, White teachers may flounder and struggle to create meaningful classroom communities. Although it is not the duty of those from other cultures to educate White teachers, more research on the benefits of cross-racial school staff would add to the body of literature.

2.2.3. Mentorship

Mentorship is a critical component of a first-year teacher's professional experience (Martin et al., 2015). Roff (2012) stated, "teachers need a support system that will not only enable their success, but that will also foster a sense of community among all members of the building faculty" (p. 31). Much of the research in mentorship focuses

on novice teachers and mentors based on the mentor's qualifications and the mentoring offered. A veteran teacher is often assigned to a novice educator to provide guidance and support, but with varying levels of expectations and structures for mentoring relationships in schools. The effectiveness of each mentor is variable depending on several factors. New teachers have reported meeting with their mentor only once, ineffective advice, or inaccessible mentors (Kardos et al., 2001). Successful mentorship in the form of a formal mentor or a self-selected mentor provides a secure platform for new teachers to express concerns, evaluate instruction, learn how to build relationships with students, and expand their practice (Kardos et al., 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Research indicates that mentors who are accessible and meet regularly with mentees have the most significant impact on the novice educator's first year as a teacher of record (Kardos et al., 2001; Roff, 2012). Formal training for mentors is found across the globe in the most successful school systems (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Martin et al. (2015) stated that "Mentoring is a critical component of the induction process; therefore, it is paramount that leaders select mentors that are qualified for the role and prepare them to successfully support beginning teachers" (p. 10). Regardless of the program structure, having a constant mentor during one's early career proves to be beneficial.

Moreover, existing research regarding cross-racial mentoring relationships and, more specifically, the mentoring relationships between Black mentors and White educators (faculty) primarily exists in higher education (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Angel, 2017; Louis et al., 2018; Stanley & Lincoln, 2005; Cooper et al., 2006; Louis, 2015). To begin, Stanley and Lincoln (2005) explored a cross-racial mentoring journey

using narrative inquiry at a predominantly White institution (PWI). Stanley and Lincoln concluded that cross-race mentorships require mutual respect and understanding of race, culture, and differences. Additionally, a mentorship "requires work on both sides—including deep reflection on the meaning(s) of white privilege; the assumption of white seniority and "voice"; and departmental and college mores, traditions, and values" (p. 48). Moreover, they integrate debriefing sessions once critical conversations are complete, which speaks to the nature of cross-race mentorships and their cultural complexity (p. 50). Additionally, Cooper et al. (2006) explored the mentoring relationship between a White professor and two Black faculty members at an Historically Black University (HBU) using a portraiture method for storytelling and narration. The authors concluded that asking questions, sharing stories, and opening space for others to share information is the starting point for building relationships across cultures. Furthermore, the sharing of oneself and openly discussing cultural history that comes with that kind of personal vulnerability helps to dissect misconceptions about race in our society.

Moule and Higgins (2007) conducted a grant-funded research initiative to place White, graduate-level preservice teachers in culturally diverse school environments and pair them with a Black mentor. Using observations from university staff, participant journal entries, and participant reflections, researchers found that placing novice educators lacking diverse life experiences with Black mentors provided the White teacher with several gains in their careers. Additionally, Moule and Higgins (2007) stated, "this type of placement is the only way one can begin to ensure cultural

competency among preservice teachers that come to teacher preparation with little or no multicultural background or understanding" (p. 618). In another study, Louis (2015) analyzed the narratives of White faculty members at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Louis (2015) stated, "many White faculty members had to engage in self-reflection about their own reactions, personal prejudices, and beliefs which may be barriers to effective interracial relationships" (p. 3). Louis also found that White faculty members acknowledged that they would not have attained a level of social consciousness had they been employed at a Predominately White Institution (PWI). Finally, Louis implored HBCUs to assign Black faculty mentors to assist White faculty with the socio-cultural nuances. However, far more research is needed on cross-racial mentorships and their effects on White first-year teachers in urban, PK-12 schools. Schools and universities do not exist independent of the natural world, and with the world demographically changing as it is, so these organizations and the mentoring relationships within should mimic the outside world as much as possible (Hansman, 2002).

2.2.4. Self-Reflection and Teacher Identities

New teachers come into the teaching profession knowing that a large part of their role is to transform students' lives. So much of teaching is focused on learner identities and character traits (Jones, 2019). What can surprise novice educators is the internal transformations they, too, can achieve in the classroom. Teachers can only truly challenge inequities and lead an anti-racist classroom after exploring and developing

their own identities (Gay, 2010). Often, White teachers are not prepared or aware enough to recognize the pervasiveness of their dominant culture.

Teacher preparation programs often lack the depth of content needed to address race and racial frames, privilege, and equity in the classroom (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020). Whitaker (2019) stated:

> It seems unfair to expect new teachers to have engaged in such deep self-analysis when teacher preparation programs rarely tell them they should and help them do so. Instead, teacher training is primarily focused on the "what," so we cannot be surprised when the "who" is not considered in teachers' pedagogical decision-making. (p. 8)

In regards to educators' personal views and identities, Jones (2019) stated, "individuals enter into the process of becoming teachers with preexisting views that might well be deficit in nature and potentially damaging to young people within schools" (p. 597). Novice educators having first-time experience in urban school settings or diverse work environments do not recognize their White identity and thus do not realize the impact their Whiteness has on their students and coworkers (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020; Whitaker, 2019). A critical reflection of self is necessary for novice teachers, especially in urban school settings (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020; Gay, 2014; Whitaker, 2019). Exposure to the classroom environment, robust preparation programs, and honest self-reflection leads to White teachers' identity development.

2.2.5. Racial Identity Development

Race itself is a social construct and learned throughout one's life. Howard (2016) "found it helpful to acknowledge that the development of a positive White racial identity, as the movement toward mature adulthood, is a continually unfolding journey of discovery and growth" (p. 90). Daniels (2001) explored three White racial identity models, including the Hardiman White Racial Identity Model (Hardiman, 1982), White Racial Identity Development (Helms, 1984), and White Racial Consciousness Development (Rowe et al., 1995), to assist White counselors to treat White clients with friends experiencing racism in society. Daniels reviewed Hardiman's (1982) first attempt at a White Racial Identity Model with stages ranging from naivety to internalization. Helms's (1984) model contains two phases: abandoning racism and defining a nonracist identity. Within those phases, Helms developed six ego statuses. Rowe et al. (1995) asserted that both Hardiman and Helms only described White people's sensitivity or awareness to Black individuals and left out other cultural groups altogether.

Moreover, these scholars go on to separate Whites into two categories: achieved or unachieved White Racial Consciousness, and those who are unachieved are either avoidant, dependent, or dissonant. The authors insist that White Americans who have achieved White Racial Consciousness are dominant, conflictive, integrative, or reactive. These models are troublesome in present-day America due to the modern complexity of race and White racial identity. Whiteness needs to be undone by helping European Americans perceive themselves as multicultural beings who have been cleverly taught to ignore their many cultural heritages (DiAngelo, 2011). Chen & Simmons (2015) affirm that "it is important to not only teach relevant identity theories and concepts but also

create spaces for students to examine and reflect on who they are, thus allowing the invisible (such as whiteness) to become visible." (p. 157). White teachers working with diverse student populations must engage in identity development. In order to build strong classroom communities, they must assess and process previously held bias and empty themselves of what could be detrimental to their students.

2.2.6. Kenosis Defined

The concept of kenosis is generally found in Christian theology concerning the omnipotent or omnipresent qualities relinquished by an incarnate Christ. McCall (2018) stated, "the term kenosis is most frequently linked to Christ's voluntary renunciation of certain divine attributes in order to identify himself with mankind." The Greek form of the word, kenōsis, is the action of emptying (Merriam-Webster's dictionary, 2020). Christian scripture says that Jesus emptied himself of his divine properties to walk among men (Ford, 1928). McCall (2018) also defines kenosis and the act of God the Creator pouring himself into the creation of Earth. Doncel (2004) explains that "kenosis marks the whole activity of the Creator as a work of love." (p. 797) Furthermore, humans should imitate God in his expression of love through kenosis.

One author compares this act of kenosis to the ability to relate to people of other religions, to imitate Christ in crossing boundaries to and His openness to all. Martha Fredricks, a scholar of world theology, wrote about kenosis and its correlation to relating to others from differing religions. (Fredricks, 2005). Fredricks (2005) states, "It is this voluntary act of self-emptying that enables people to cross boundaries of power, caste, class, culture, and religion." (p. 216). Moreover, kenosis does not require one to abandon

one's identity through emptying; instead, they set aside their own power to better understand others while remaining authentic. Fredricks goes on to address culture and the sociopolitical setting stating,

> because kenosis calls for shedding one's once acquired status, flexibility, and adjustment, the model emphasizes that not the self, the preservation of the community, or the structure or the policy is important, but the other human being and his/her shalom. (p. 217)

In this shared humanity, humans find common ground and that the self-emptying of one's self is crucial to understanding others. However, there is no mention of Kenosis in the literature for PK-12 education, but this concept may be a critical consideration for promoting the development of culturally responsive educators. The purpose of this manuscript is to apply the elements of Kenosis to unpack my experiences and journey on my path to actualizing the ethos of an anti-racist White educator.

2.3. **Research Questions**

1. How did I seek cultural confidants to build communalism in an urban school setting?
2. How has my personal Cultural Kenosis experience transformed my professional practices to serve in urban school settings?

2.4. **Methodology**

To paint a picture for the readers, I will present this manuscript in the form of an autoethnography. The word autoethnography comes from the parts ‘auto’ meaning self

and ‘ethnography’ the study and documentation of people and cultures. Hamilton et al. (2008) stated:

> Auto-ethnographers include cultural elements of personal experience. They situate themselves, contesting and resisting what they see. Like narrative and self-study, auto-ethnographers often write in the first person, using a multi-genre approach that can incorporate short stories, poetry, novels, photographs, journals, fragmented and layered writing. (p. 22)

Likewise, I will use careful and extensive reflexivity, balancing emotion, creativity, and intellectual rigor (Adams et al., 2014). My transformative experience as a White teacher learning to exist and thrive in urban schools is best understood through storytelling, informed by the evolving literature on Whiteness studies. Nevertheless, I felt the existing literature did not represent my story, and the complex emotions I felt during my journey was not expressed by other authors (Muncey, 2010). Adams et al. (2014) believes autoethnography offers "nuanced, complex and specific knowledge about particular lives, experiences, and relationships rather than general information about large groups of people." (p. 21) Through vulnerability in my sharing of particular experiences and humility in the learning process, the reader will journey through my time of personal darkness evolving into renewed hope. Additionally, I will look within as I gaze outward to create an ebb and flow of experience and reflection (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997). It is vital for the reader to know that my experience is grounded in humility, love, and a commitment to continuous growth.

My process of critical self-reflection began by unpacking my experiences as a White, middle-class female, and I proceeded by analyzing the varying cultural experiences I encountered at different phases of my life leading up to my first year of teaching. I then illustrated a timeline of my first year as a teacher using the Cultural Kenosis model as a framework. I included photos and an interview with my mentor to spotlight specific memories. I conclude with future considerations for the Cultural Kenosis model based on the experiences I shared.

2.5. **My Cultural Kenosis**

As a successful urban educator, I have spent years refining my classroom practice. I have spent equal or perhaps more time refining who I am as an individual, coworker, and ally in the workplace. Because my educational career has been spent in multicultural environments, I have evolved from a naive, White employee to an anti-racist partner in urban school settings. This autoethnography will take the reader on a journey to explore how one White novice educator evolved through Cultural Kenosis. Each section details my experience with the components of Cultural Kenosis told in narrative form.

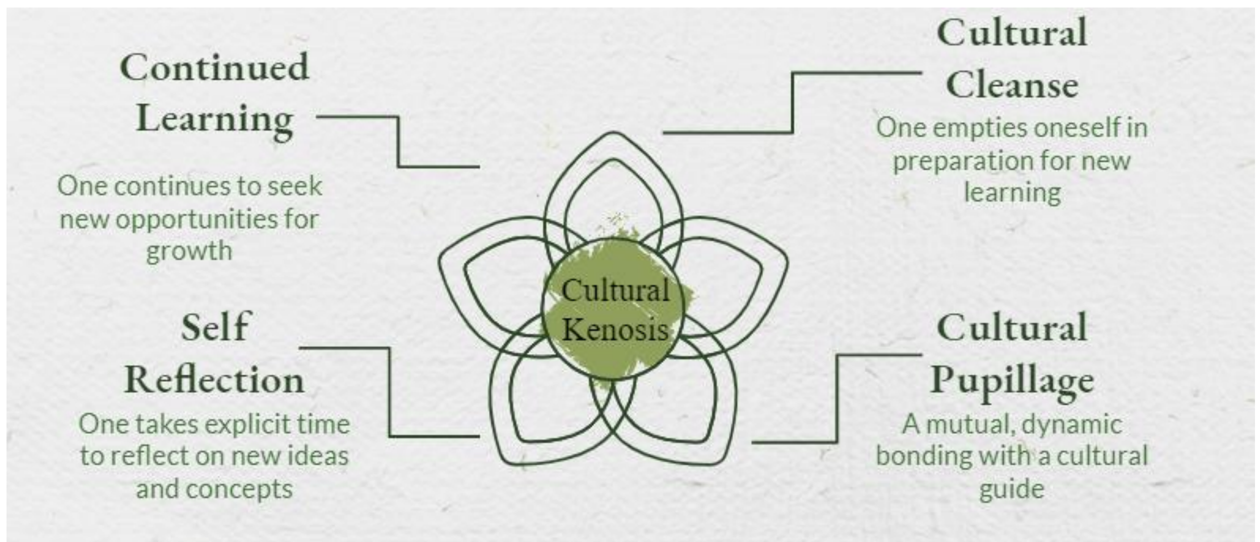

Figure 2.1 Cultural Kenosis Model

2.5.1. A White Teacher's Cultural Kenosis Journey

I grew up in a small town in East Texas. My mother was an educator for 39 years. She chose to send me to a private, university-based Kindergarten while she taught at a middle school in town. The following year, I attended the elementary campus to which I was zoned. After that year, rather than continue to send me to this predominantly White suburban school, my mother purposely acquired a teaching job in the semi-diverse, rural school district in the neighboring city. She chose this city's school system due to its demographics reflecting more of a real-world population rather than the White-dominated district in which we lived. I use the word "city" loosely. It was a three-stop-light town, and each stop-light was placed there only due to the nearby school. My new school district consisted of two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The friends with whom I began second grade were the same friends with whom I

graduated from high school. While the district's demographics included about 30% Black and 15% Hispanic students, my close group of friends was 100% White.

For my undergraduate degree, I attended a large university in Texas that, at the time, had a student body with about 80% White students (TAMU, 2001). In the year I graduated with my marketing degree, the business school totaled roughly 82% White student population (TAMU, 2001). I would like to add that I never even noticed the races of my peers. I did not see that most of my classmates were White, and I did not notice the lack of diversity among my friend groups and student organizations. Like many White Americans, I didn’t realize ‘Whiteness” as a culture (DiAngelo, 2011). One of my organizations paired us with other students to lead small groups of incoming Freshmen. I remember telling my mom that my partner's name was Ofer. She asked about his nationality, and I replied with, "I'm not sure. I know he's Jewish, and his skin is brown. Oh! And he taught me what hummus is." My mother lovingly replied, "You just don't see color, do you?" This short, superficial relationship with Ofer was the extent of my non-White cultural experiences in four years of college.

I worked in corporate America for a few years after graduation. I would love to share the cultural experiences I had during my time working in human resources at my company, but I had none. I worked for a big-box retailer in a relatively small suburb of Houston that was predominantly White, so, naturally, the employees and our customers were predominately White as well. My adult friends remained White, and my cultural experiences outside of my own race were almost nonexistent. In fact, I never understood my interactions with family and friends as cultural, simply "normal."

When I decided to change careers, I selected the best alternative teaching certification program in my area. I opted for a program through the local, regional education service center. I chose a hybrid model of both in-person courses and online instruction. I completed all of my coursework diligently, and I "graduated" successfully. Throughout my program, I served as a special education paraprofessional in a suburban school district near my home. I was accepted as a student teacher for my clinical teaching in an affluent elementary school within the same district where I was currently employed. In 2012, this K-6 elementary school enrolled 62% White, 6% Asian, 27% Hispanic, and 1% Black students. Around 3% of students were classified as economically disadvantaged. (TEA, 2012).

Figure 2.2: A photo of the faculty at the affluent, suburban school of my student teaching (Reprinted from campus yearbook).

My supervising teacher raved about my progress and classroom teaching skills. My field supervisor stated that my classroom management skills were excellent. That spring, I applied to teach at that campus, but the one open position went to a long-term substitute who had filled that role for the entire spring semester. I began my harrowing

search for a teaching position for the fall. I sent no less than 100 resumes, starting with the northernmost school districts and campuses in suburban or rural areas. As the summer stretched on and I received no call-backs from principals, I expanded my search to include districts with more diverse populations.

2.5.2. My Cultural Kenosis Begins: Cultural Cleanse

Have you ever felt a false sense of security? Do you recall that sickening sensation when you realize you have been blissfully unaware and now realize you are wildly unprepared? I felt that every day in my first year of teaching. To understand what I felt, I will share my stories from first year in an urban school as well as anecdotes from my career in an urban school district. I compare my first-year experience to a dark winter, myself in need of a deep pruning in order to grow and flourish.

While vigorously applying for teaching positions, July began to draw to a close, and I started considering paraprofessional jobs just in case no principals called. Just when I was losing hope, one school called me in for an interview. I met with the principal on a Tuesday, interviewed with a committee of campus leaders on Thursday, received a job offer on Friday, and began my new job on Monday. I will add here that all of my interviewers were Black individuals. The principal even made it a point to tell me that the demographics of the school in which I was applying to work were the "polar opposite" of the school in which I had my clinical experience, an experience many novice educators face in their early careers (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020; Whitaker, 2019). In fact, the campus enrolled 42% Black, 40% Hispanic, 15% Asian, and 2% White students. Of those students, 73% were considered economically disadvantaged (TEA,

2012). I referenced the demographics of my childhood schools and assured her there was nothing to be concerned about. Upon later reflection, the only preparation for urban schools I received was what had been portrayed in the media (Ehrenstein, 1996). I had watched Lean on Me (Warner Bros.) and Dangerous Minds (Buena Vista Pictures). I was ready to teach all children of color because I believed in the mantra, "I see no color." In fact, I even grew up in a middle school and high school with some Black kids, and they liked me. I should be totally fine, right?

I had ten working days before my students arrived. My retired teacher mom drove four hours to come to decorate and organize my room so that I could attend meetings and planning sessions without worrying about my teaching space. My hallway team consisted of four Black educators with many years of experience, both in education and at this particular campus. I recall needing to step away from the campus during our lunch break to eat and pick up a few items at the local teacher supply store. My mom and I were invited to join my team for lunch, and I politely declined. I was intimidated at the thought of having lunch with four individuals I did not know. I can honestly say here that it had nothing to do with race, although I am sure it appeared that way to my new teammates. In an instance of what I only accept as divine intervention, my mother and I chose to dine in at Whataburger, and so did my four colleagues! Again, they invited us to eat with them, and we obliged. Although we had declined their invitation once, they graciously extended the invitation again. Through my reflections and life experience, I know now that they could have politely waved and smiled at us two White ladies and continued to eat separated from us. But, they didn't. They invited us to sit with them.

This would not be the last time that a group of Black individuals extended their grace and acceptance to me even though it was yet unmerited.

2.5.3. Cultural Pupillage with Marks

As a first-year teacher, I was assigned a campus mentor. This mentor was a phenomenal Black educator making great strides in raising the bar for the young Black students he taught, but he had a lot on his plate. It was evident that I was low on his list of priorities. Enter Mr. Marks. Mr. Marks was moved to my grade level after the final student counts came in and class numbers leveled. We both taught Reading and Social Studies. I will pause here to say that at my particular elementary campus, we addressed each other by last names only, no Mr., Ms., or Mrs. Before. This was a part of the campus culture long before I arrived. I could tell instantly that Marks would be someone with whom I should associate and from whom I should learn. He was a master educator and a consummate professional. Part of my Cultural Kenosis journey would include Marks as my cultural confidant and trusted advisor. Since we taught the same subjects, we had many planning sessions together and often collaborated. I looked to Marks for guidance in just about everything. I would run to his room moments before a parent conference, and he would coach me in exactly what to say: start with the positive and end with opportunities for growth. Sometimes I ran to his room for comfort, not necessarily from his words but from his presence. I recall collapsing on Marks's classroom library rug, silently crying as I contemplated my career choice. He was sitting at his pull-out table, eating Ramen noodles, and watching Netflix, his typical, duty-free lunch activity. He looked over briefly and asked, "You need me, baby?" I sniffled, "No. I

just need to lay here." And he silently returned to his lunchtime routine. His presence was enough. And, he was merciful enough to provide that presence for me whenever I needed him.

I had no idea how to lead my classroom. Like many first-year educators, I struggled with classroom management despite my glowing reviews from my clinical experience (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2005). I was entering the winter darkness of my new career, and I was spiraling. I resorted to yelling quite often, something I'm not particularly proud of. Marks always did his best to model quiet conversations with students, particularly Black boys. His firm but loving guidance always amazed me. He explained that they hear too much yelling at home. They are desensitized. I remember asking him how I would get to that level of quiet confidence with my students, and he said, "You just have to love them through it." I did not fully understand that statement until the following year when I had a better grasp of classroom management and the students I served. I struggled my whole first year, barely hanging on and often disintegrating into tears weekly, sometimes daily. Looking back now, I know that Marks “loved me through it” even though he did not have to.

I remember a particularly rough day in my fourth-grade classroom. My students were out of control, not listening to me, and acting incredibly disrespectful. I yelled, "I am going to sit in my chair, facing the wall, and countdown from five. By the time I reach one, everyone needs to be in their chairs, ready to learn!" So, I began my countdown. Slowly, students became quiet, I could hear chairs sliding and students getting settled. I thought, *Wow. This is really working! I'm going to remember this for*

next year. I reached one and turned around, particularly proud of myself, and there in the doorway stood my principal, looking confused and disappointed.

She asked the instructional specialist to cover my classroom while we spoke in the office next door. I will remember parts of this conversation for the rest of my life. I cried through most of it. I said, "I didn't think teaching was supposed to be this hard." At that point, my principal said, "Perhaps you need to take some time and think about if this school is the right one for you, if this demographic is the right type of student for you, and if teaching is the right career path for you." Having someone question your ability to reach a student group will shake you to your core. Having someone call into question your career choice will break you. And, I was broken that day.

Luckily, I found Marks later that afternoon. He vehemently confirmed that I had selected the right career and that I will review all coaching conversations with him from that moment forward. He told me to bring him my evaluation forms, and we would sort through the fluff, erroneous observations and form the authentic pieces into action steps for my future development. He did not give me an excuse about not being my official mentor. He did not roll his eyes at yet another White girl who couldn’t hack it un urban schools. He took the sobbing educator under his wing and lifted me up so that I could see forward again.

2.5.4. Critical Self-Reflection with Continued Learning

An essential piece of Cultural Kenosis involved continuous revelations and reflections. I give much credit to Mr. Marks, but I also spent a great deal of time during my Cultural Kenosis journey researching topics on my own. I began my research

wanting to make sure I had enough information to participate in conversations around the lunch table. However, as I discovered more, I realized this was more than wanting to feel included. There was a whole world out there I never knew existed. I researched Black fraternities and sororities and memorized their colors, letters, and sayings. I had never heard of an Historically Black College and University (HBCU). When someone mentioned HBCU's in passing, I nodded and smiled, feigning understanding. I went home and scoured the internet for material on HBCU's in my area. I also read article after article written by Black individuals who were speaking directly to White people. In this exploration, I began thinking of the interaction I mentioned in the opening of this manuscript, the "you people" comment. I discovered the term "microaggression." Nadal (2020) states

> Microaggressions are defined as the everyday, subtle, intentional — and oftentimes unintentional — interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups. The difference between microaggressions and overt discrimination or macroaggressions is that people who commit microaggressions might not even be aware of them." (para. 6)

I reflected on even more microaggressions I was guilty of. I would lock my car doors at the sight of a Black man walking down the sidewalk. I describe Black women's beauty as "exotic." I even assumed that some of my colleagues of color were not born in America. And the microaggression I was most guilty of was the statement I often made about my coworkers and students- "I don't see color." I was shocked to learn that this was actually denying those I loved of their cultural beauty and forced them into my

White, dominant culture. Some of the articles I read made my skin crawl as I assigned myself as a villain in my own world. I made several mental notes of what to do and not do when I heard microaggressions in everyday life. Perhaps the most critical aspect of my new cultural deep-dive was the awareness and acknowledgment that my White culture was not shared by many (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019), and even though I was beginning my cultural development, I still had a lot to learn from my new friends of color.

No winter lasts forever. My spring did come, albeit slowly. Toward the end of my first school year, teaching got better. Maybe not so much better as it just got more tolerable. We arrived at the time of year when the administration asks for your future plans regarding staying at your current school for the upcoming school year or moving on to other opportunities in or out of the district. Much to my family's dismay, I decided to stay at my current school. It was my hope to teach in the same content and grade level. When discussing this with those who loved me, they could not understand how I would want to stay in an environment that made me cry so many tears of sadness and frustration. My wife said, "I wanted you to get away from that school. That was a traumatic environment and was enough to make anyone run away. I was afraid if you didn't leave, you were going to leave the teaching profession." I explained my decision to stay using science. If I did not keep some values constant, how would I know whether my hypothesis of a good career choice was accurate? I needed further research to determine what, if any, factors were impeding my success. Was it the administration, the age of the students, the demographic, or just inexperience? I would never know if I kept

hopping to new schools and districts. I would certainly never know if I left the profession altogether. Marks assured me again and again that this was the career for me, so I took his words as the faith I needed to continue.

Over the summer, I heard that the administrators from my first year had been replaced with a new principal who was bringing his own administration. My wife said, "I felt so much better just knowing you were going to have a fresh start with a new administration." While this new leadership team was slightly intimidating, I saw this as a chance to show my strengths. I spent all summer analyzing what went wrong in my first year and replacing those deficits with the strategies Marks taught me. I attended professional learning seminars and spent hours typing up a document I would use to guide me through all of my first days with my new students. I would focus intently on rules, routines, and classroom procedures in addition to building an inclusive classroom community (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). After a few observations, my new principal called me into my first evaluative meeting. I remember he said, "You teach with the grace and confidence of a fifth or sixth-year teacher." In that second year of teaching, I tied for Teacher of the Year with none other than Marks, my forever mentor.

As I continued working in urban schools, so did my process of cultural kenosis. Marks will forever be a confidant of mine, but my culturally responsive mentors changed as I grew in my leadership. I was particularly grateful to earn the trust of four Black women in school leadership who embraced me as one of their own. I have could never have traversed through different school leadership roles without the help of those cultural confidants. They kindly accepted me as one of their own. They even added me

to their group text! I remember hours spent at the conference table with Terri, Candi, Kyanne, and Chloe, The Boss Babes (a cute moniker we gave ourselves). We would discuss a wide variety of topics, both trivial and heavy. I remember one lengthy conversation about skin tone and discrimination within the Black community. Chloe, whose skin is light, shared that her mom raised her not to speak about her lighter skin so that others would not see her as arrogant or better than. I was always able to listen, absorb, learn, and ask questions, knowing I would get genuine answers from the Boss Babes. I never had to fear anger or disbelief at my privileged thinking, and these women cared about my growth as a human and valued my friendship. They did not have to take me in as an "honorary sister", but they did so with such a natural progression that I felt we had been friends for ages. Their souls are beautiful and kind and just. I am who I am today because of their friendship.

And even with all of my growth, my Cultural Kenosis continues. Still, today I am faced with my White privilege, sometimes unexpectedly. I like to say my White privilege jumps up and hits me in the face from time to time. A few years ago, I was laughing with a colleague about driving to work with an outstanding traffic ticket. I even chuckled at the thought of possibly having a warrant out for my arrest. Realization washed over me as the color probably drained from my face, recognizing that the Black coworker I was chatting with did not have that luxury. It was not safe for her to drive with any outstanding legal matters, let alone laugh about it with colleagues. I verbally acknowledged my privilege, and we exchanged in meaningful discourse about that privilege and the fear she felt just driving to work. Rather than proceed with ignorance, I

always turn to my Black friends and share my thoughts, including how I will use my newfound knowledge. I use that story during the inclusion and equity training I provide for new teachers today with the hope that they can begin to recognize areas of privilege in their lives.

2.6. **Implications for Teachers: Enacting Cultural Kenosis**

First-year educators, particularly White teachers in diverse classrooms, must be provided the opportunity to evolve into a culturally responsive educator with the guidance of a culturally responsive mentor. Using the Cultural Kenosis model to guild these pairings of mentor and mentee can increase the likelihood of teacher retention and student success. It is essential to understand that while the model can appear cyclical, it is more so a evolutionary and transformative process unique to the individual needs of each teacher. I believe this process is fluid and recursive as multiple pieces can be co-occurring.

2.6.1. Cultural Cleanse

The first element of Cultural Kenosis is the Cultural Cleanse which begins when a teacher realizes they are unprepared to teach in their new environment and that particular biases they held prior to teaching are inaccurate and perhaps harmful to students and colleagues. I held preconceived notions of Black students, and adults for that matter, that were wildly untrue Utt & Tochluk, 2020). I was also under the impression that my classroom management skills were impeccable despite the fact that I had never set up my own system of classroom rules and procedures. This can be jarring, especially when a bias or long-held belief is realized to be harmful. Much like the

mortifying “you people” experience I shared at the beginning of this manuscript, deep emotions and psychological effects come with a cultural cleansing. It is not to be rushed or taken lightly, and the teacher must have enough humility to be able to receive new concepts.

A cleanse also is the process of opening one's mind and preparing for new ideas and direction. The awareness of knowing your previous experience has not prepared you, understanding that your thinking may have been jaded by your bias, and realizing the need for help in the right direction are all a part of the Cultural Cleanse. Again, Cultural Kenosis is not a series of steps, and a cleanse does not just happen once. It may occur several times over the course of one's cultural pupillage and may need addressing each time new biases arise. Like I recently addressed my privilege of driving with a warrant, educators may have bias creep into their lives and workspaces with little warning. It is crucial to have a trusted individual with whom to deconstruct these actions, thoughts, and emotions.

2.6.2. Cultural Pupillage

Finding a culturally responsive mentor is critical for a successful Cultural Pupillage. A new educator must first recognize the need for such a mentor. Just as I chose Marks rather than my assigned mentor, sometimes the novice teacher must seek out a culturally responsive mentor that best fits their needs (Kardos, et al., 2001). This is a critical task and must not be brushed over or discounted. There must be a deep, spiritual connection made with one's mentor, so openness and willingness on both sides are crucial. It is imperative that the new teacher find someone who is held in high regard

on campus and someone who has the type of confidence that the educator aspires to have. This may not happen right away. I remember repeatedly associating and situating myself with my group of Black women in leadership. We joke that they one day realized I was not going away, so they decided to "adopt" me into their group. I knew these women held significant leadership roles on campus, had the respect of the teachers and staff members, and possessed the knowledge that I needed to learn. Similarly, after observing Marks in various professional settings, I knew that I wanted professionalism like his. I wanted to model my classroom structure after his successful setup. These mentor "selections" did not happen overnight. Furthermore, it will behoove one seeking mentorship to do so with an air of humbleness and open-mindedness.

Again, it is not the role of Black mentors to fully educate their White peers. It should be noted that even in the absence of a cross-racial mentor, the Cultural Kenosis work of a White individual must still continue. In settings where White individuals are moving through the metamorphosis that comes with realizing privilege, it is crucial to understand that this is the personal work of the White person. It is not out of obligation that the Black mentor serves as a guide, but rather the goodness within that individual leads them to want to assist (Moore, 2019). I spent intentional time building relationships with these mentors. I shared my personal stories with all of my confidants, and I ensured that I remembered the key similarities we shared outside of our school setting. For example, Marks and I were both members of the LGBTQ community and shared similar lived experiences. Chloe and I both enjoyed fashion and decorating. Terri and I loved world travel and often spent our free time perusing and sharing discount

travel sites. I connected with Kyanne through learning about her sorority, and I connected with Candi through our love of theatre production. I worked hard to look for the similarities rather than the differences. A new teacher ready and willing to grow and learn must take every opportunity to spend time with their mentor or confidant and build the relationship through transparency and accountability.

2.6.3. Critical Self-Reflection

Critical self-reflection constantly evolves throughout Cultural Kenosis. It is not a stepping stone or a stage at which one arrives. It is woven throughout one's entire journey. Willingness and openness in addition to humility are critical during one's Cultural Pupillage. Part of the initial cleanse is the realization of one's own biases, and consequently the critical self-reflection aids in the development of new ideas and transformative thoughts. Humility is vital when self-reflecting but is not to be confused with guilt. When new microaggressions or biases would rear their ugly heads, of course, I would feel guilt. Marks and other mentors would constantly challenge me to not stay in guilt but simply ask, "Now, what are you going to do with your new knowledge?" Just as I use various scenarios and personal experiences in my professional development sessions for new teachers, I call on educators to take their personal reflection and turn it into personal growth.

2.6.4. Continued Learning

In conjunction with and often alongside critical self-reflection comes continued learning. When one self-reflects, the new knowledge requires some additional research or learning experiences. Often times my new awareness would lead to further research,

opening a Pandora's Box of revelations. I spent a long lunch hour discussing Black skin tones with my group of women. I was unaware of the skin color bias that existed in the Black community. I was able to ask critical questions without judgment, and they gave real answers regarding pieces of their culture I needed to know. When White first-year educators come to the realization that their previous notions and biases about the Black race are incorrect or ill-informed, they come to a new need for additional information. This applies to many circumstances, just as I was unaware of the concept of an HBCU and scoured the internet for more information. Continued learning can take the shape of a deep dive into the world wide web, safe conversations with a culturally responsive mentor, or additional observations and mental notes about the newly acquired knowledge.

Again, Cultural Kenosis is not a stair-step concept. There is no ending place. It is continuous throughout one's existence. Continued learning also comes with the openness and readiness to be taught and an enthusiasm for new information and ideas. This can lead to a necessary Cultural Cleanse when new biases emerge or when entering unfamiliar environments. I continue my Cultural Kenosis to this day. It is my responsibility to my friends.

2.7. **Conclusion**

As the diversity of our nation increases, so does the need for cultural responsiveness for White educators who find themselves suddenly in the minority (Louis, 2015). Currently, America is emerging from a dark winter. Spring has arrived, and the time for change is now. Cultural competency comes from the ability to challenge

one's own assumptions and biases (Moule & Higgins, 2007). We are primed in the education world to reflect internally on our own bias, seek cultural mentorship, and continue our personal reflections through the process of Cultural Kenosis. There is much work to be done in the garden of life, but a new spring approaches and new growth is happening.

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3. CLOSING THE REVOLVING DOOR: YEAR-LONG RESIDENCY PREPARES PRESERVICE TEACHERS FOR URBAN SCHOOLS*[1]

3.1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem

It's no secret that teacher turnover is currently a hot topic in America's education communities and urban school districts (Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster, & Carter, 2009). One of the root causes of this "revolving door" in teacher education is a lack of realistic preparation in clinical teaching seminars and a dire need for professional support during the first year of teaching (Ingersoll, 2001). For many of the traditionally trained, White, female pre-service teachers at Texas A&M, clinical teaching experiences happen at a school near the university. Many of these local schools are situated in affluent, suburban neighborhoods. However, most teaching jobs available for first-year teachers are in urban or inner-city schools. Imagine the culture shock when these preservice teachers are hired in urban centers and transition into classrooms with low-performing children placed at-risk, equipped with only their knowledge from limited field experiences in polar-opposite settings. There is such a grand disparity between what they thought teaching would be and what they are actually faced with that many novice teachers leave the district and sometimes the profession (Huisman, Singer, & Catapano, 2010).

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These concerns generated the idea of the Urban Student Teaching Advanced Residency (USTAR) program. To help close the revolving door, we must better prepare our preservice teachers with the multicultural and multifaceted teaching experience needed in urban schools. Extended clinical teaching opportunities are known to produce better-prepared teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2014). The theory behind programs such as USTAR is that student teachers fully immersed in the urban school setting for a year-long clinical program will be able to better understand and fully grasp the needs and demands of teaching placed-at-risk children. Spring ISD and Texas A&M University created a partnership to give high-performing seniors in the teacher education program an opportunity to experience one full year in a Title I school teaching children in culturally diverse classrooms before becoming a teacher of record.

3.2. **Literature Review**

Darling-Hammond (2014) states that "no amount of coursework can, by itself, counteract the powerful experiential lessons that shape what teachers actually do" (p. 553). Extended clinical teaching experiences are on the rise in American education. Goodwin, Roegman, and Reagan (2016) state that "Urban teacher residency programs are, by definition, clinically rich, given the extensive immersion of preservice teachers (or 'residents') in classrooms" (p. 1199). Teachers who participated in extended student teaching programs felt they had a better mentor relationship and more experiences with the inner workings of school systems (Spooner, Flowers, Lambert, & Algozzine, 2008).

Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster, and Carter (2009) write about the effectiveness of a full-year internship with intensive mentoring specifically in urban

schools. In their study, interns began the school year as the actual teacher of record and had the guidance of a full-time teacher-mentor to assist with their growth and development. Participating districts paid interns and interns were evaluated using the teacher evaluation method of that district (Helfeldt, et al., 2009). Regional Education Laboratory Midwest (2017) created a report on a select group of extended (one full school year) clinical teaching programs across the U.S. This report summarizes urban teacher preparation programs from University of Chicago, Wayne State University, Boettcher Teacher Residency Program, Boston Teacher Residency Program, and Georgia State University among other programs without an urban focus. Of the twelve programs that catered to urban school experiences, most of the programs were post-baccalaureate. The one program offering experiences to college seniors was the iTeachAZ program through Arizona State University. Piloted in 2010, the Senior-Year Residency program gives seniors at Arizona State an additional semester of placement in a school district in Arizona. The program includes 25 school districts, and has both urban and rural foci (REL Midwest, 2017). While this program is similar to USTAR, it lacks a specific focus on preparing preservice teachers for urban school centers.

After a comprehensive study of new, urban school teachers, Huisman, et al. (2010) found that "the set of seven themes that emerged from the codes supported the theoretical framework of positioning and led to teacher resiliency. These themes included: significant adult relationships, mentoring others, problem-solving, hope, high expectations, sociocultural awareness, and professional development" (p. 487). The overarching goal of the USTAR program is to provide some, if not all, of these themes

needed for a successful first year in the context of a year-long student teaching residency specifically in an urban environment.

3.3. **USTAR Program Overview**

Members of the Spring ISD Office of School Leadership and Texas A&M Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture chose Thompson Elementary School to be the setting for the pilot year of USTAR. Dr. Robert Long, III served as principal for one year prior to the program's inception and fit the description of the type of leader needed to house this new endeavor. Thompson's demographics also matched the goals of the program offering a racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse environment in which Texas A&M seniors would complete their year-long residency (see *Figure 1*).

	Campus	District	State
Attendance Rate (2015-16)	96.5%	94.2%	95.8%
Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity			
African American	42.6%	40.1%	12.6%
Hispanic	37.2%	44.1%	52.4%
White	3.1%	8.9%	28.1%
American Indian	0.9%	2.1%	0.4%
Asian	15.1%	3.0%	4.2%
Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%
Two or More Races	0.7%	1.4%	2.2%
Enrollment by Student Group			
Economically Disadvantaged	70.7%	68.5%	59.0%
English Language Learners	35.4%	23.0%	18.9%
Special Education	6.9%	7.9%	8.8%
Mobility Rate (2015-16)	14.3%	23.1%	16.2%

Figure 3.1 2016-2017 Data from Texas Education Agency School Report Card for Thompson Elementary (2017)

Milner (2014) utilizes a framework defining three types of urban school districts: *Urban intensive* includes large cities most people think of as "inner-city" with a population over 1 million. *Urban emergent* districts are less than 1 million, are located close to large cities, but share the demographics, challenges, and difficulties of urban intensive districts. *Urban characteristic* schools are beginning to see some of the same demographics and obstacles as in urban schools, but they are located in suburban and rural settings. For the purpose of this study and further research concerning the USTAR program, Thompson Elementary School is considered to be *urban emergent* in that almost 70% of students rank as economically disadvantaged, 35% of students are English Learners, and 98.5% of students at Thompson are children of color. Thompson and Spring ISD are also adjacent to Houston ISD, an urban intensive and the largest school district in the area.

Beginning in August of 2016, four Texas A&M EC-6 Education Majors relocated to the Houston area to begin their year-long teaching residency. Dr. Long and school leadership paired these four students with master educators in various grade levels on campus. They began the first day the teachers started back to work after the summer, which was almost a whole month before their Texas A&M peers began their senior year. They spent every school day of the fall semester at Thompson with the exception of Thursdays when they would commute back to the university in College Station for their senior methods classes.

During their fall semester at Thompson, they observed their master teacher in action during the first crucial weeks of school, helped plan lessons, co-taught lessons,

and eventually took sole control of the classroom leading the students as if they were the teacher of record. Their fellow education majors in College Station spent their time in suburban schools only observing for two or three hours at a time. Occasionally the students participating in the traditional senior year had the opportunity to tutor or work in small groups. The USTAR students, however, were paid by Spring ISD to start an after-school tutoring program for the most academically challenged students in fourth and fifth grade, further adding to their experience in building relationships with diverse student populations. They were also paid to substitute teach at Thompson so that they did not have to find part-time employment to support themselves.

In the spring semester, the USTAR students transitioned to a different grade level with a new master teacher for their official Clinical Teaching required by the State of Texas. The students spent 65 school days following the Texas A&M Clinical Teaching Pacing Guide, which allotted for a gradual release into sole control of the classroom. The USTAR students were often able to accelerate their progress because of the large amount of experience they brought from the fall semester. Their paid after-school tutoring program continued throughout the spring. After completing their Clinical Teaching, USTAR students remained at Thompson for more paid opportunities to substitute teach and tutor students preparing to take the STAAR test in May.

Overall, the teaching and field experience hours gained by the USTAR students during the 2016-2017 school year more than doubled that of their peers in traditional student teaching programs. They acquired exposure in the areas of building student relationships, interacting with parents, interacting with administration, and utilizing

curriculum and content. While an extended number of hours looks great on a resume and more exposure to content helps when answering interview questions, we still wanted to know to what extent these four young women felt ready when entering their first year as a teacher of record. We wanted to know how well the USTAR program prepared these educators to teach in an urban school setting.

3.4. **Conceptual Framework and Methods**

The goal of this small study was to determine the level of preparedness for teaching in an urban/multicultural environment the participants possessed at different points in the USTAR program. The study was built around the concept of professional development schools for teacher learning (Lee, 2018; Collinson, Ferrara, 2014; Hohenbrink, and Sherrell, 1994). Professional development schools provide an environment to foster supportive school-university partnerships. These partnerships strengthen the teaching practice of clinical, novice, and experienced educators in an effort to benefit the school, students, and community (Lee, 2018). First, we needed a baseline measure of participants' preparedness *prior* to their senior year at Texas A&M. We also wanted to evaluate the impact on participants of various components of their USTAR experience pertaining to Title I and/or urban school settings. We needed to determine the overall effectiveness of the pilot year of the USTAR program *prior* to beginning the first year as teachers of record and then evaluate the overall effectiveness of the USTAR program *after* participants served as teachers of record for the majority of their first year.

Three of the four students who participated in the pilot year of the USTAR program were White females and one was an African American female. All four students completed a survey during March of 2018 with various questions tied to the objectives of the study. Survey responses were scored using scaled metrics such as "not well at all" to "extremely well" and "not prepared at all" to "extremely prepared." The four USTAR participants also rated the program in terms of their personal and professional development in a series of twelve areas using the ratings of "no impact," "somewhat impactful," or "very impactful." Follow-up interviews in April of 2018 with two of the participants provided further understanding of the survey findings. A predetermined set of open-ended interview questions was used with all participants answering the same questions in a one-on-one setting. We were unable to coordinate schedules with the African-American participant, and one other participant was willing to fill out the online survey but was unavailable for a follow-up interview after multiple attempts to make contact.

3.5. **Survey Results**

The survey began by assessing the participants' level of preparedness prior to beginning their senior year and the USTAR program. When asked how prepared the students felt for teaching before the USTAR program, two participants indicated they felt somewhat prepared, one felt moderately prepared and the fourth participant felt somewhat not prepared. We also asked "How prepared for managing a classroom did you feel entering your senior year at TAMU, prior to USTAR?" One participant felt

somewhat prepared and the other three participants selected the “not prepared” response.

Later in the survey, participants were asked “How prepared did you feel for teaching in an urban environment upon completion of the USTAR, but before starting your 1st year as a teacher of record?” Two participants responded that they felt extremely prepared and two felt somewhat prepared. They were also asked “How prepared did you feel for addressing social-behavioral issues in classrooms upon completion of the USTAR program, but before starting your 1st year as a teacher of record?” All participants selected the “somewhat prepared” response.

When asked “How prepared do you feel in classroom management during your 1st year as a teacher of record?” three participants felt extremely prepared and one responded with “not prepared.” When asked “How well did the USTAR program prepare you for classroom management in urban schools?” three participants answered “extremely well” and one chose “slightly well.”

The survey also asked participants to rate USTAR’s impact on a series of 12 teacher activities and responsibilities. Participants chose either “no impact,” “somewhat impactful,” or “very impactful.” Table 1 shows that three of the four participants felt that USTAR was very impactful in the pedagogical and professional actions of setting expectations at the beginning of the year, working with other cultures, and interacting with coaches and specialists. Three or more participants thought USTAR was somewhat impactful in the areas of differentiating lessons and assessing student data. All USTAR

participants felt that the program was very impactful in the area of working with adults from diverse backgrounds and interacting with peers/grade-level teams, and all four participants felt that USTAR was somewhat impactful in designing lessons to meet student needs. All results from this portion of the survey are included in Table 1.

#	Actions	No Impact	Somewhat Impactful	Very Impactful
1	Setting expectations in the beginning of the year.	1	0	3
2	Setting up a system of awards and behavioral consequences.	0	2	2
3	Communicating with parents	1	2	1
4	Working adults from diverse background	0	0	4
5	Working in Professional Learning Community groups	0	2	2
6	Working with other cultures	0	1	3
7	Differentiating lessons	0	3	1
8	Interacting with peers/grade-level team	0	0	4
9	Assessing student data	0	3	1
10	Designing lessons to meet student needs	0	4	0
11	Interacting with coaches & specialists	0	1	3
12	Interacting with campus leadership	1	1	2

Table 3.1 Responses of Impact on 12 Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

3.6. **Follow-Up Interviews**

Two USTAR students participated in follow-up interviews based on data from the anonymous online survey. Both participants felt that the classroom and teaching exposure they gained benefitted them during their first year of teaching. Participant A described her year-long residency experience as "real" because she "wasn't sheltered

from anything.” She enjoyed having the freedom to explore strategies a real teacher would employ but in a lower-risk environment. When comparing her college courses to her residency program, Participant B stated:

> There are some situations in the textbook that you can take and you can form to the community you’re in, but it's not always going to be realistic. I think that it [USTAR] just gives you so much experience in a real workplace setting. And, it's a safe way to get that experience.

Both participants mentioned the amount of time and exposure to real-world scenarios as their biggest benefit. More specifically, they both felt the USTAR program helped them learn to interact with grade-level teams and peers. Participant A specifically felt she was “treated as a professional on campus.”

Both participants also had the opportunity to see and experience dysfunctional teams. Participant A said:

> I saw dysfunctional teams and I saw what happens when adults undercut each other in front of students and how impactful that is on the entire team and the entire grade level and I definitely didn't want to be a part of that.

Participant B stated:

> I think I've learned a lot about conflict resolution just because I’ve seen a lot of situations where a team, they're all kind of going different directions and so I've

learned a lot about making sure that I'm not part of the drama and then making sure that I am contributing in a positive manner.

Participant B also felt that conflicts she witnessed dealt mostly with varying levels of work ethic and dedication to the organization, rather than personality conflicts.

When discussing how the program helped to prepare them for interacting with parents from diverse backgrounds, Participant A felt she was as prepared as she could be "without actually being the teacher of record." Participant B felt that she was not prepared to talk to and build relationships with parents and she struggled with this throughout her first year.

3.7. **Discussion and Implications**

Through the survey and follow up interviews, one theme consistently emerged. The USTAR program gave Texas A&M seniors valuable exposure to urban schools. Participants went from feeling moderately prepared or somewhat unprepared to at least somewhat prepared or even extremely prepared. Three of the four participants felt the program prepared them to teach in urban schools either very well or extremely well. Both participants interviewed mentioned being able to see and experience a multitude of interactions between teachers and students, teachers and grade level peers, teachers and administrators, as well as teachers and parents. Just being able to see and hear these interactions were a benefit to their first year as teacher of record. Another emerging theme, while somewhat negative, was the USTAR participants experiencing dysfunctional teams. Both interviewed participants shared about observing negative

adult interactions and applying that to their skill set development. Essentially, they were learning “what not to do” in a professional setting.

Based on survey results, the USTAR program has a few areas that need improvement moving forward. All participants felt that the extended clinical teaching was only somewhat impactful on their ability to be able to design lessons to meet student needs. Perhaps Spring ISD could create additional professional development sessions to help introduce lesson design in a contextual setting specifically for the USTAR participants. All participants felt that the extended clinical teaching was only somewhat impactful on their ability to be able to design lessons to meet student needs. This seems to align with the notion that lessons at the university level do not always transfer to practice in the urban school setting. Spring ISD and Texas A&M University will need to collaborate to design additional training sessions to better prepare these future educators.

Although this was a small study of the pilot year of USTAR, the knowledge we gained may also be useful to other teacher residency programs wishing to extend both the length and depth of their students’ immersion in urban and diverse school settings. While there is always room for improvement, overall USTAR participants felt the extensive real-world exposure to the kinds of situations and demands they faced in their first year as teachers-of-record in urban settings was valuable. Reducing teacher attrition is a pressing need in the field, and better preparing new teachers who are most likely to get their first jobs in urban and underserved schools for the demanding realities they will face in those positions is especially vital.

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4. “IT WAS THE HARDEST THING I’VE EVER DONE”: ESTABLISHING ROOTS OF RESILIENCE THROUGH EXPERIENCES IN AN URBAN TEACHER RESIDENCY

4.1. **Introduction**

With teacher turnover and teacher shortages being considerable concerns in the U.S. today, teachers working in urban schools are all too familiar with what has been termed a “revolving door” (Ingersoll, 2003, p. #) of teachers leaving the profession too quickly after their onboarding (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Many schools struggle to stay staffed from year to year (McVey et al., 2029). Combating burnout (Bottiani et al., 2019) and strengthening the resilience of novice educators (Gu, 2014) is one place to start overcoming the teacher shortage. This study explores the experiences of three young women who participated in a year-long student teaching residency in an urban, high-needs school. Through narrative inquiry (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997) and photo-elicitation (Collier, 1954), these young women share their paths to resilience and the nuances of their journeys that formed their commitments to multicultural education.

4.2. **Statement of the Problem**

Teacher turnover is on the rise and varies from district to district (cite). One study reported that 13-35% of first-year teachers in Texas left their urban school district during the first year, and 44-74% left within five years (Papay et al., 2017). Another study found that 44% of first year teachers in the United States leave within the first year (Will, 2018). Many factors must be considered when analyzing why teachers are leaving the profession. The school support systems, lack of resources in high-needs schools, and

outdated teacher preparation approaches all play a role in why teachers might be leaving (Hammonds, 2017, Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Moreover, a lack of adequate preparation and professional support could also lead to new teacher attrition (Cavendish et al., 2021; Ingersoll, 2001). For instance, higher proportions of new teachers in urban schools are hired on emergency permits or waivers and lack rich clinical experiences in the classroom and other pedagogy background knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Garza and Harter (2016) state, "preparing aspiring teachers via a residency program and providing quality mentoring through a partnership may be one way to address the teacher shortage" (p. 410). A residency program often provides, at the very least, greater exposure to school environments, further preparing novice educators to enter their new profession (Goldston, 2018).

Traditional student teaching program models from colleges and universities sometime fall short of adequately preparing novice teachers to enter the classroom (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013). This lack of preparation could be that the traditional in-school teacher preparation program consists of approximately 14 weeks, usually in the spring semester, when classroom students are well adjusted, and classroom procedures are already in place (Garza & Harter, 2016; Ingersoll, 2001). Moreover, the student teacher may be placed in a school that is situated in a neighborhood or city with student demographics vastly different from the one in which they will eventually be hired (Maddamsetti, 2019; Milner, 2006; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). One could argue that students pursuing a career in education may be led into a false sense of security in their ability to lead multicultural classrooms (Huisman et al., 2010). Couple that with the burnout and

fatigue of a first-year teacher (Shaefer et al., 2014), and it becomes clearer why districts lose so many novice educators in their early years. Toward this goal of understanding the role teacher residencies play in teacher retention, this study will seek to understand how student residents evolve into effective first-year teachers.

4.3. **Literature Review**

In this review of literature, I will begin by addressing teacher burnout as it is one of the causes of teacher turnover in urban schools. Next, I will review other causes of Teacher turnover and the effects of this turnover. Following this, I address the research surrounding teacher residency models as this is the context for my narrative inquiry. Finally, I will review literature concerning teacher resilience and factors that build resilience in educators.

4.3.1. Burnout

The World Health Organization (as quoted in Fraga, 2019) states, “Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed” (para. 3). Early career teachers are leaving after only a few years in the classroom (Ingersoll, 2001). Many challenges in an educator’s career and demands of the job could lead to potential burnout and leaving the profession. Many of these factors may be compounded in urban school settings (Camacho & Parham, 2019). Several studies found that disruptive students, decision making, workloads with unrealistic timelines, and emotional exhaustion, all play a role in the potential burnout of teachers (Bottiani, 2019; Byrne 1994; Camacho & Parham, 2019; Zhongying, 2008).

Byrne (1994) surveyed over 3,000 educators across two urban school districts to determine organizational and personal factors that lead to teacher burnout and to determine causal patterns for teacher groups through cross-validation. Through a series of causal path analysis, Byrne found that classroom climate impacts emotional exhaustion and decision making, which often leads to increased depersonalization or a negative outlook or attitude among teachers. Furthermore, Byrne stated, "Over time, these effects take their toll, manifesting themselves first in terms of job stress and ultimately in perceptions of diminished personal accomplishment" (p. 665).

More recently, Bottiani et al. (2019) used a mixed-methods approach to research the depths of teacher stress and burnout in 33 low-income, urban middle schools. This study featured teacher observations, a teacher self-report inventory, and structured coaching. The goal was to measure job demands, job resources, teacher-reported stress and burnout, the racial context in the classroom, and classroom climate. The researchers determined that teaching in schools with significant numbers of students of color and dealing with disruptive behaviors, lead to stress and burnout among urban educators. Surprisingly, Bottiani et al. stated that although they "had hypothesized that teachers who were emotionally exhausted would be less able to sensitively respond to students' needs, burnout was associated with more teacher sensitivity" (p. 46) in that they were able to address student needs despite their fatigue. Additionally, the researchers admitted the study was limited in that they were unable to ascertain a connection between White teachers and more stress in urban schools due to the teacher/student racial mismatch in

the sample population. However, these authors did find that White women teachers reported more stress and burnout than their Black female colleagues.

Camacho and Parham (2019) studied White teachers in urban schools and the reported stress and burnout of those teachers. These researchers used snowball sampling and asked the 164 female teachers to qualitatively describe challenging classroom scenarios. The top five categories regarding the teacher-reported challenges were related in some way to negative teacher-student interactions, such as student misbehavior and aggressive student behavior. Moreover, Camacho and Parham (2019) posited that

> White teachers, especially those who teach students of color in low-income contexts, more commonly harbor negative assumptions about their students and their behavior. It is thus possible that the racial composition of our sample's teachers and their students, who reside in urban districts predominantly populated by African-American and Latino students, contributed to teachers' evaluations of student behaviors as more acute. (p. 166)

Another study in an urban junior high in Shangqui, China showed emotional exhaustion as a severe cause of burnout. Zhongyong (2008) points to a lack of research connecting the relationship of teacher burnout with social support, particularly that of school leaders. Additionally, using a social support scale survey, Zhongying found that leadership and supervisor support were the most significant predictors of burnout among urban school teachers. Finally, Zhongying found that social support can enhance a teacher's sense of personal accomplishment, but the same peer providing social support

could lead to emotional exhaustion if not approached in a positive manner. Burnout can ultimately lead to teacher retention problems, and urban schools are no stranger to turnover.

4.3.2. Urban School Teacher Turnover

High teacher turnover is another issue plaguing urban schools in America (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Hammonds, 2017; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020; Papay et al., 2015). Craig (2014) stated, "nowhere internationally is the struggle of newcomers entering the teaching profession more pronounced than in USA's urban schools where young white, middle-class females typically teach minority, high poverty urban youth" (p. 82). In fact, in urban school districts, novice educators have been found to leave their positions within the first five years (Papay et al., 2015). Often, it is after five years that teachers begin to show mastery of the teaching practice, yet they too often move to less challenging schools or different professions altogether (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020).

Kamrath and Bradford (2020) completed a case study in a high-poverty school in a southern state exploring why teachers leave and why teachers stay in urban schools. This case study utilized a mixed-methods approach with surveys and structured interviews. During the interviews, researchers found that teachers who stayed in this urban school setting long-term cited the students and their connections with them as the main reason they continued to return year after year. Moreover, survey data showed that teachers who left in the first five years did so due to a lack of backing and support from administration. Furthermore, the survey asked what factors, if any, would have

convinced teachers to stay. Respondents' top factors included increased teacher recognition and increased administrator support. It should be noted that only long-term teachers were interviewed in person, and only short-term teachers were surveyed electronically.

Similarly, a phenomenological study conducted by Hammonds (2017) focused on the strategies of leaders in Tennessee's urban school districts with high turnover. Using open-ended interviews and field notes, Hammonds gathered details about the experiences of six urban school administrators and their thoughts and perceptions on teacher retention. Study participants recognized the amount of stress caused by educators working to close student learning gaps. Furthermore, they acknowledged a need for additional training to assist teachers with navigating the school and community culture. Administrators gave support to teachers by providing time for collaboration with other educators on campus. Specifically, administrators attributed teacher retention to support from hired interventionists, feedback sessions, and co-planning with teachers, while half of the study's participants used campus mentors to assist teachers.

Renzulli et al. (2011) studied the effects of the dynamics of school type, either public or charter, and racial mismatch between teacher and student on teacher satisfaction. These researchers used the 1999-2000 School and Staffing Survey and the Follow-Up Survey responses, analyzing data from only those who stayed in the profession. In particular, Renzulli et al. "examine[d] how teacher-student racial matching influences teacher satisfaction differently depending on school structure and then consider the process through which these factors influence turnover" (p. 32). They found

that while public school teachers were more likely than their charter school counterparts to stay in the teaching profession, White teachers in racially diverse schools were less satisfied than those who teach in predominantly White schools. Finally, the researchers noted that this dissatisfaction might be due to a scarcity of resources, not necessarily the demographics of the students themselves. Some argue that more preparation for urban schools like one might receive in a teacher residency could combat issues of turnover.

4.3.3. Teacher Residency Model

The teacher residency model is becoming more popular as a way to better prepare teachers for the responsibility of educating the nation's children. Modeling a program like one would see in the medical field, teacher residencies place preservice educators in a school for one full year or more to gain real-world experience in a school environment (Helfeldt et al., 2009). Often, traditional preparation programs provide prerequisite coursework requiring completion before ever setting foot inside a classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2014). Moreover, traditional teacher preparation is usually quite generic and fails to prepare new teachers for complex settings, such as urban schools (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013). Additionally, Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) stated, “many urban and poor rural districts have hired a growing number of individuals on emergency permits or waivers who lack formal preparation for teaching” (p. 2). Often, there is such a significant disparity between what they thought teaching would be and what they are actually faced with that many novice teachers leave the district and sometimes the profession soon after entering it (Huisman et al., 2010). Teacher preparation is so vital to the success of an educator and their students, the investment in

preservice experiences can ensure those dedicated to urban schools are retained (Andrews & Donaldson, 2009).

Guha et al. (2017) stated, “building on the medical residency model, teacher residencies provide an alternative pathway to teacher certification grounded in deep clinical training” (p. 31). Specifically, novice educators are given an extensive preparation experience embedded in the schools in which they will eventually teach (Goodwin et al., 2015). With the growing popularity of the residency model, colleges, alternative certification programs, and school districts across the nation are moving to a full year of teacher preparation complete with a dedicated classroom mentor and university support personnel through a school-university partnership (Helfeldt et al., 2009; Stairs, 2010). These new programs come in different structures and timeframes. What is more, residencies can offer college students extended clinical experiences (Gilley & Rector-Aranda, 2019). Additionally, some residencies are offered only to graduate students (Wasburn-Moses, 2017), and some clinical residencies come in the form of intern-style programs where residents are evaluated and paid just as a teacher of record would be (Helfeldt et al., 2009). The prolonged exposure through a residency to these urban environments could lead to enhanced resilience among novice educators.

4.3.4. Teacher Resilience

There is no denying the importance of resiliency when it comes to retention and successes in the classroom (Drew & Sosnowski, 2019). The current body of knowledge surrounding teacher resilience is broad and inconsistent. Specifically, the inconsistency comes in the definition of resilience. Concepts of resilience have been based on research

concerning children and are context-specific or role-specific (Gu, 2014). Additionally, resilience has been explained as a phenomenon influenced by an individual's circumstances or environment (Gu & Day, 2013). Ainsworth and Oldfeild (2019) explained it simply as “evidence of positive adaptation despite challenging circumstances” (p. 120).

Beltman et al. (2011) conducted a review of 50 empirical studies of resilience in novice educators. While the majority of studies were located in the US and Australia, studies in Canada, Ireland, and the UK were also included. Beltman et al. stated, “the papers reviewed were mainly qualitative with small samples, aiming to understand the experiences and characteristics of teachers at varying career stages” (p. 188). Additionally, very few studies focused on preservice educators, and there was a complete lack of intervention studies. Beltman et al. also found a lack of studies examining personal factors affecting resilience. Contextual factors were commonly explored in the 50 papers with an extensive examination of classroom/school context challenges and classroom management issues. Of the studies that explicitly researched resilience, although they approached with varying conceptual frameworks, formal analysis showed that teacher resilience is dynamic and a result of environmental factors over time. Interestingly, of the 50 papers reviewed, only 13 used the word “resilience” or “resiliency” in their titles, and six did not even define resilience. Finally, over half of the papers only addressed factors that help teachers sustain and thrive, but not necessarily develop resilience. Several challenges and problems surfaced from this meta-analysis.

The dynamic and idiosyncratic nature of resilience makes locking in a concrete definition nearly impossible. Moreover, Beltman et al. stated,

> the review also revealed methodological challenges. Examining a construct with multiple dependent variables, that varies for individuals over time and contexts, and may only be visible in the face of adversity, presents challenges in how to examine or measure it. (p. 195)

The authors conclude that research in multiple contexts and over extended periods of time is needed.

More recently, Kangas-Dick and O'Shaughnessy (2020) took a different approach and conducted a systematic review of literature concerning interventions that support teacher resilience. Articles including "teacher resilience and wellbeing, burnout, retention, commitment, stress, or coping were retained" (Kangas-Dick & O'Shaughnessy, 2020, p. 135) The 61 articles retained were separated into two groups, quantitative analyses of teacher resilience with no intervention, and articles with a resilience intervention present. Several articles fell into the category of non-experimental studies which used case studies and other non-experimental research designs. These findings were categorized to target preservice teachers, early career teachers, and teachers teaching in high-stress environments. The interventions in these studies focused on skills-based professional development and strengthening relationships in social ties and school communities. The discussion stemming from this literature analysis included the need for supporting early career teachers who are often more susceptible to burnout

and stress. Moreover, Kangas-Dick and O'Shaughnessy point to school leaders as the gatekeepers of school cultures that promote work-life balance. In sum, given the lack of consistency and agreement among teacher resiliency research, I contend that considering more robust frameworks for resilience designed to study other populations may provide a way forward in teacher resilience research.

4.3.5. Building Resilience

To build resilience in early career educators, we must first seek to understand the students they teach. To become a culturally responsive educator, teachers must conceptualize how the students, classrooms, and communities in which they teach all work together providing context, culture, and experience (Gay,2010). For the purpose of this manuscript, I will employ a conceptual framework for teacher resilience informed by the American Psychological Association's (APA, 2008) report, titled, *Resilience in African American Children and Adolescents*. The goal of the APA report was "to provide a critical, interpretive review of the resilience, strength-based, and adaptive coping literatures related to African American children and adolescents" (p. 14). Four guiding themes were presented by the APA for optimal youth development to inform and frame their review of the literature. These themes are noted in the chart below.

Critical mindedness helps protect against experiences of discrimination and facilitates a critique of existing social conditions.
Active engagement includes agentic behavior in school, at home, and with peers, such that children and adolescents proactively and positively impact their environment. Impact on settings, however, must be executed effectively, and flexibility becomes essential.

Flexibility promotes adaptation to cognitive, emotional, social, and physical situational demands and can include bicultural competence or fluency across multiple cultural contexts that youth must traverse.
Communalism includes the importance of social bonds and social duties, reflects a fundamental sense of interdependence and primacy of collective well-being, and offers the drive for connection and promotion within and across diverse groups.

Table 4.1: American Psychological Association (2008) Themes for Optimal Youth Development

As was the goal for the APA (2008), I seek to provide a lens through which to view critical teacher development as well as professional and personal growth for educators serving diverse populations. For the purpose of this manuscript, I will adopt the APA Task Force's 2008 definition of resilience. The Taskforce states, "Resilience as currently understood is a dynamic, multidimensional construct that incorporates the bidirectional interaction between individuals and their environments within contexts (family, peer, school and community, and society)" (p. 2). Additionally, the report expands on the idea of resilience to include the considerations for context and environment, including the feelings and perceptions of the individual and their specific experience. Moreover, for the purpose of the report the APA Task Force adopts a concept of resilience that "is used to refer more specifically to strength and protective factors and the maximization of positive outcomes" (p. 15). To guide my conceptual framework, I will use the themes outlined in APA's portrait of resilience informed by Lerner et al (2003) and current literature to conceptualize these themes as resilient teacher dispositions.

Critical mindedness in African American youth is evidenced by an ability to critically examine and understand the world around them, research important information using higher-order thinking skills to analyze new thoughts and ideas (APA, 2008). For teachers, critical mindedness is expressed through the ability to seek understanding and new ideas, and thinking about what is best for students rather than what is best for the teacher (Haberman et al., 2018). Moreover, APA (2008) stated that active engagement for African American youth, "includes agentic behavior in school, at home, and with peers, such that children and adolescents proactively and positively impact their environment" (p. 2). This quality translates to teachers seeking professional learning communities to increase and add to the knowledge base of education, actively participating in school and community events, and approaching teaching with wholeheartedness (Haberman et al., 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2009). African American adolescents show resilience in their ability to be flexible by adapting to cognitive, emotional, social, and physical situational demands (APA, 2008). Teachers can adapt in much of the same ways. Haberman et al. (2008) state that star educators are, "not easily shocked by horrific events, adjusts and copes to the ways of a bureaucratic school system by being aware of said system" (p.12). Finally, APA emphasizes the importance of community in resilient youth by underscoring, "the importance of social bonds and social duties, reflects a fundamental sense of interdependence and primacy of collective well-being, and offers the drive for connection and promotion within and across diverse groups" (p. 2). Much like youth, resilient educators understand the importance of strong social bonds and build strong trusting relationships with students, peers, and parents

(Haberman et al., 2018). In this manuscript, I seek to understand how teacher residencies foster and facilitate these resilience attributes.

4.4. **Research Questions**

1. How have the lived experiences (personal, classroom, professional) of resident teachers contributed to their development as educators?

2. How do the experiences within a year-long urban teacher residency inform how residents develop resilience as teachers?

4.5. **Methodology**

I framed my inquiry using the themes outlined in the APA (2008) report *Resilience in African American Children and Adolescents*. Using this report as a conceptual guide was essential to show a parallel in the resilience of African American students with the teachers who lead them. Just as the APA Task Force (2008) had a goal to "strategize ways in which to shift the scholarly landscape and provide the reader with a more balanced and holistic perspective on African American children and adolescents" (p. 91), I too am seeking to provide a balanced and positive perspective of teacher resilience development in urban schools. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask resilience-related questions while also allowing the participant flexibility to explore ideas and share experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Photo-elicitation gave participants the freedom to express their thoughts about resilience and uncover ideas and metaphors in ways that differed from the interviews (Bunster, 1977).

4.5.1. Methods and Data Collection

Through the process of narrative inquiry, I interviewed three female teachers who had completed the same year-long residency program. I used individual interviews as the primary means of data collection. My interviews were semi-structured with a core set of open-ended questions that allowed for tangents and additional personal illustrations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I utilized grand tour questions, descriptive questions, and structural questions (Bhattacharya, 2017). For instance, "Can you describe the general URP experience?", "Tell me about a time when you had to be flexible", and "What does resilience mean to you?"

In addition to narrative inquiry, I also utilized photo-elicitation. Photo-elicitation is a qualitative research concept developed by Collier (1954). Simply put, participant-driven photo elicitation incorporates a photo into a participant interview (Harper, 2002). Harper (2002) explained, "… images may connect an individual to experiences or eras even if the images do not reflect the research subject's actual lives" (p. 13). In order to understand the concept of resilience in educators, I asked that participants choose photographs, either photos they owned or stock photos, that communicated resilience in their lives (Miller, 2016).

All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed by a third party, and then verified as I listened to the recordings while reading the transcripts to ensure accuracy. I met with the participants after school hours and away from their classrooms to limit distractions. During the interview process, participants chose their own pseudonyms. I used my personal knowledge of the residency program as well as the APA resilience

themes of active engagement, critical thinking, communalism, and flexibility to guide my questioning.

4.5.2. Data Analysis

I spent several hours reading and rereading interview transcripts. I also listened to the recordings of the interviews multiple times to familiarize myself with the data. Before sitting down to code each interview, I utilized the APA (2008) report to generate a conceptual framework for my interviews and outlined several deductive codes (Sage, 2019): critical mindedness, active engagement, flexibility, and communalism. While coding my data, I looked for statements and ideas that categorize into the four deductive codes, either from their adolescence or their residency experience.

I also left an open space for new themes to emerge. I used the coding software Dedoose, notating the transcripts with two parent codes: family history and urban residency. Under each parent code, I created child codes to further align the data. The child codes were: adaptation/flexibility, active engagement, communalism, and critical mindedness. I added new child codes as themes emerged. I added cultural awareness, identity development, support/resilience to the family history parent code. Additionally, I added cultural awareness and identity development to the urban residency code.

4.6. Positionality of the Researcher

Certain subjectivities surface in my research process and require disclosure. Emerging from a ten-year period of growth and development as an educator has influenced how I see novice educators in urban settings. All three of my participants are

graduates from a large, research university in the southern United States, and all participated in and completed a year-long urban teaching residency I will call Urban Residency Program (URP). I had access to these participants through my position as the URP liaison between the university and the school district and through my ongoing relationships with these young women. But, it was more than just access to people. I was, in a sense, their supervisor, however we developed deep, meaningful bonds throughout the course of their residency. I choose these participants from different cohorts of residents to explore differences in their experiences but also because I knew they would bring a variety of ideas to the interviews. Their candid nature during our interviews, and their willingness to provide clear ideas and experiences, enriched the content I was able to collect.

4.7. **Study Context**

All participants were members of an Urban Residency Program (URP) and completed year-long student teacher residencies at an *urban emergent* (Howard & Milner, 2014) PK-5th elementary school in the southern United States. Howard and Milner (2014) describe urban emergent as "schools and districts are in large cities but typically have populations smaller than 1 million." (p. 201) As previously mentioned, all participants graduated from the same university. All participants selected their own pseudonyms for this study. Ashley participated in the first cohort of residents during the 2016-2017 school year. Khloe was in the second cohort during 2017-2018. Lucy was a resident in the third cohort in the 2018-2019 academic year. All participants are now current teachers-of-record for elementary schools.

All participants knowingly participated in the study and understood that their personal identities would be concealed as much as possible. They freely shared information about their families, backgrounds, and experience without coercion. Each participant was informed of the recording process and were sent transcripts of their recordings to verify via member checking (Birt et al, 2016).

4.8. **Participant Introductions**

In this qualitative study, two participants are White women and one participant is a biracial woman of White and Black lineage. All three women had two different mentors during their time at the Urban Residency Program (URP) elementary school during the program that ran 2016-2019. These four mentors used of the course of three years consists of three Black females and one Black male. The student demographics for the 2017-2018 school year were 44% African American, 40% Latinx, 13.6% Asian, and 2.4% White (Texas Education Agency, 2018). This elementary school employed a diverse teaching staff with 41% African American, 21% Latinx, 7% Asian, 2% two or more races, and 20% White (Texas Education Agency, 2018). The URP elementary school is located in an urban emergent (Howard & Milner, 2014) school district with 35,000 total students located roughly 20 miles north of a dense, urban metropolis.

4.8.1. Ashley

Ashley is a 26-year-old White female. She grew up in a single-parent household with her mother and her two siblings, a brother and a sister. She had limited exposure to her father's side of the family after her parents' divorce. She calls herself a “mamma's girl.” Her mother worked fulltime with overtime as a nurse, and Ashley often took

leadership roles in her home to help. She took on household projects in order to make their rental homes nicer on a low budget. She first attended a predominantly White neighborhood school but transferred to a diverse, urban school after 7th grade.

4.8.2. Khloe

Khloe is a 29-year-old Biracial female. Her father is African American, and her mother is White. She grew up in California, mostly with her mother. Her parents divorced, and each remarried within their races. She battled with identity limbo in that she felt she had to act a certain way depending on which side of the family she was visiting. Khloe's schools consisted of those that educated primarily White and Latinx students. While growing up, it seems as though her racial identity was at the forefront of her mind.

4.8.3. Lucy

Lucy is a 22-year-old White female who grew up in the suburbs in a large, two-parent household. She is the youngest of four siblings, and her family, while all very different individuals, is “closer than most families.” She notes that she sees herself as the member of the family with ‘the sense of reason.’ She went to predominately White schools, with her high school becoming slightly more diverse as she got older. She was a model student, and her parents were actively involved in her school community.

4.9. Participant Life Experiences

Growing up, Ashley displayed many of the resiliency attributes. She showed critical mindedness in evaluating relationships with her father's new wife and children

with the limited exposure she had to this new family. Ashley showed tremendous flexibility as an adolescent. When her brother got older she noted that "he had some personal demons to battle," and she was able to adjust and adapt emotionally. Additionally, in 7th grade, Ashley moved from the school district she had always attended to a magnet school in a completely different area. During that transition, she showed flexibility in learning to make new friends for the first time. Ashley expressed, "… for me was really scary because I had to start putting myself out there and start trying to find where I fit in. And to me, making new friends was really hard." She remained actively engaged throughout her time at a magnet school. Ashley shared, "I tried dance for the first time. Tried art. Just tried to find where I fit in. There was a lot of new experiences."

Perhaps her most vivid resilience attribute was communalism. Ashley demonstrated an understanding of communalism from a very young age, bonding with family and making new friends in a new school. Furthermore, the ability to comprehend the need for a close-knit family system emerged during her interview. She spoke about the rental houses her mother would find and how they were not always the prettiest, but "they had potential." Ashley spoke a lot about turning these houses into homes with her mother and sister, "I painted so many rooms, I pulled so many weeds, I did the yard work, like, we did it all ourselves." Her sense of communalism really evolved throughout her adolescence. She found that "community" was more about a support system. She said, "We don't rely on blood. Blood doesn't make you family. We are very loyal to those that we consider our family."

Much of Khloe's resilience attributes come from her identity development as an adolescent. As a teen, she certainly displayed critical mindedness and flexibility. Khloe struggled between her Black culture and her White culture depending on which side of the family she was spending time. When she was with the White side of her family, she felt like an outsider, not appearing to belong with her step-siblings. She said of being with her Black family, “I always felt like I needed to pull my black side a little harder. And if I didn't, then like it was vocalized.” She was forced to assess various situations and adapt accordingly. Khloe expressed:

> You just pick and choose what you're going to say, you figure out how you're going to respond a specific way. And it was kind of frustrating, because like even then, with doing that, you still felt like it's not enough for them to accept you to fit in.

Additionally, she mentioned, “I was always too white for black kids and too black for white kids. So, I actually spent like, the majority of the time with Hispanics because they look like me.” She showed a sense of communalism during our interview when she mentioned her friends and a biracial teacher who made her feel safe. She felt comforted in that, “He looked like me.”

Lucy's familial support helped her understand communalism and active engagement at an early age. She said of her family, “We are... closer than most families. Most people, when they look at our family and see how close we are, they're like, ‘That is not normal.’” She was also very involved in church activities and had close groups of

friends through the youth group. Her whole family was involved in church groups, Bible studies, and mission trips. Additionally, Lucy's parents were active parent volunteers at her school. Lucy also displayed much flexibility growing up. Her family moved about every seven years to accommodate the number of people in the home. She often had to be open to new ideas through critical mindedness when her school zoning changed, or her parents pushed her out of her comfort zone. Lucy went through a short rebellious phase in high school, although she did say it was mild compared to other teens. She skipped band practice and started hanging with a group of students who were getting themselves into trouble. She attributes "finding my roots again" to her parents and teachers who helped her to refocus her lifestyle.

4.10. **Participant Residency Experiences**

Even though each participant completed the URP residency program during different program years, they shared many of the same experiences. The women all mentioned several instances and opportunities that helped them achieve a new sense of resiliency. These four emerging themes are discussed in the following sections and describe the experiences the participants felt helped them become more resilient. While many of the resiliency attributes acquired obviously overlap, I separated their experiences in order to provide more clear examples.

4.10.1. Critical mindedness

College courses at universities often lack exposure to real-time classroom decision-making (Hammonds, 2017). Throughout the interviews, each URP participant made mention of the many decisions teachers have to make. Khloe said, "All of the

classes you could possibly take don't prepare you for what teaching really is." Ashley and Lucy both expressed the importance of the program's exposure to real-world classroom experiences. Ashley and Lucy both had experiences with the same supervising teacher. Ms. Booth encouraged each participant to think critically about what they had observed and then decide how to make it their own. Lucy said, "She gave me a lot of opportunities to step out of my comfort zone and kind of take control of; this is what we have to teach, but you can teach it however you want to." Ashley shared that the exposure the program provided was valuable. She said, "I remember looking back, and it felt like I had just gone through, like, a month of experiences, but it had literally only been five days."

During discussions about their year-long residency, all participants talked about their mentor teachers pushing them out of their comfort zone and requiring them to think critically about their practice. All URP participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to ask their mentor questions and adapt lessons and teaching styles to fit their own personalities. Khloe specifically remembered her supervising teacher, Mr. Marks, encouraging her to think critically about her teaching. Khloe said:

> … that really helped me get comfortable with self-reflection and self-growth and not just personally but professionally. So, like, if a lesson didn't go well, he would not tell me these are all the things you did wrong. He would be like, "This is what I saw went great, what do you think went great? Where do you think that you would need to fix this for it to go better? What are some things we can do?"

Long-term residencies offer preservice educators an immersion experience in order to build relationships with trusted professionals and ask questions in a safe setting. All participants stated they specifically sought out qualified individuals to ask questions, observe, and practice methods in a low-risk environment. Lucy expressed her joy as she felt like her whole grade level team "adopted" her. She felt that she could ask any of them for help or advice, and in turn, they always were always interested in how she was coming along with her program. Khloe found trusted teachers and shared that she was able to be herself. She used an analogy of a mask. She would wear her professional mask daily, but there were times when she could take it off and get candid with her mentors. She said, "I could take it off; I could ask questions; I could fix the makeup before I had to put it back on." Teachers in traditional short-term clinical teaching experiences rarely get this type of in-depth critical thinking (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013). Residents like the URP participants spend so much time on campus, open and meaningful relationships grow and flourish easily. Communalism is essential to a meaningful residency experience. Moreover, it helps teachers learn to make connections so that they can become actively engaged in their school communities.

4.10.2. Active engagement

Active engagement is at the core of every resilient, successful teacher. Wholeheartedness in teaching (Haberman et al., 2018) grounds the budding professional in a way that serves students, as well as colleagues, with compassion. URP residents were able to acquire skills in targeting instruction for students, teaching the whole child, and teaching in culturally responsive ways. Participants attended all professional

development sessions with their supervising teacher and were active participants in those sessions. Ashley commented that when given a new task, she was able to collaborate with more qualified individuals. URP participants ran a small, after-school tutorial program to earn extra money and better familiarize themselves with the state standards. Ashley stated:

> I reached out to a lot of people on campus and talked it through and learned how to dissect the [standards}, and really, it was my first time actually experiencing the [standards], not just reading them but learning them and using them and what they actually mean, and it was really cool.

All URP participants were able to gain more experience by substitute teaching during their long-term residency, an experience not offered in the traditional clinical teaching experiences. Becoming actively engaged on a campus through experiencing different grade levels and subjects proved to be beneficial for the participants' future teaching careers. Khloe was able to get a long-term substitute job at another school in the district after her program was complete. This allowed her to earn more money and gain more classroom time before graduation.

4.10.3. Flexibility

Participating in the URP program was in itself a lesson in flexibility. For the first time in their lives, participants worked beyond 45hours per week and went to school full time. They attended their URP program at an elementary school near a large, urban city, and on Thursdays, drove nearly two hours to attend in-person senior methods classes at

the participating university. Much of their flexibility came through adapting to the cognitive, emotional, and physical fatigue that came with this type of commitment. All exclaimed that the URP was a massive undertaking for them. Ashley stated, “It was one of the hardest things I've ever done.” Khloe and Lucy both commented on the endurance the program requires and the stamina it brings for everyday teaching. Khloe allowed herself to have emotional “breakdowns” and analyze specifically from where her feelings were coming. Due to the nature of her residency, Ashely was able to locate the cause of her stress and work with others to move through those feelings and adapt. She said “… it's constantly a learning process, and you're always learning, and you're always changing, and you're always adapting.”

Teaching in Title I schools often brings a new environment even for the most experienced educators (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Ashley noted that “Teaching in a Title I school is even harder. We are never fully funded, we are never fully staffed.” She felt that the URP program provided them with the exposure and opportunity to adjust to this new environment. Lucy was astonished at “how many decisions teachers make in a day.” She also learned to be flexible when substitute teaching in other classes. She said, “You're always thinking, you're always making decisions, and you have to be ready to step into a situation with no preparation and make it through a day without just putting on [an educational video like the] Magic School Bus.” These residents learned how to assess situations quickly and adapt to those situations.

4.10.4. Communalism

When considering the interviews with participants, communalism was the most frequently discussed idea. There was a resounding notion that teaching is a collaborative career. All participants had strong feelings about the relationships they built within the program. Within their individual cohorts, they forged strong bonds that are still intact to this day. Khloe smiled when she said, “That ability to know you're not struggling alone makes a world of difference. Like, we're all in this together, and that's okay, keep going.” Lucy spoke of her bond with her cohort counterpart noting “we were two people going through the exact same experience… and even now, we talk about like what we're experiencing and how URP prepared us for what we're doing.” Ashley relied heavily on the bonds created by her cohort. She was still able to list their individual strengths and how they were utilized. She also said,

> Oh, you can't do this by yourself. At all. That's what this program taught me. Teaching is not an island. Really the life you can't be on an island, but if we're focusing on a teaching aspect, it taught me I cannot do it all. You will literally kill yourself trying to stay here every night till seven o'clock getting here at six AM to get it all done. You need to realize other people's strengths and learn to work with what, you know, work as a team.

It was clear from their responses that the deep, interpersonal relationships built during the program translated to their current careers as teachers on department teams.

In addition to bonding with each other, the participants also learned how to communicate with students’ parents. There were no classes at Texas A&M that taught

the residents how to build quality relationships with parents. They were also unprepared for communicating with parents from backgrounds different from their own (Gilley & Rector-Aranda, 2019). Khloe felt lucky to have great mentor teachers to show her how to work with parents. One of her mentors "would call his parents Mom and Dad, and I used to think it was so weird… and told me, 'it's not weird at all'… because their names don't always match what their child's name is, and that's a whole other, like, issue that can happen during a conversation." The residents were able to see how expert professionals used words and techniques to build trust with parents.

4.11. **Photo-Elicitation**

Each participant selected up to five photos which represented resilience in their lives. Participants had the option to include their own photos or stock photos that represent their feelings. These selections included photos of themselves and their family members and photos that represent certain ideas and concepts used as analogies or metaphors.

4.11.1. Critical Mindedness

All participants presented an acquired sense of critical mindedness through the photo-elicitation activity. The presenting of photos as representations and metaphors of thoughts and feelings show that these teachers know how to think critically and use previous experiences to guide their understanding of the world around them. All three participants presented photos that represented a time where they had to evaluate a situation or make sense of a confusing time. Ashley shared a photo from a mission trip teaching kids in Paraguay as a recent high school graduate. She said that even though

she wanted to go home often, she “stuck it out” and learned a lot from it. She said, “I mean, how many adults are willing to go somewhere for eight hours a day where they don't speak the language?” Thinking critically about her experience helped build her resilience as an educator of English Learners (ELs). She continued,

> I remember teaching ESL kids. I'm like, come on. If I could teach kids at 18 and I didn't speak their language at all, I have resources and Internet and help now. And I've been to college. So… it made me a lot braver when it came to working with ESL kids. And like, if I did it then, I can do it now.

Khloe used a photo of the Grand Canyon as an analogy for traversing difficult situations and remaining resilient. She said, “You look at the Grand Canyon, and you're like, 'How am I complaining?' Like, it's endured so much and what's left is so magnificent.” She spoke of the erosion the canyon endured and how it ended up being an amazing wonder that people from all over the world come to see. This reminded her to be resilient and keep pushing through.

Lucy shared a photo of the day she got her college ring. At her university, this is a significant accomplishment that comes with a grand celebration. This symbolized her transformation in college, where she opened herself to new ideas and sought intellectual input from peers and professors. The ability to analyze experiences and apply them to abstract concepts shows that all three participants embody critical mindedness.

4.11.2. Active Engagement

All of the participants presented active engagement characteristics in their interviews with the photos they selected. Ashley and Khloe both shared photos of their parents, learning lessons from their life experiences. Khloe spoke of her mother's resilience and how she is reminded to push harder to become a better person. In addition to her active engagement in Paraguay, Ashley laughed when she shared that her mom has taught her to rein in her emotions. She said,

> My mom always wanted me to learn what not to do from here in the sense of, like, the mistakes she made. And I really took that to heart… So, she's kind of taught me how to control my temper and not get myself in trouble so much.

Lucy shared a photo of herself that she sent her students while they were learning at home during the COVID19 pandemic. Her team compiled a video of photos to send to students to show they were thinking of them and that they loved them. This embodies active engagement through doing what is best to impact the environment around her.

4.11.3. Flexibility

Throughout her interview, Lucy showed an overwhelming understanding of flexibility as she explained her photo selection. She spoke of her new marriage and what it means to compromise with a partner. She shared a photo of her new baby, and she often expressed the trials of motherhood. She said,

> I feel like motherhood has taught me resilience in a whole new way… just learning every single hour, every single minute is completely new, and you have

> to be able to bounce back, and it's going to be hard, but you learn from each experience and every single day you learn something new and how to be better.

Additionally, when discussing a photo of herself and her partner in the residency program, Lucy shared how the URP program helped her learn resilience through flexibility. For the first time in her life, Lucy experienced workplace tension. She learned,

> Even if there is tension or conflict, or if something's not going right, to be resilient, you've got to process through that and reflect and overcome, and things aren't going to get better if you don't take steps to do that.

Moreover, Lucy talked about her experiences teaching and giving birth during a pandemic. She was building a house while teaching from home, and the internet was not always guaranteed. When she delivered her daughter, she was not able to have her family in the delivery room as planned. Her ability to adapt and adjust during challenging times underscores that Lucy understands what it means to be flexible.

4.11.4. Communalism

While all participants demonstrated a powerful sense of communalism throughout their interviews, their portrayal of communalism through photographs was particularly poignant. Ashley presented a photo of US Marine recruits during the Crucible, a grueling boot camp event where they work directly with a partner to truly become Marines. She spoke of this because her sister had recently participated in her Crucible and Ashley was in awe of her resilience in that “she's doing something that I

respect and that I couldn't do." She related her experience in URP to her own version of the Crucible. She said that she had her partners with her, and she relied heavily on her bond with her fellow residents to finish the program strong.

Lucy reflected on her time in URP as well. She brought a photo of herself and the other resident that participated in her cohort on the very last day of their residency. Of this bond, she said, "Gosh. I don't… I couldn't imagine somebody else to go through that program with." She expressed that the magnitude of experiencing such an impactful program has bonded her and the other resident for life. Furthermore, they still speak almost every day, and they share their current stressors and experiences just as they did when they were residents.

Finally, Khloe presented a photo that her husband had commissioned for her. He said that it was a portrait of her through his eyes. Khloe discussed the bond of marriage and how important her husband's support is to her. Not only did she speak of her marriage throughout her interview, she also mentioned relying on others to help her manage stress. She said of her mentor, "Marks made it very clear that burnout is real." She still has a bond with her mentor as well as other residents from her URP cohort. She relies on her relationships with former residents to reflect on her career and her role as an educator.

4.12. **Identity Development**

In both semi-structured and open-ended interviews, a fifth resilience theme emerged: Identity Development. The URP residency provided ample time for residency

teachers to evaluate their own knowledge and how it applies in real world situations inside urban schools. Lucy said, “It shaped me as an educator and taught me that you have to be resilient in order to be an educator.” Because the URP program was situated in a school environment so vastly different from the schools she attended as a child, Lucy also said, “I learned a lot, and grew a lot and was really stretched and challenged, but it made me a better person, a better educator.”

Khloe was grateful for her supervising teachers in the URP program. Her supervising teachers helped her gain exposure to classroom settings and an understanding of the breadth and scope of an educator’s role. She said, “You just don’t understand what is expected of you as a teacher and how many hats you really do wear. So, clinical teaching gave me an opportunity to really get comfortable with some of those hats.” Furthermore, she learned how to be a professional during intense moments with parents. She said,

> You can speak your mind, make your statement, be tactful, professional, but also in no way are you sugar-coating or walking in circles. And I think that was really what was great about them is both of [my mentors] are so direct that it allowed me to see how I could continue to be direct and it not be too much for whoever I’m talking to all the time.

Ashley also spoke about learning to interact with parents and how URP helped shape her identity as White educator in a diverse school. She expressed,

> Because I always feel like when I first meet some parents, I have to kind of like prove that I'm here for the right reasons. But I very quickly do that, and I usually don't ever have issues. Like, in my three years as a teacher, I have done great. But URP taught me that, URP taught me how to make those relationships good.

Ashley also expressed gratitude for her supervising teacher who led her through developing her own classroom style. After her residency ended, she was hired and served on the same grade-level team as her mentor. She reflected,

> And even my first year, she was my team lead. I was on the same team with her, my room was a lot like hers, but if you were to actually know my systems and routines, mine were very different in the way that they were structured, and they were structured to what made sense in my brain.

All participants expressed that they would reapply and complete the program again if asked. They grew as educators before even having students of their own.

Although the URP program provided an immense amount of exposure for identity development, these women also came to the program with toolboxes full of life experiences that had shaped them. Lucy shared that her parents are the reason she is resilient. Her parents pushed her and her siblings out of their comfort zone, and "it made us realize that the more you push yourself and the more you challenge yourself, the more independent and stronger you become." Ashley's single-mom household helped her develop into a resilient adult. When she spoke of moving to different rental houses every year, she said, "It made me a lot more flexible and made me realize that home isn't

really a place, it's a feeling. And it made me more willing to adapt and, like, it simplified what I thought was important." Khloe spoke about her experiences with two families due to her parents' divorce and remarriage. She reflected that each side of her family taught her different life-lessons in personal resilience. Because of this, in her classroom, she said, "If I need to get on you, I can get on you, but I can still pump you up, and I can still love on you. And, I think if I didn't experience both, I wouldn't know how to give both."

4.13. **Discussion & Considerations**

The definition of teacher resilience and the terminology used to describe resilience is so varied, it is difficult to align research and practice (Gu & Day, 2013). Urban schools, where novice educators are often hired, do not always provide the structures and opportunities for these early career teachers to grow in their resilience (Hammonds, 2017). The insights gleaned from participant interviews allows for emergent refinement in the vast and inconsistent literature on teachers' resilience. From the APA (2008) resilience themes, we can begin to build a framework with which to review literature, refine the definition of teacher resilience, and utilize a common vocabulary with which to analyze and foster resilience in urban educators. Further research could produce a solid framework for resilience to add to and align the current literature. Moreover, with a deeper understanding of resilience, practitioners have the opportunity to combat burnout in their staff and develop resilient educators, especially early career teachers.

Additionally, through the data collected in these interviews, it is clear that long-term residencies provide unmatched experiences for student teachers. Having an immersive exposure to urban and Title I schools better prepares preservice educators for the real world in which they will work. All participants encountered all of the APA (2008) resilience themes to varying degrees during their year-long residency. Not only did they have exposure to schools and teaching practices, they grew as women learning how to navigate life as adults. Should schools or universities decided to implement a residency program, they should consider the following recommendations:

- Ensure candidates can provide examples of their understanding of at least two of the APA (2008) resilience themes; consider the resilience themes when working to establish interviewing guidelines.
- Make sure that the host school has several highly qualified master teachers to serve as mentors; ensure a liaison is available to guide mentoring practices.
- Provide real-world experiences for the residents, keeping in mind that they are still college students.

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5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Synthesis of Literature with Critical Findings

It is clear that the more prepared an educator is for their teaching environment, the better their chances are for success in diverse classrooms (Nava-Landeros et al. 2020). This is evidenced by existing literature as well as my research. Preservice education programs often lack knowledge application components that translate to the real-world classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Goldston, 2018; Guha et al., 2017; Huisman et al., 2010). As verified by my autoethnography, my preservice education experience did not prepare me for teaching in an urban school setting. In this spirit and to address the inadequacies in traditional teacher preparation, the Urban Residency Program was created. The Urban Residency Program (URP) gave extensive exposure to the resident teachers in each cohort as illustrated in my second and third articles. Providing future educators with a robust preservice experience, culturally responsive mentoring, and a strong induction program can help reduce turnover and improve classroom performance (Guha et al., 2016). In this concluding chapter, I provide a robust handbook giving direction for urban school districts and universities so that they may implement effective residency programs.

5.1.1. Preservice Experience

Whether participating in a university program or becoming alternatively certified, there is a need for those interested in teaching to have exposure to urban schools before becoming an educator (Tapp, 2017). Teacher preparation programs can be rather generic and lack authentic experiences (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013) for

students. Often, there is a significant gap in what is taught in preparatio programs and what is expected of a teacher in an urban school classroom (Huisman et al., 2010; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). In my preservice experience, the predominately White, suburban school where I completed my traditional clinical teaching did not prepare me for what I encountered as a teacher in a diverse, urban school. Teacher preparation using the residency model may be the new frontier in teacher preparation experience (Goldston, 2018; Wasburn-Moses, 2017). By nature, residencies are clinically rich (Goodwin et al., 2015), and they provide intensive mentoring before becoming an official teacher of record (Guha et al., 2016; Heldfelt et al., 2009; Tapp 2017). As the results of my study indicate, the URP provided residents with incomparable experiences including teaching diverse student populations, working with a diverse staff, and learning to lead culturally responsive classrooms. I suggest, based on this study and my comprehensive experience with such programs, that urban school districts and universities seeking to impact teacher retention should provide realistic teacher preparation by implementing a residency program.

5.1.2. Culturally Responsive Mentoring

Preservice and early career teachers need a strong support system to make strides as educators of diverse student populations (Roff, 2012; Wasburn-Moses, 2017). In their development, early-career educators need strong mentors to learn professional cues, evolve within a school's culture, and understand certain pedagogical experiences that cannot be learned from a textbook (Andrews & Donaldson, 2009; Goodwin et al., 2015; Kardos et al., 2001). Moreover, mentors serving in urban school settings must be well

supported and developed to help foster meaningful relationships with residents (Vass, 2017). Although I identified a gap in cross-racial mentoring in PK-12 schools, I described how relying on the professional guidance of Mr. Marks in my first year as a teacher helped me advance to a trusted practitioner within our community. The participants in this study, URP residents, acknowledged their previous mentors and specifically, the impact their personal and professional development as novice educators. This dissertation manuscript makes it clear that it is essential, especially for White school teachers in diverse school environments, to have a cultural confidant as a trusted advisor during this evolutionary process. Moreover, these cultural mentors need extensive training particularizing how to provide support to novice educators (Tanguay et al., 2018). This mentorship coupled with a robust induction program is recommend to provide the ultimate support for early-career teachers.

5.1.3. First-Year Induction and Support

A study conducted by Hammonds (2017) found that 67% of teachers decided to remain at their particular campus due to campus support systems and positive school climate. Moreover, Guha et al. (2016) found that "teachers who completed residencies demonstrate a retention rate of 80% to 90% in the same district within three years and 70% to 80% within five years" (p. ii). Additionally, a UCLA study (Nava-Landeros et al., 2020) demonstrated over 86% retention rate for residents remaining in their residency school district and 76% remaining five years post-residency. Schools in urban districts partnered with universities should consider adopting the residency model as well as emphasizing early-career induction programs and continuing support for new

teachers. Research shows that strong induction programs reduce turnover and wasted resources related to onboarding and attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Furthermore, my research indicates novice educators benefit from ongoing professional learning opportunities, strong mentorship during the first year of service, and continued professional support as they enter their second and third years of service.

5.2. Recommendations for Practice

Existing literature and my research indicate a need for extended preservice, in-school experiences for novice educators. The more exposure pre-service teachers receive, especially exposure to urban school settings, the greater the retention and success of those teachers (Guha, et al., 2016; Hammond, 2017). Several formats and program designs already exist for those looking to enter the teaching workforce. The following suggestions are based on current research, the findings of this study, and my knowledge of higher education preparation programs and PK-12 urban school districts.

5.2.1. University Residency Programs & Urban School Partnerships

To provide the best possible immersive experience, universities must consider extending their preparation models beyond the outdated, one-semester clinical teaching duration, and deepen their connections between coursework and pedagogical experiences (Helfeldt et al., 2009; Mazzye & Duffy, 2021). Many residency models have varying lengths and commitment requirements, but one common thread is the support residents receive from master teachers (Reagan et al., 2021). Guha et al. (2016) stress additional factors to success including

> … the elements of careful recruitment and selection of residents and mentor teachers within a context of a strong partnership between a district and university, a tightly integrated curriculum based on a year-long clinical placement in classrooms and schools that model strong practice, adequate financial assistance, and mentoring supports as candidates take on classrooms and move into their second and third years of teaching. (p. iii)

To meet the needs of inexperienced undergraduate students, I propose a model similar to the Urban Residency Program (URP) with additional enhancements based on participant feedback and my knowledge of such programs. The URP design was implemented by a large research university in the southern United States partnered with an urban school district. The program occurred from August of 2016 to May of 2020, and I was the school district's URP supervisor. In this program, I created much of the policy and procedures associated with the general timeline of events as well as the guidelines for performance and professional responsibility. In light of this and my dissertation research, this culminating chapter is a handbook-style guide for practitioners and universities considering a residency program. In this proposed residency model handbook, undergraduate participants will experience a gradual release of responsibility culminating in sole control of daily classroom activities in December with the supervision of a master mentor, then transitioning to an official student teaching semester in the spring.

5.2.1.1. Recruitment & Onboarding

The URP provides authentic experiences in urban school settings for university seniors in their final year of studies at a university. Darling-Hammond (2014) shared, "traditional versions of teacher education have often had students taking batches of front-loaded coursework in isolation from practice and then adding a short dollop of student teaching to the end of the program" (p. 551). Residency models like URP, by nature, alleviate this isolated learning experience and expand residents' application of knowledge in real-world settings. Should a university or school district decide to implement a residency program, recruitment should begin in the beginning months of the university student's third year in order to onboard new residents in a timely manner before their fourth and final year of preparations begin. Recruitment of residents must be a collaboration between the participating university and school system. Personal qualities linked to a successful classroom teacher (Haberman et al., 2017) and resilience attributes (Gu, 2014) are examples of my personal considerations when selecting participants. Furthermore, in their collaboration, universities and school districts must ensure resident recruitment matches the staffing needs of the district (Guha et al., 2017). University staff and school administrators should interview candidates considering these qualities, request a writing sample, and a lesson plan example (Silva et al., 2015). Based on my experience and research, it is imperative that school districts and universities co-plan a distinct and robust program based on a strong set of mutually agreed upon standards (Guha et al., 2017; Reagan et al., 2021). University and program liaisons should be paired with participating schools rather than individual residents in order to better support the program's needs (Gardiner & Lorch, 2015). Similar to Beck &

Kosnick (2002), professors in the practicum, urban residency programs benefit from full-time supervision from either a university professor or staff member in order to build trust, provide immersive coursework, and solidify the bond and dedication to the practicum in alignment with the university values. Once recruitment is complete, the school district must expedite the onboarding of residents.

With my experience and the data collected during my interviews with former residents, I suggest that resident programs and school districts begin their onboarding of residents in the summer months before school begins. This gives time for school districts to take residents through the complete hiring process as they will eventually become substitutes and tutors. This may include an official application to the school district, background checks, and new-hire paperwork. Completing these tasks before teachers return to campuses at the beginning of the school year reduces stress and clerical tasks that could distract from important program components.

5.2.1.2. Teacher Inservice & Fall Semester

Based on a review of existing literature, program observations, and the results of this study, coupled with my extensive knowledge of an urban residency program (URP), I am able to pinpoint the essential functions of the first months of a successful residency model beginning with teacher inservice (See figure 5.1). In their final year of undergraduate studies, residents will be immersed in a school and classroom from the first day teachers return from summer break until the last student exits the building in May (Reagan et al., 2021). Beginning staff development in August with their supervising teacher provides many benefits that most novice educators do not get (Heldfelt et al.,

2009). For example, residents will be able to observe and help their supervising teacher design and construct an effective classroom setting. Additionally, they will begin planning with grade-level or content teams and attend professional development on campus with their supervising teacher. Equally important, being present on campus during July and August allows residents to meet new students and build relationships with parents on “Meet the Teacher Night” and the first day of school.

As residents progress into September, they will continue to solidify rules, routines, and procedures set forth by their supervising teacher, spending four full days per week working in the classroom setting (Guha et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2015). They will become accustomed to planning with grade level or content area teams and attending Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and staff professional development. During this month, residents will begin to plan and host after-school tutorials or enrichment sessions twice per week. As mentioned in my study, the collective school-university partnership agreed to have URP residents hired as temporary employees within the district. This is an opportunity for residents to earn money so that they do not have to find part-time jobs. Should a program opt to provide this experience, the residents will tutor as well as earn more money as an occasional substitute on their assigned campus should they be ready for this independent responsibility.

Transitioning to October, residents will begin actively co-teaching in the classroom with their supervising teacher. Depending on the competency level of the resident, they may teach one subject or many subjects with the assistance of their supervisor (Silva et al., 2014). Additionally, residents may pull small groups and provide

targeted instruction for students needing additional support. In my experience with URPs, residents begin planning lessons and preparing to teach full lessons independently providing a deeper understanding of content and pedagogy. This type of experience is usually offered late in the school year to traditional student teachers minimally, if at all. Moreover, by participating in a residency program, novice educators get exposure to curriculum planning and implementation much earlier than in a traditional clinical teaching model (Goodwin et al., 2015).

In addition to clinically rich experiences with their supervising teacher, residents need to understand the benefits and impact of community engagement (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013, Marshall et al., 2021). Residents can take the month of November to plan and implement a service-learning project. Service-learning projects can include book drives, food drives, playground equipment fundraisers, and any other events that connect the community to campus, and vice versa.

During the final months of the fall semester, residents will plan to take sole control of the classroom. Based on my study, it is most beneficial and should be the ultimate goal of the residency program to have residents lead the majority of daily activities in the classroom in the weeks following Thanksgiving break leading up to the December break. In this time, the supervising teacher will act as an observer and a co-teacher (Heldfeldt et al., 2009). The resident will handle all transitions, classroom activity execution, classroom management, and most lessons. The supervising teacher can and should intervene at the request of the resident. This type of structured fall semester gives residents a low-risk environment to practice the pedagogy they have

learned in coursework until this point. The results of my study suggest that gaining this experience one whole semester before their peers was one of the key success factors of URP and the participating residents. Undoubtedly, once residents reach clinical teaching in the spring semester, they will have a full grasp of the inner workings of a classroom. Furthermore, this provides the opportunity to hone teaching strategies, building relationships, and additional components of a public school organization.

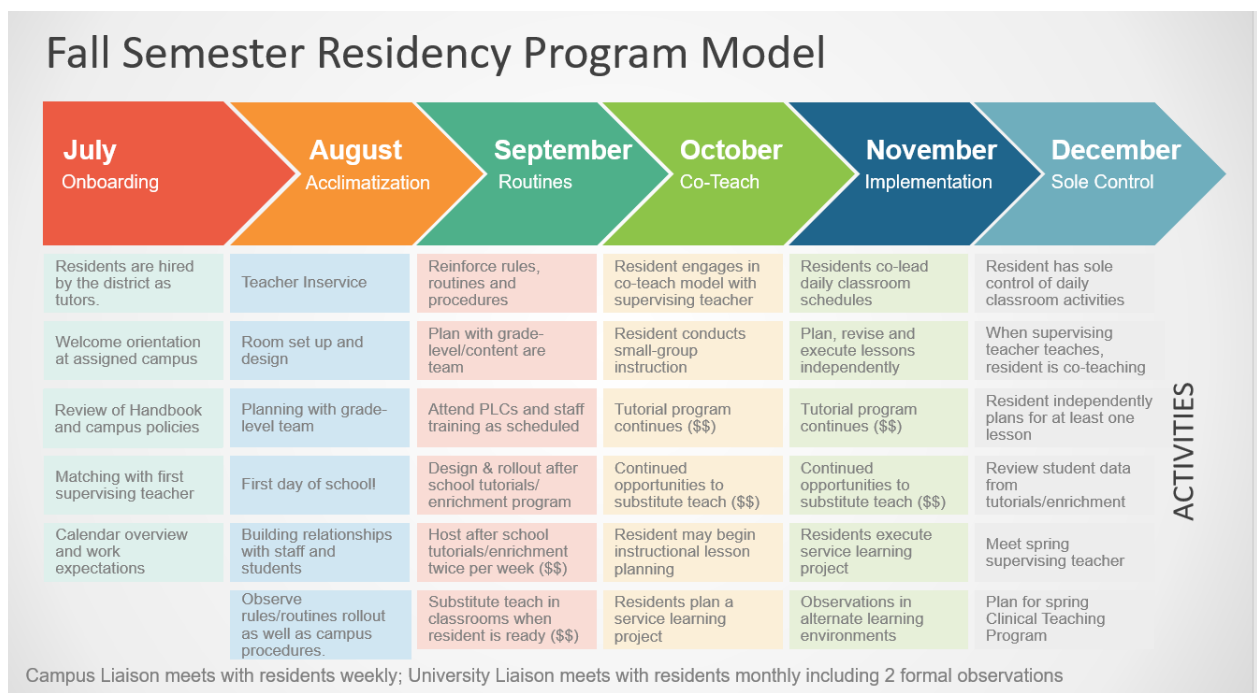

Figure 5.1 Residency Program Activities by Month

5.2.1.3. Fall to Spring Semester Transition

Currently, each U.S. state has different requirements for student teaching and observation hours for those seeking a degree in education, and universities often make their own timelines for student teaching. Universities should partner with districts and ensure expectations are set in place to complete official university requirements during

the course of a residency year (Guha et al., 2017). For example, the university associated with the URP I worked with required a 14-week clinical teaching experience with a very specific timeline set forth by the College of Education's clinical teaching handbook. During the spring semester, I had residents and supervising teachers follow the designated university handbook to ensure all requirements were met for graduation.

I have found that beginning the transition from fall residency to spring student teaching is most effective if done before students leave for the December holiday. Supervising teachers for the spring should be selected in November. Residents can be notified of their spring semester supervisor and visit their classroom throughout December to build relationships with students and staff at that grade level. This helps the resident become familiar with their new assignment before any observing or teaching begins.

5.2.1.4. Partnerships, Retention, and Future Experiences

5.2.1.4.1. School-University Collaboration

A strong district-university partnership is essential for the success of any residency program (Darling-Hammond, 2014). Unfortunately, this did not happen for the residency program I was leading. To unpack the complexities of this school-university partnership is beyond the scope of this dissertation but is worth undertaking in future research. . In short, despite authoring and signing a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the residency, the department responsible for teacher certification and College of Education did not support the residency program. Because the residency-style experience was new, it seemed as though university leaders saw it as a threat. Faculty

leaders, students and I were met with continuous road blocks concerning funding, recruitment, and faculty staffing.

To prevent similar breakdowns, I advise that urban districts only partner with universities that prioritize relationships with urban districts and schools as a central thrust of their program design.

Furthermore, based on the participants' program feedback, universities must extend the same student support services to residents as they provide for traditionally enrolled students. University leaders must also ensure that faculty politics do not compromise students' experiences, and foster differential enforcement of university policies and procedures. Moreover, participants reported that the support from university field supervisors were essential to their success in the collegiate portion of the residency. This liaison should also conduct informal and formal resident observations to collect data and report to the state for official clinical teaching purposes (Sanderson, 2016). Additionally, this liaison should build relationships with student residents to act as a confidant should there be any concerns during the residency term.

Similarly, the host school district should provide a district liaison to organize the program at the campus level. This school district liaison will also build relationships with residency students and serve as the point of contact throughout the program. It is imperative that school districts and universities set aside an adequate salary and job role specifically dedicated to the success of the residency program (Guha et al., 2017). In addition to school district and university liaisons, residents should be assigned a supervising teacher, preferably one in the fall semester and a different supervising

teacher in the spring semester. Supervising teachers should embody the essence of a master teacher, which entails exemplifying a collaborative mindset, fostering growth in teacher identity and pedagogical practices, and being effective in building relationship skills (Ellis et al., 2020).

Finally, school district campus administration should support liaisons, supervising teachers, and residents (Vassie et al., 2021). The principal will need to build a residency program into the campus improvement plan, and adequately budget for potential tutoring roles and supplemental pay for residents. Counselors and other administrators can act as secondary liaisons giving program direction, assisting school district campus liaisons, and supervising teachers with decision-making and leadership skill development.

5.2.1.4.2. Benefits and Retention

An additional benefit for residents is the work offered after the culmination of student teaching in the spring. In the program I led, residents completed their residency and university requirements about six weeks before the end of the district's academic school year. Furthermore, based on the successes of the URP residents and the qualitative data I collected, offering additional learning or work experience in these final weeks is an effective extension of the program. Residents can take on a long-term substitute position, and many choose this route because of its financial benefits. Some residents chose to stay on their current campus, provide added classroom support in various learning environments, and shadowed other teachers for more exposure.

Finally, this is also the time residents actively seek employment either in their current district or elsewhere. One of the primary benefits of a residency program for school districts is the retention of its residents. Guha et al. (2016) recommends that,

> Residents commit to teaching in the local school district after the program ends. High-quality residency programs are codesigned by the district and the university to ensure that residents get to know the students and families in the communities in which they will be teaching and are rigorously prepared to teach in those communities and schools. (p. 31)

Residents often find comfort in their surroundings post-residency with a common interest in students and a large network of support gained during residency (Andrews & Donaldson, 2009). Through my study and experience I found that most residents wished to be hired by their residency campus for their first year of teaching.

5.2.1.4.3. Residency Considerations

I recommend considering teaching environment and school demographics when designing residency program. My research shows a need to tie in cultural experiences for future teachers. While my experience and the experiences of my research participants largely focused on Black culture, there is a growing need to expand to include other cultures as well. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported that during the 2018-2019 school year, over half (52.6%) of PK-12 schools were Latinx students and 19.5% we English Learners. Additionally, 60% of students enrolled were considered economically disadvantaged and 9.6% of all students enrolled were labeled with some type of disability (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2020). Considering these specialized areas,

school districts and universities can tailor experiences to benefit both the novice educator and their preservice experience as well as the hiring needs of the district.

5.3. **New Teacher Induction**

After preservice work is complete, novice educators need a strong induction program to ensure a successful first year (LoCascio et al., 2016; Tricarioc et al., 2015). Globally, countries with a strong teacher workforce invest in robust induction programs and lengthy teacher support systems to solidify the retention of quality educators (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Wiens et al. 2019). Induction programs implemented with fidelity can bolster novice educators' classroom management skills, reduce the stress related to adapting as a new professional, and reduce turnover, particularly in urban school settings (Kutsyuruba & Tregunna, 2014). The following sections detail an effective induction program for urban school districts based on my study and experiences in urban schools.

5.3.1. Induction Program Phases and Support Levels

Ideally, a successful urban teacher induction program would consist of multiple levels of support, beginning during the novice educators' hiring process and extending through three to five years of employment depending on the need (Tricarico et al., 2015). I recommend tiering teachers into cohorts and keeping them grouped with their cohort throughout the first years as teachers of record to foster a sense of group identity (Andrews & Donaldson, 2009). By continuing to organize new teaching into induction cohorts, data can be easily collected and analyzed. The following support layout is my

suggestion for the ideal induction program based on my study and tenure in urban schools (See Figure 5.2 for Induction Support Phases).

In the first phase, Tier 1, teachers have less than six months of official classroom experience. These educators will be assigned a school district campus-based mentor as well as a district mentor. This mentor should be well versed in culturally responsive mentoring. I suggest using the Cultural Kenosis Model outlined in my autoethnographical study as a guide for professional learning. This model will ensure mentors are prepared to support novice educators in their teacher identity development. New teacher social support groups are also suggested for added care (Dimitroff & Dimitroff, 2018). In this light, Tier 1 teachers will attend a monthly New Teacher Academy (NTA) hosted by district mentors and professional development facilitators. NTA sessions include professional learning critical for a novice educator, covering topics like culturally responsive teaching, self-care, and classroom management (Weins et al., 2019). Tier 1 teachers will have the opportunity to attend a monthly social snack-n-chat session where they can have snacks, ask questions in a risk-free setting, and socialize with other Tier 1 teachers. District administrators should also collect data via small focus groups each month. Moreover, I found it beneficial for district administration to collect anonymous survey data from Tier 1 teachers periodically. I suggest these data be collected at mid-year and at the end of the year.

Tier 2 teachers will receive slightly less support than Tier 1 teachers unless their principal deems it necessary to continue a Tier 1 support based on performance. Tier 2 teachers will receive a visit from their district mentor every other month. They are also

eligible to have a campus-based mentor assigned by the principal should they need one. District administration should continue with focus groups throughout the year.

Except for the district mentor, Tier 3 teachers receive all the same support as Tier 2 teachers. It would be beneficial for district administration to continue cohort focus groups throughout the induction phases. After the first three tiers are completed, novice educators will enter into Tier 4, grooming them for leadership opportunities. They will have the opportunity to become teacher leaders in leading PD sessions and support Tier 1, 2, and 3 teachers.

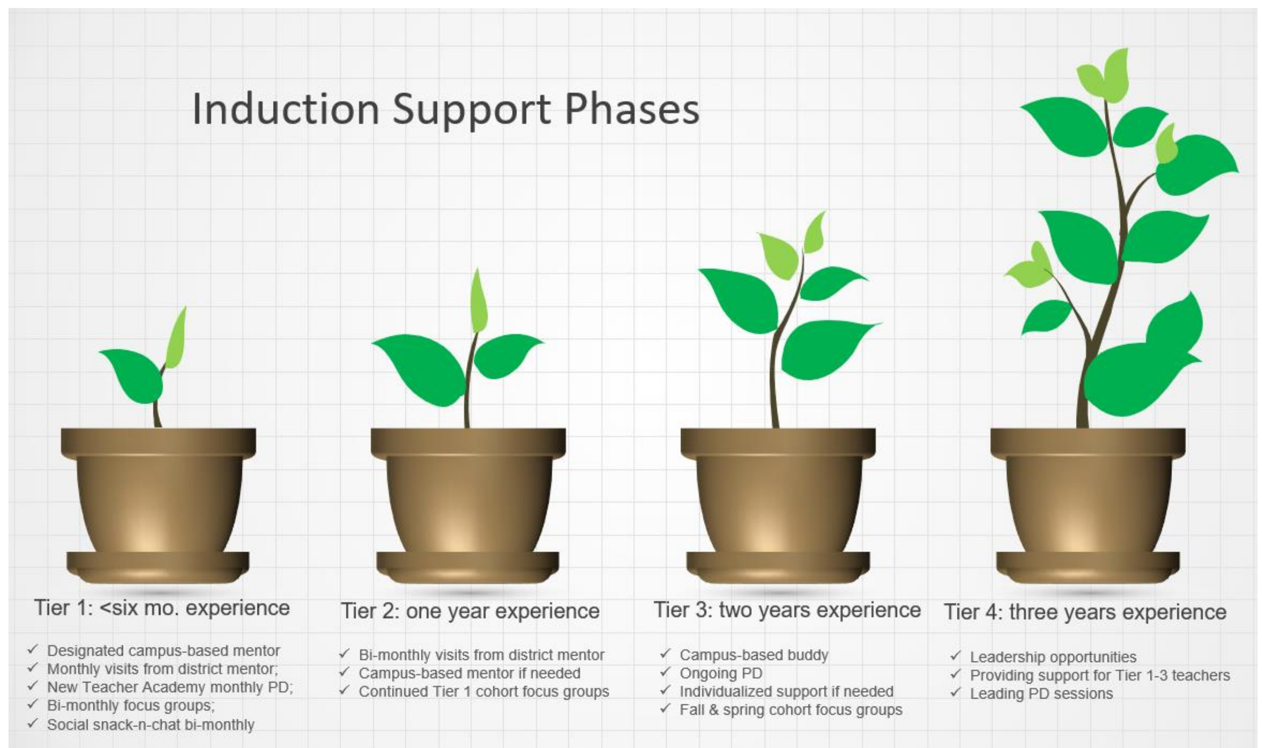

Figure 5.2 Induction Support Phases

5.3.2. Mentorship

Mentorship is a critical component of an urban school induction support program (Ellis et al., 2020). The ideal program will offer all multiple levels of mentorship, starting with a campus-based mentor for novice educators assigned by the campus principal or school district. This mentor will be proficient in culturally responsive teaching, standard mentoring protocol, and best practices in the classroom (Roff, 2012). Ideally, mentors will meet with Tier 1 teachers once per week, documenting goals, strengths, and growth opportunities. Furthermore, it may be helpful for urban school districts to offer a small stipend to mentors to compensate them for their extra time in cultivating novice educators. Districts may also offer a district-level mentor for Tier 1 teachers. These mentors will also document any concerns Tier 1 teachers have and offer opportunities for modeling and coaching during the academic day.

The final consideration for school districts needing to implement a strong induction program is extensive training for culturally responsive mentors (Tanguay, 2018). A trusted partnership between mentor and mentee is essential, and pairings must be created with considerations like common planning times, similar subjects or grade levels, and years of service (Martin et al., 2015). Kardos et al. (2001) stated:

> The novice teacher, eager to succeed in the classroom and the school, seeks signals from her colleagues about how they interact with students, what instructional approaches they promote or suppress, what topics they deem appropriate or out of bounds for discussion at meetings, whom they look toward for expert guidance, how they use their planning time, and whether they encourage peers to exercise leadership beyond their classrooms. (p. 251)

Utilizing the Cultural Kenosis Model from my study, urban schools can ensure culturally responsive mentors are prepared to assist novice educators, particularly White teachers in diverse schools, in their evolution as culturally responsive teachers. Moreover, campuses should plan professional learning sessions around each concept within the Cultural Kenosis model and provide mentors with the skills necessary to assist first-year educators with their transformative process.

5.4. **Future Research**

Two significant areas for future research emerged from my study. First, there is a lack of literature regarding cross-racial mentorships in urban, K-12 schools. There is an opportunity for university campuses and school districts to conduct action research based on their cross-racial mentor pairings, the adaptation of the Cultural Kenosis Model, and the satisfaction and retention of White first-year educators. Second, school districts could conduct retention studies based on the experiences of preservice teachers and the induction programs they implement related to teacher preparation, retention, and cultural awareness. All studies should include a qualitative component in order to collect data through interviews, journal entries, classroom observations, and focus groups.

5.5. **Autoethnography Postscript**

It is important to make note of the changes I have undergone in the time that has passed since my first years as an educator. As a district administrator my role is vastly different from that of my classroom days, and appropriately my leadership disposition has changed as well. Gary Howard (2004) states, “As white educators, we are collectively bound and unavoidably complicit in the arrangements of dominance that

have systematically favored our racial group over others" (para. 4). This has been my driving force in recognizing and deepening my understanding of my own privilege and helping others to do so. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Black citizens were hesitant to wear masks or bandana for fear that they would be presumed as robbers (McFarling, 2020). I was sewing masks for family, friends and healthcare workers while working from home. After realizing that many Black men were choosing to go maskless as risking exposure out of fear for their lives, I put out a simple plea on Facebook. I said, "If you are a person of color who fears wearing a mask will compromise your personal safety, please reach out to me so we can design an option that works best for you." I thought of many fabric patters that would perhaps look safer, even silly, and they style of mask I was creating looked more like a healthcare workers mask. To come to the realization that folks were sacrificing the health of themselves and loved ones for fear of being targeted broke my heart and then drove me to action.

I take great pride in being the "go-to" White person in my office when it comes to educating and answering questions about race, privilege, gender, and sexuality and the inevitable questions that come from White folks in diverse work spaces. I often laugh because it is obvious when a coworker has a question about a "sensitive" topic. They usually come in, close my door, and say "Okay. I have a tough question." The beautiful part of my journey is that the question is almost always not a tough one. I very easily answer with honesty and transparence, something I was not always confident enough to do in the past. My authentic answers help educate my coworkers and empower them to become better allies.

I am still working on my ability to be a better ally. Gloria Ladson-Billings said something enlightening during a presentation I attended. She said, “To be a culturally responsive educator, you must be fluent in your own culture and one other culture.” I am without a doubt, fluent in Black culture. I am working to become fluent in Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous cultures as well. I am finding that new information surfaces daily. Gary Howard (2004) describes my phase of White development as a “*transformationist white identity,* which is a place of humility and active engagement in one’s own continuing growth and reformation.” I am choosing to examine and reexamine my privilege daily. This is spiritual and holy work that never ends. My dedication to live my life as authentically as possible depends on this.

5.6. **References**

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