THE FIGURED WORLD OF ADVOCACY IN A HIGH IMMIGRANT POPULATION URBAN SCHOOL IN THE NEW SOUTH

by

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ABSTRACT

ELENA TOSKY KING. The figured world of advocacy in a high immigrant population urban school in the New South. (Under the direction of DR. SPENCER SALAS)

This participatory qualitative inquiry explored the fluctuating subjectivities of, and advocacy performed, by three content area teachers in a high-immigrant population, urban high school in the New South. Using a neo-Vygotskian theoretical framework highlighting the socially constructed nature of teacher positionality (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), I narrate the sometimes-conflicted understandings of three teachers' advocacy and the sense that it brought to their professional selves. Data analysis revealed the generative hesitations and complications that arose as the three teachers cast and recast themselves as successful. Findings highlighted the complexities of the enactment of "caring" and "never giving up" in an advanced Math III course; the self-reflective hesitations surrounding a Latin American Studies teacher's piloting of a social justice framework; and the incompleteness of a dual licensure ESL/ Social Studies teacher's efforts to make more of a difference in her newcomer immigrant students lives. Implications for research and praxis highlight the spectrum of advocacy in urban schools and its tensions.

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Ultimately, I want to thank the teachers who welcomed me into their classrooms. I hope that this type of research sheds light on the heart-breakingly difficult task of teaching in a high school like Easton.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In early August 2014, *The News & Observer* in Raleigh, North Carolina reported that since January of that same year nearly 1,200 unaccompanied children from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador had been placed with sponsors or relatives in North Carolina (Frank & Canada, 2014). In the same article, North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory responded, "This is not a border issue any longer. This is an issue for North Carolina" (Frank & Canada, 2014). The article explained how North Carolina fit into a larger national debate on "what to do" with the thousands of unaccompanied minors, who traveled, sometimes at great personal risk, across the Mexico-U.S. border. The North Carolina response fell largely in to one of two camps. Below are two posts written in response to the *News & Observer* article:

> The article says approximately 1200 children have come to NC since January. That is, on average, 12 children per county over a seven or eight month period. And we cannot assimilate these young refugees, fleeing for their lives? Where is our compassion? Where is our common sense?

To which another reader responded:

> My compassion lies with our HOMELESS VETEREANS [sic] and our HOMELESS   LEGAL AMERICANS! We do NOT need some other country's LAW BREAKERS! If they want to come here and have a good life, DO IT LEGALLY! OUR tax dollars are paying for these CRIMINALS!

While the first editorial writer expressed a desire for compassion, the frustration, anger, and isolationist attitude in the second response was palpable.

In past decades, the Southeastern United States lacked the diversity of more important immigrant gateways in the Northeast and in the West. However, as more immigrants are drawn to the agricultural opportunities in southern belt states, and more children arrive seeking refuge, a new dynamic has been added to the 'Traditional South,' shifting the Black/White dichotomy to include this significant immigrant population (Cuadros, 2006; Gill, 2010; Pandit, 1997). Schools are presently witnessing one of the largest influx of immigrant students since the beginning of the 20th century (Wright, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), English language learners (ELLs) composed 9.1% of the total student population, nearly 4.4 million students, during the 2011-2012 school year. In urban schools, the average enrollment of ELLs was 14.2% (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Southern states comprised eight of the thirteen states where the growth in the immigrant population was more than twice the national average of 28% over the last decade, including North Carolina, which grew by 67% (Camarota, 2012). Unfortunately, poverty among immigrants and their children is also among the highest of these high-growth states with North Carolina's immigrant poverty status reaching 29% (Camarota, 2012). While North Carolina's statewide four-year cohort graduation rate for the 2012-13 school year increased to 82.5%, the Limited English Proficient[1] (LEP) rate hovered at just under half (Alhour, 2014).

While the immigration debate continued, North Carolinians stood up against teacher pay freezes, the environment, and a number of other social issues through Moral Mondays—civil disobedience protests in the form of sit-ins and demonstrations

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[1] It is important to note that not all ELs are newcomer immigrants. Some are 2nd and 3rd generation, but are classified as LEP due to home language surveys and subsequent results on English language proficiency tests. In addition, not all immigrants are classified as LEP based on these same language tests. Specific data on immigrant populations in schools is not collected.

performed outside the state legislature building in Raleigh. Teacher salaries were among the main issues as the state fell to 46th in teacher pay in the country (Daleiso, 2013). Articles highlighting education issues peppered print, online media, news radio, and TV outlets claiming headlines such as, "Fewer NC students seeking teaching degrees" and "Houston officials luring North Carolina teachers with $20K raise." In addition, fourteen of the seventeen state universities in North Carolina reported drops between twelve and forty percent of students enrolled in traditional teacher education programs (Browder, 2014). One local teacher told reporters after a Houston recruitment interview, "I think North Carolina needs to wake up and start to really honor their teachers and the job they're doing." (Hansen & Philips, 2014). Although the North Carolina state legislature approved teacher raises, some teachers began the 2014 school year unsure of what their pay would actually be.

Combined, these statistics, media reports, and subsequent public perception seem to paint a picture of failing immigrants and education in North Carolina. However, these statistics do not illuminate the work that teachers do daily to support the vast range of transnational children of immigration; the numbers, furthermore, fail to explain the complicated nature of how teachers perceive their work with adolescent transnationals within a complex system of school. Using a sociocultural theoretical framework, (Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Holland & Quinn, 1987; Portes & Salas, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978), this dissertation study describes the nuances surrounding teachers' subjectivities—the internal realities, or judgments shaped by their lived experiences—in one urban high school in the New South and these teachers' acts of

improvisation in their content area classrooms that created a shared if somewhat conflicted/conflicting figured world of advocacy for children of immigration.

Statement of the Problem

After the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which resulted in amnesty for nearly three million undocumented immigrants, networks of newly legal Latino immigrants began surfacing throughout the South. These now documented immigrants sought to reunite with their families (Gill, 2010). By the mid-1990s, Latino communities began to form in the South as big agriculture such as chicken farms recruited immigrants to these cities and towns. While older community members worked to understand the nature of this new population, both positive and negative dialogues emerged. As recently as 2000, former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke headlined a protest against Latino immigrants in Siler City, North Carolina (Cuadros, 2006). Ten years later North Carolina's Fifth Congressional District candidate Vernon Robinson announced the following in a campaign advertisement:

> The aliens are here, but they didn't come in a spaceship; they came across our unguarded Mexican border by the millions. They've filled our criminal courtrooms and invaded our schools. They sponge off the American taxpayer by clogging our welfare lines and our hospital emergency rooms. They've even taken over the DMV. (Gill, p. 36, 2010)

Both positive and negative narratives of immigration in the South marked the ten years between Duke's appearance and the Robinson's "Twilight Zone" ad campaign. Five years later, the debate over undocumented children in our schools continues.

However, the Latino population was not the only group redefining the South. North Carolina also became home to the 12th largest population of Southeast Asians in the U.S. in the early 2000s (Walcott, 2012, p. 2). Walcott (2012) explained that

emigration out of Southeast Asia came in two waves. The first wave began in the mid-1970s after the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, and the second began in the late 1980s when refugees were relocated to areas with better jobs and newly located family networks (Walcott, 2012). The most recent statistics indicate that over 2,600 refugees settled in North Carolina in 2013 alone ("Statistical abstract for refugee resettlement stakeholders," 2014). The growing Karen population from Burma even prompted Public Radio International to produce a segment on this unique group resettling in North Carolina (Parsons, 2013).

While communities sought to rewrite their understanding of what it meant to be a Southerner, public schools also saw significant shifts in demographics. As of 2000, the South had a higher percentage of students who were ELLs than the Northeast (Meyer, Madden, & McGrath, 2004) with between eight and fourteen percent of students speaking a language other than English at home (Camarota, 2012). While the student population remained dynamic, teacher backgrounds and demographic data indicated that teacher education programs continued to recruit predominantly white females in their early twenties who shared similar profiles as beginning teachers (Feistritzer, 2011). In the midst of immigration debates and Moral Monday protests, teachers have entered, are entering, and maintain veteran roles in the discourse surrounding these new community members and their own role in serving North Carolina students.

Researchers have described the assimilation and acculturation of immigrant youth in education (Olsen, 1997; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008; Valdés, 1996, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999) and the disparity between white teachers and African American youth (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-

Billings, 2009). Books have surfaced describing both the tensions and the harmony that occur when a new population is added to a community in the New South (Cuadros, 2006; Gill, 2010), but few researchers have described teacher professional subjectivities about immigrants and immigration in states where immigration is a more recent phenomenon— what mediates those subjectivities and the possibility of their improvisation. Teacher's attitudes about children of immigration and understanding of culturally sustaining pedagogies matter because they affect student achievement (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Through this research, I intended to add to the literature by describing teachers' subjectivities about their students and how those subject positions are leveraged in the enactment of their professional activity including their expectations of classroom, culture, and success. Through a figured worlds (Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) lens this study intends to narrate the complexities of teachers' advocacy while teaching in an urban, New South, high school, and the articulated positionalities, or ever-changing identities, that they build for themselves and their students.

Conceptual Framework

The relational nature of the classroom teacher, classroom culture, and teacher belief system can be framed in a Vygotskian perspective in which societal interactions and cognition intertwine. Vygotsky (1978) proposed the idea that in order to understand the psychological development of humans, history must be introduced. Vygotsky described knowledge as situated in a dialogue within history and time and that learning develops first with the *inter*psychological and then the *intra*psychological. This places learning within a set of beliefs transformed by the mediation of others and reflection on this mediation, respectively (Vygotsky, 1978). Whereas a positivist approach of

understanding how schools affect students and teachers leads to cause and effect relationships, a Vygotskian lens places the school, teacher, and student in layers of history that create the social and historical context of schooling. Within this qualitative context, the social aspects of education are included to allow for a contextualized understanding of teacher thinking

Holland's et al. (1998) notion of "Figured Worlds" draws from the structure of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1986) to introduce an identity analysis that gives agency to the actor. Figured worlds are "'socially produced, culturally constituted activities" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 40) in which the nature of the world and the subjectivities of the participants involved are mediated by personal and professional experiences. The figured worlds framework has been leveraged in qualitative studies in the field of education because of the ability to describe the meaning-making within the classroom as teachers perform self-authoring, or "the meaning that we make of ourselves" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 173) based on their own experiences with education, past and present beliefs, and current coping mechanisms within their classrooms (Brown & Feger, 2010; Robinson, 2007; Urrieta, 2007a, 2007b). Urrieta (2007a) explained that "the strength of this framework for those…doing social/cultural analyses lies in the very fact that it cannot be reduced to one simple, content-specific definition" (Urrieta, p.112, 2007a). Rather, this framework allows for the negotiation of identities rather than assigning participants to scales of diversity awareness.

Purpose of the Study, Research Questions, and Methodology

Teachers are employed in a profession in which the public openly scrutinizes their abilities, their qualifications, and their pay (Block, 2014). Because 93% percent of

Americans attended public school through at least 9th grade (Ryan & Siebens, 2012) they often assume that they know exactly what teachers do. Even teachers come to the profession with a belief that they know what the profession entails (Pajares, 1992). deMarrais and LeCompte (1999) explained this dilemma in education research:

> Examining the actual structure of schools in an unbiased fashion is very difficult, because . . . we are too familiar with them to be objective! To facilitate this task, we use a device often employed by anthropologists—making the familiar strange—that is, treating something we know very well as if we had never seen it before. (p. 45)

By using a qualitative approach of interviews and participant observation, this study explored the following research questions pertaining to the figured world of advocacy in a high immigrant urban school in the New South:

- What are the ranges of classroom teachers' professional subjectivities—internal judgments and realities shaped by their lived experiences—surrounding immigrant students in the setting of an urban school in the New South?

- What additional contexts mediate those subjectivities?

- How are teachers' positions of success and advocacy constructed, reconstructed, and potentially "improvised" in institutional and classroom settings?

This participatory qualitative inquiry leveraged interviews and participant observation as primary means of data generation supplemented by archival analysis of school and teacher-generated documents. The participants in the study were a cohort of three to seven content area educators, teaching at Easton High School (research site pseudonym). Data collection began in August 2014 and ended in January 2015, with follow-up interviews for clarification purposes only during the spring 2015 semester. Each of the three teacher participants engaged in three, semi-structured, audiotaped interviews lasting between 30 and 55 minutes. I conducted 25 observations across the

three participants' classrooms. Additionally, I tutored in one of the teacher's classes, proctored exams for another and conducted observations in common spaces during class changes and lunches. During the observations, I recorded fieldnotes about the site, classroom instruction, the participants' interaction with students, and professional and personal conversations with the participants.

I then used a data analyses approach described by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) to closely read fieldnotes first as a data set, to look for themes, patterns, and variations in what was written. Next, using an open coding process, I categorized small segments of the fieldnote record according to identified words or phrases to create as many codes as possible. I then reorganized the data into themes and subthemes to connect the data. I constructed the themes into memos, asides, and vignettes to further organize and analyze the data in an attempt to clarify the research questions.

Contribution to the Field and Significance of the Project

In 2011, the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) included in its model core teaching standards elements to address the needs of individual learners and the importance of understanding students within their cultural context (Council of chief state school officers, 2013). However, none of the standards specifically addressed the unique needs of immigrant students, nor did the standards address teaching in a social justice context. In the years since the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), immigrant students have often been defined by their language success, or Limited English Proficiency sub group rather than by their status as first, second, or even third generation immigrants. This grouping neglects the nuances of each student's story as well as their relationship with both American culture and home cultures, and does not

encourage teachers to know their students beyond their language abilities (Adler, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999; Wright, 2010). Padilla (2006) explained, "social unity cannot be found in multicultural diversity itself," (p. 19) but in the understanding of cultures and the movement beyond, to a world-view of freedom and democracy. However, in light of added pressures for teachers to increase student performance on standardized tests, teachers have begun to view students in an either/or mentality. Either students need additional support to be engaged with learning, or they are self-motivated. Teachers often also take on a positonality that coincides with the students they teach or the school in which they teach (Brown & Feger, 2010; Pennington, 2007), meaning that when they are teachers of "dumping ground kids" (Saunders, 2012) their colleagues often see them as less successful than teachers of top tier students. While issues of culturally sustaining and responsive pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2010; 2012) are of great importance in the classroom, this research intends to move beyond prescribed curriculum and pedagogies to view through thick description one school's teachers and the figured worlds of advocacy in teaching immigrant students in the New South.

Summary

In this chapter, I contextualized teaching in the New South in terms of current and recent history. I outlined the statement of the problem and the conceptual framework used to view this study. I stated the research questions, purpose of the study, and briefly described the methodology that explored these questions. I also included the significance of the current study in relation to additional work in qualitative educational research.

In Chapter Two, I begin with a restatement of the problem and context of the current study. I then highlight some of the literature describing culturally sustaining,

humanizing and caring pedagogies and teacher self-authoring in the classroom. I further

explain the neo-Vygotskian lens and figured worlds framework used in this inquiry study.

I then conclude with a description of the prior use of figured worlds in education studies.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This dissertation study describes the figured world of advocacy within and the professional positionalities thus created by a group of teachers from Easton High School situated within a large, urban, New South school district. In the following literature review, I describe the changes and structures that have created the necessity for content area teachers to work more closely with students of diverse backgrounds. I then provide an argument for teaching with a culturally sustaining pedagogy. Third, I highlight the literature that surrounds teacher self-authoring. Finally, I describe the figured worlds framework that guides this study by reviewing this framework in the context of education.

The diaspora of immigrants settling in the New South, particularly in North Carolina, has created a change in the demographic landscape of the cities and towns in this region. As Gill (2010) explained, "I first discovered in 2002 that I could get on a bus in my hometown of Burlington, North Carolina and travel directly to Mexico by sunset of the following day." (p. ix) According to the data from the 2011 schools and staffing survey, 84.4% of North Carolina schools housed at least one designated LEP student (Bitterman, Gray, Goldring, & Broughman, 2013) and 48% of North Carolina public school students, nearly 700,000, identified as non-White, with Latinos comprising 13.5% of total students.

Around the same time that schools in the New South began to experience such diversity, they also began to analyze the test scores and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of specific subgroups of the population as mandated through the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While not all immigrants are LEP and not all LEP students are immigrants, there is overlap between the two categories. Schools began to disaggregate assessment data along lines of race and English language ability, and later linked teacher's evaluations to their student's test scores. One of the main issues with NCLB and the LEP subgroup is the unattainability for students to pass the standardized tests associated with NCLB. Crawford (2004) problematized the LEP subgroup as a construct in terms of its fluidity and reclassifications of ELLs stating that:

> ELLs are defined by their low achievement level. When they have learned English, they exit the subgroup and their scores are no longer counted in the computation of adequate yearly progress (AYP). So it not merely unrealistic – it is a mathematical impossibility – for the ELL subgroup to reach full proficiency, as required by NCLB. (p. 3)

It is no longer the ESL teacher as language expert, but the content area teacher who is tied to the scores of their often newcomer immigrant students—those who still are in the LEP subgroup (Wright, 2010)

Because of these shifts in accountability policies and higher instances of immigration, teachers began teaching more newcomer immigrants in their content classes. Co-teaching models (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010) and other sheltered English instruction (SEI) programs such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, (SIOP) (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2004) and Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners Project ExC-ELL™ (Calderón & Minaya, 2011) began to become more popular as these students were mainstreamed out of the "hermetic universe" of the ESL classroom

(Valdés, 2001). While these programs are specifically targeted toward ELLs, there are no such trademarked programs to support teachers in understanding the wide range of immigrant students they encounter.

Cultural Self-Authoring

Since the Hart-Celler Act of 1965, sociologists and educators alike have attempted to understand the range of experiences of immigrants as both groups and individuals. Researchers sought to extend the conversation and complicate the narrative of a single immigration theory or understanding of how an immigrant community enters the host society—particularly in schools (Alba & Nee, 1997; Olsen, 1997; Portes, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). Both Lewis (2001) and Sue (2011) found that many teachers have a strong belief in naturalization, "viewing the racial hierarchy as a natural occurrence" (Sue, 2011, p.548). This view of naturalization helps to "reproduce the status quo…by allowing Whites, to continue to see themselves as racially neutral…deserving of their own success and not responsible for the exclusion of others" (Sue, 2011, p. 803). In this way teachers and institutions, such as schools, play a large role in the success or failure of immigrant students (Valenzuela, 1999).

Teachers, however, can successfully reevaluate their subjectivtities through guided reflection and developing understandings of who they, and their students, are (Asher, 2007). Scholars interested in studying how students and teachers find success in the classroom tend to write in spatial terms of borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987), the interstitial (Bhabha, 1999), and third spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008) within classrooms. Rather than highlighting the divides found in schools, Anzaldua (1987), Bhabha (1999), and Gutiérrez (2008) used these terms to explain the way in which students and teachers are

able to self-author in these spaces "between and within cultures" creating a more personal sense of self. Understanding these types of hybridizations acknowledge the fluidity of creating ones' personal narrative and the way in which positionalities influence societal structures within the context of current and past histories (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Vetter, Fairbanks, & Ariail, 2011). Both students and teachers can utilize these notions of hybridizations to understand positionality in the shared space of the classroom. Tan and Calabrese Barton (2010) described this collective third space as creating arenas for improvisations and change within schools that respect the uniqueness of each immigrant story.

<center>Teaching with a Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy</center>

Humanizing (Bartolomé, 1994; del Carmen Salazar, 2013; Franquiz & Salazar, 2004; Paris, 2010), caring (Noddings, 1988, 1992, 2002), and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2010, 2012; Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012) stem from Freire's (1970) work in critical pedagogy which is characterized through a principal of teaching that specifically asks students to recognize power structures within education and focuses on the learning and relearning of information from multiple perspectives. First used by Freire among disenfranchised and marginalized populations in Brazil in the 1960s, this critical framework emphasized that teaching should be conducted through a problem-posing curriculum, which encourages creativity, dialogue, and an emergence of consciousness.

Bartolomé (1994), in particular, challenged institutes of higher education with the responsibility of creating politically aware and culturally sound teachers. She argued that a humanizing pedagogy, an approach to teaching, which emphasizes students'

backgrounds, language, and culture in a learning context in which teachers share power

with students, can create an understanding within teachers to diminish overt and covert

racism within schools (Bartolomé, 1994). Noddings (1988) similarly asserts that

educators must participate in the modelling of "caring for" that is co-constructed between

the teacher and student so that they are both working toward a common goal of success.

Humanizing pedagogy, like culturally sustaining pedagogy, denies a deficit approach to

teaching marginalized populations and, "seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—

linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling"

(Paris, 2012, p. 93).

      Creating hybrid positionalities and spaces for a thoughtful approach to cultural

integration takes reflection and dialogue. Whipp (2013) described two types of teachers

in her study of early career educators: those who use a social justice framework that

encourages questioning of texts and perspectives and those who simply relied on forming

relationships with students rather than teaching students to understand the complexities of

race in the United States. The latter described multicultural practices in their school such

as singing a song in another language during a holiday program (Whipp, 2013). While

forming relationships with students is important, critical pedagogies are not simply about

getting to know your students as individuals at the micro level. Acknowledging the

diverse nature of schooling has led to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support

Consortium (InTASC) including in its 2013 model core teaching standards elements for

creating comprehensible input for diverse populations, and elements that encourage

teachers to become promoters of inter- and intra- group diversity (Council of chief state

school officers, 2013). However, the standards still do not focus on anything as Freirean

as questioning the structure and equity of traditional schooling at the macro level. To achieve a culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012), teachers must begin to view the world and their students in terms of their histories, socioeconomic realities, and their day-to-day challenges (He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014). He et al. (2014) argued that teachers need to become "sociologists of their own backyards" (p. 338) and move toward a funds of knowledge approach that accentuates the unique assets that students bring to the classroom (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Valenzuela, 1999).

<center>Teachers' Positionalities in the Classroom</center>

As educational arenas are currently encouraging cross-cultural and historical understanding of students, a variety of similar constructs have developed including cosmopolitanism (Hull, Stornaiuolo, & Sahni, 2010), global intelligence (Gerzon, 2010), and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). What all of these constructs have in common are elements of understanding, positioning, and connecting as well as moderating dialogue, and developing ideas and understandings about oneself in both micro and macro contexts. Stevens (2011) explained that as educators "are lost in a sea of vague terms such as *student-centered* and *sociocultural approaches,* knowing one's students well has equated with establishing classroom-based relationships with them" (p. 139); but understanding students at the micro level may not lead to creating spaces for hybridity at the structural level for students or teachers.

Teachers are assigned a complex job of working with students who often share different backgrounds and cultures. Teachers are also insiders, meaning that they are not new to the classroom environment and often come to the profession with developed beliefs about school structures, learning, and teaching (Pajares, 1992). They hold beliefs

about how race and culture is constructed in schools as well as within society (Haberman, 1991; Lewis, 2001). These beliefs manifest in the form of cultural folklore as in the statement, "girls do not do well in math" (Pajares, 1992). Studies have also focused on teacher doubt, ambivalence, or insecurity within the student-teacher relationship when working with groups so foreign to their own upbringing (Ball, 2009; Conchas, 2010; Dabach, 2011; Valdés, 1996, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). If teachers are not encouraged to reflect thoughtfully on these beliefs and folklore statements, they may be mistaken for knowledge. However, these racial and cultural ideologies are not static and can shift as new contexts and circumstances mediate new beliefs (Gee, 2012; Lewis, 2001). Zembylas (2010) described this in terms of Foucault's *ethic of discomfort,* to suggest that by providing pre-service and in-service training about diversity and spaces to discuss their ever-fluctuating ideas, teachers may adjust their discomfort to develop a self, which includes, learning from, and celebrating immigrant students and seeing themselves as successful teachers of immigrants.

In her research surrounding Mexican immigrant families and their negotiations with culture and school, Valdés (1996) explained:

> I naively still thought that difficulties experienced by non-English-speaking children had primarily to do with language. It became clear that I was seeking instead to understand and explain how multiple factors, including culture and class, contribute to the academic 'failure' of Mexican-origin children. (p.6-7)

Similarly, Valenzuela (1999) articulated the culture clash of American schools, stating that "students are objectified by a double standard that calls on them to make sense of schooling when schooling is not attempting to make sense of them" (p. 258). The implications are evident in the many students struggling with an identity not valued as sufficient in the eyes of teachers and school administrators. Except in the rare instances

of bilingual education, learning in schools, means learning in English. Palmer and

Martinez (2013) explained that while a teacher's monolingualism is not of general

concern, students' bilingualism is often problematized. As teachers construct student

identities in their classes, they also position themselves as certain types of teachers based

on school settings and the students they teach (Fairbanks et al., 2010). By understanding

their own notions of education and their own racial narratives, teachers become more

likely to understand their own beliefs about culture.

On one side of the spectrum, teachers are displayed as misunderstanding their

students' cultural positionalities. Then on the other end the "teacher as hero" narrative

informs both teachers' and the publics' attitudes about teaching. Carter (2009) explained

how simple the narratives of movies such as *Dangerous Minds, Mr. Holland's Opus,*

Freedom Writers, and *Stand and Deliver* succumb to popular education mythology

mocking the pedagogical effort of teachers and instead forming the identities of the

teachers in these films as "a true story of a modern miracle." Carter clarified:

> Thus, it seems reasonable for the public to expect English teachers to 'work miracles,' and to blame them when miracles somehow do not take place. They are supposed to work miracles. This difficult expectation may be central to the overall public disregard revealed by both teacher salaries and by the rhetoric with which teachers are periodically blamed for the failings of education. (p. 65)

Teachers are not positioned as professionals, but instead are asked to sacrifice themselves

and their careers so that they can teach others to become professionals. Bach and

Weinstein (2014) describe Tony Danza's role in the reality show *Teach* in a similar

"teacher as hero" construct, stating,

> In such narratives, teachers who find themselves getting jobs in urban schools are outsiders, often nonconformists, who care so much for their students that they are willing to make personal sacrifices to make their students' lives better. (p. 303)

Few studies show the everyday achievements of teachers working with diverse students without relying on either a critical lens or the teacher-as-saint whitewashing, and these studies are needed.

<div align="center">Figured Worlds: Theory and Features</div>

Understanding the classroom environment is complex, but one way to narrate the individual stories of teachers and students is through a sociohistorical framework drawn from Vygotsky's (1978) work on child development, which seeks to view the interpretation of knowledge as situated in a dialogue within history and time. To this extent Vygotsky described the action of learning as first situated within the *inter*psychological—within interactions with people—and later the *intra*spyshoclogical—on a personal level, yet still in dialogue. Vygotsky contended that to understand the child, we must also examine the external social world that the child interacts *with* and *in*. Smagorinsky (2007) articulated Vygotsky's theories, explaining that the social nature of learning "implies that even when people are alone, their thinking involves a sort of dialogue with others, including those long gone." (p. 62).

The evolution of sociohistorical to sociocultural can be synthesized, to an understanding that the theory "has two themes: human action and mediation" (Oguz, 2007, p. 8). The sociocultural perspective has profound implications for teaching, schooling, and education as it guides the creation of the self-image and reality of both teachers and students within schools (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). When using a sociocultural framework educational researchers can move beyond a positivist approach of understanding how schools affect students, to develop an understanding of what mediates the complex actions within each particular classroom (Hausfather, 1996). What

also makes this framework important is that unlike critical theories, the sociocultural

framework:

> Is less clear on [making] judgments about the morality of various perspectives,
> since the emphasis is on understanding how people learn to think through their
> immersion in a social value system. (Smagorinsky, 2007, p. 63)

Rather than look at teaching through a critical lens, this framework is descriptive and

relies on contextualized understanding of student and teacher to describe their realities

(Hausfather, 1996).

Holland et al. (1998) extended the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin to introduce

an identity analysis that gives agency to the actor, who then improvises through past

histories and present discourses. Because of the sociohistorical-cultural nature of

schooling and the constructed communities enacted in each particular school setting, the

classroom can also be a socially constructed "world." Figured worlds are defined by

cultural improvisations or performances, mediating devices, and positional identities

(Holland et al., 1998). These features within the larger framework explain the choices and

actions teachers make as they negotiate their understandings of their positionalities and

subjectivities within their specific figured worlds of an urban, diverse classroom. In the

following section, I elaborate on education literature that uses the figured worlds

framework.

<div align="center">The Figured Worlds of Schools</div>

The figured worlds of education encourage the understanding of student

orientation, dialogues and negotiations with power structures, participation in certain

school cultures (Kangas, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, & Hakkarainen, 2013), and teachers'

social practices in specific school settings (Saunders, 2012). Fecho, Graham, and

Hudson-Ross (2005) drew on a figured worlds framework to describe, the improvisation that occurred as in-service language arts teachers entered each other's spaces to extend their teaching practices beyond their current subjectivities. As the teachers in this study both figuratively and literally entered each other's classrooms, their figured worlds were renegotiated as they tried to make sense of the vast differences in schools across the United States and the improvisations performed by their students when issues of race and culture were addressed (Fecho et al., 2005).

Power enacted through policy also has implications for both students and teachers in terms of their self-authoring (Brown & Feger, 2010). Policies such as NCLB, with its demand for testing, have changed the literacy practices and curriculum of teachers, thereby converting their mantra to "no child shall be left behind" and creating changes in school practices. Policy makers rely on artifacts such as standardized tests to interpret teacher quality, positioning teachers at poorly performing schools as less qualified than educators at schools of excellence (Pennington, 2007). Positioning based on these single forms of assessment reduces teacher's power and influences their own positionalities situated in the context of NCLB.

The teachers in Brown and Feger's (2010) study echoed this positioning and framed their students in terms of their achievement or potential achievement on standardized tests. In turn, they struggled to negotiate the tension between how they were taught to teach in their colleges of education and what they found themselves pressured by the administration to do in the classroom. The figured world was further complicated by their lived experiences, as each teacher came to the classroom with conceptual

knowledge of "school" based on their own experiences in the Texas public education system (Brown & Feger, 2010).

Similarly, community and school attitudes toward schools or programs within schools also affected teacher self-authoring. Saunders (2012) described the school in her study as two distinct worlds: honors on the bottom floor and "the dumping ground" above. Ms. Morgan, the student teacher described in the study, found that soon after she started teaching the "dumping ground kids"—many of them ELLs—she was "equally burdened with the diminished expectations of her colleagues" (p. 19). Thus, the students' positionalities are also projected on the teacher. However, as a novice teacher, Ms. Morgan took risks that other teachers did not. She soon was able to improvise her position to give both herself and her students' agency by tasking them with projects that encouraged discussion and critical thinking about texts. She was therefore able to shift their classroom to a figured world of critical analysts rather than dumping ground kids (Saunders, 2012).

The multiplicity of perspective and descriptive narrative offered in a figured worlds framework lends itself well to research in the realm of teacher self-authoring and practice. By understanding what mediates teachers' subjectivities about diversity, it may be possible to help negotiate those internal beliefs into ones that reject notions of monocultural and monolingual society and classrooms. As explorations in the New South open the dialogue on teacher and community relationships with students (Cuadros, 2006; Gill, 2010; Salas, 2008), qualitative inquiry such as this dissertation study, can extend the current discussions of how teachers negotiate figured worlds in urban high school settings allowing researchers, such as myself, to narrate participants' stories rather than simply

critique them. By understanding teachers' professional subjectivities, and the lived experiences that mediate them, teacher educators and in-service teacher coaches may be in a better position to help develop reflective practices that encourage an ever-evolving notion of culturally sustaining pedagogy.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined how culturally sustaining, caring, and humanizing pedagogies are envisioned in the classroom. Secondly, I highlighted some of the ways in which teachers self-author within the context of school. I then explained the theory and features used in a figured worlds framework, ending with a description of how that framework has been used in educational qualitative research. The purpose of this study was to clarify understandings of the personal subjectivities and the contexts that mediate those subjectivities of content area teachers in a high-immigrant, urban high school in the New South. In creating this qualitative study, I hope to further the dialogue of the casting and recasting of advocacy performed by these teachers.

In Chapter Three, I will expand on qualitative inquiry and align the figured worlds framework with the methodology of the current study. I will also include a description of my pilot study, research site, subjectivity statement, and the data generated for this dissertation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This dissertation study leveraged participatory fieldwork to generate understandings of teachers' professional subjectivities about working with students in a high-immigrant population, urban high school through a lens that views human behavior as always involved in meaning making. I have conducted this study in the absence of a critical lens and with the belief that "best practices" are not best for all students. It is my hope that research such as this can be used to retract from ideas of providing teachers "toolboxes" or "arsenals" of strategies and allow a more dialogic approach to understanding the rationales and potential tensions behind the choices they make in the classroom. Educators of teachers and administrations within this school, and others like it, may be able to use the data, narratives, and voices from this study to understand teachers' self-authoring as they do the important work of teaching.

In this chapter I provide (a) a focused review of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and a further explanation of the Figured Worlds theoretical framework (b) the purpose of the study and research questions (c) the design of the study and description of the research site (d) a subjectivity statement and (e) an explanation of the processes and procedures including a description of the data collection, coding, and analysis.

Qualitative Inquiry and Theoretical Framework

Sociohistorical conceptions of identity draw on the knowledge of the participant and researcher inside the context of a situation. The actors in each situation mediate their

beliefs through the circumstances surrounding them, first making sense of the world externally and then internally within a continuous dialogue (Holland et al., 1998; Holland & Lave, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). This dissertation drew on these concepts to understand the meaning making associated with high school teachers of immigrant students. Within the field of education, researchers have responded to the need to study immigrant students through ethnographic inquiries (Fairbanks & Crooks, 2011; Harklau, 2013; Valdés, 1996, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999) and researchers, sometimes use a more critical lens to depict the struggles of teaching "other people's children" (Delpit, 1995; Haberman, 1991; Kunjufu, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Other studies explain how students can use their histories and acculturation processes to either develop positive or negative school trajectories and position their teachers as either someone who helps them or someone who impedes their success (Conchas, 2010; Franquiz & Salazar, 2004; Gibson, 1998; Salazar & Franquiz, 2008). This dissertation study intends to elaborate meaning making without reducing context through in-depth interview processes and participant observations. Teaching and learning are constantly in a dialogue with social, political, and historical practices. As current events unfold and locations change, contemporary research can illuminate the "now" which in turn will help future researchers understand where and why certain beliefs were enacted or policies written.

I frame this dissertation through the lens of Holland's et al. (1998) figured worlds framework. This framework allows for a deeper understanding of how teachers see themselves as a teacher of immigrants in an urban environment. In the figured worlds framework, a classroom, specifically a classroom in a Title 1 or "bad" school is a created cultural world that was constructed by the demographic and interpretation of that

demographic before the teacher came and is continuously reconstructed by the actors involved. The teachers who enter this classroom incorporate the knowledge of what it means to be in a school combined with what they think it means to be in an "urban" school. Holland et al. (1998) write that:

> Identities are improvised…thus, persons are caught in tensions between past histories that have settled in them and the present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge upon them (p. 4).

Pajares (1992) contended that entering education presents a conflict for teachers because of their insider knowledge and expectations of former practices and habits. At an early age, many teachers "played" school. Most attended public schools where they interacted and engaged with additional artifacts of school: standardized tests, cafeteria lunches, textbooks, and science projects to name a few. In figured worlds, these "histories remembered" are affected by current policies of testing and immigration events that interact or "impinge" on the socially constructed world of school (Holland et al., 1998). It would be remiss to try to understand the complexities of the teacher or students who play the actors in these worlds within a paradigm that sees in mono-truths. Thus, researchers have used this framework to tell these stories in an attempt to revise the narrative that there is a single figured world of "school" (Robinson, 2007; Rubin, 2007; Rush & Fecho, 2008; Urrieta, 2007a, 2007b).

<div align="center">The Design of the Study: The Research Method</div>

This study explored the sense-making of content area teachers working with students in a high-immigrant urban high school by asking them about their past experiences as well as current teaching practices in an attempt to understand what mediated their understandings of success and advocacy in their classrooms. To that end,

the qualitative inquiry enhanced existing literature by generating a thick description shaped by the following research questions: 1)What are the ranges of classroom teachers' professional subjectivities—internal judgments and realities shaped by lived experiences— surrounding immigrant students in the setting of an urban school in the New South? 2) What additional contexts mediate those subjectivities? 3) How are teachers' positions of success and advocacy constructed, reconstructed, and potentially "improvised" in institutional and classroom settings?

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) explained that "the term method originally meant the way to the goal" (p. 105). In order to answer questions about teachers' subjectivities within a sociocultural context, researchers find that qualitative methodology with an emphasis on interviewing is a common way to the goal. The power of qualitative inquiry is in telling the stories of teachers in a way to develop discourses of understanding, of recognizing heterogeneity, and acknowledging the space-making that teachers create in their schools (Gonzalez, 2011). Qualitative research for education lies in the personal, the contextual, and the historical. Miles and Huberman (1990) argued that quantitative researches "need our work to enlarge their perception of what school learning is or can be" (p. 355). Although large-scale studies and quantitative data provide overviews, they neglect the stories of the participants and leave "gaps in understanding" (Harklau, 2013).

Glesne (2006) identified three data-gathering techniques that dominate qualitative inquiry: document collection, participant observation, and interviewing (p. 36). For the purposes of this study, the most significant source of data collection was the multiple interviews across a period of two academic quarters. Using interviews, I was able to explore the research questions to better understand how teachers in an urban environment

negotiated their professional identities, and how their lived experiences mediated those understandings. To add to the richness of the data, I also engaged in participant observation in the research participants' classes. This interview study employed methods of participatory qualitative inquiry as a means to embed stories in both macro contexts and to tease out the micro at the same time in an attempt to guide the reader to see connections not "discovered" but observed, interpreted, and written about (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Wolcott, 1983,1990).

Through "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) this dissertation study illuminated understandings in education that lead to new ways of thinking about the old, allowing for the social interaction and interpretations of the participants to narrate the complexities of reality in a manner that focused on a human understanding of meaning making. The alignment of sociocultural theory, a figured worlds framework, and a qualitative methodology enabled this dissertation to make observances through realist tales, that "pushed most firmly for the authenticity of the cultural representations conveyed by the text" (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 45) as well as impressionist tales which **"attempted to evoke an open, participatory sense in the viewer" (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 101). The study was informed by a pilot study that I briefly describe before I elaborate on the specifics of the research design's data generation and analysis.

Pilot Study

The decision to locate the research at Easton High School was a critical one for the beginning of this dissertation study. I selected Easton for various reasons, the foremost being that I taught at this school for three years and substitute taught for an additional year. In addition to my personal feelings toward Easton, I believe it was a

strong research site for this study because of the high immigrant population (the LEP population was, at the time of the study, 21.4% with many more immigrant students no longer fitting the LEP requirements) combined with the high teacher turnover rate—over one third of the faculty was new during the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition, some of the results of the North Carolina Teacher Workings Condition Survey suggested that the specific atmosphere of Easton had created a feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent among its teachers (New Teacher Center, 2014). The results of the survey included 68 of 90 (75.56%) Easton High teachers. Only 42.4% of respondents, just 28 educators, indicated that they agreed with the statement, "Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn." The level of "agree" was over 80% for all North Carolina public high schools. In addition, only 30.9% agreed with the statement, "Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions"; 13.3% agreed that "students at this school follow rules of conduct"; and only 30.3% indicated, "school administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct." One of the most problematic statements was that only 18.5% of the 68 respondents, twelve teachers, indicated that among school leadership "There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school." This was well below the state average of 73.0% for all North Carolina public schools and the district percentage of 63.7 (New Teacher Center, 2014). The results of this survey and my personal feelings toward my success at Easton, as elaborated in the subjectivity statement below, furthered my interest in how teachers formed their subjectivities about immigrant students in a climate that was not always conducive to learning and one where teachers felt somewhat isolated.

After deciding on the research site, the next step was to seek approval. I discussed the opportunities for the school and faculty with the principal of Easton High School during the fall of 2013. Shortly after our meeting, the principal provided me with an emailed letter of support. I then followed both the university and district's protocol for submitting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) proposal and application for a pilot study with a history teacher, Debbie Harrison (the pseudonym for the pilot participant). Once I received permission on all levels, I began the pilot study with an observation of the school setting, and three subsequent observations during which I collected fieldnotes in Harrison's classroom at the end of the spring 2014 semester. I followed the classroom observations with a two-hour interview after the semester ended which I audio recorded and transcribed. Because of the time constraints and the fact that this was a pilot study, the data collection was more linear in nature than the subsequent study. Figure 1 represents the timeline of the pilot study.

January 2014
presented study idea to principal & secured support

submitted IRB & district application

revised IRB & district application per district liaison suggestions

February 2014
IRB and district application accepted

March 2014
began visiting the campus of site to take notes

began recruiting participants

April- May 2014
3 participant observation visits to Harrison's classroom

August 2014
interview with Harrison

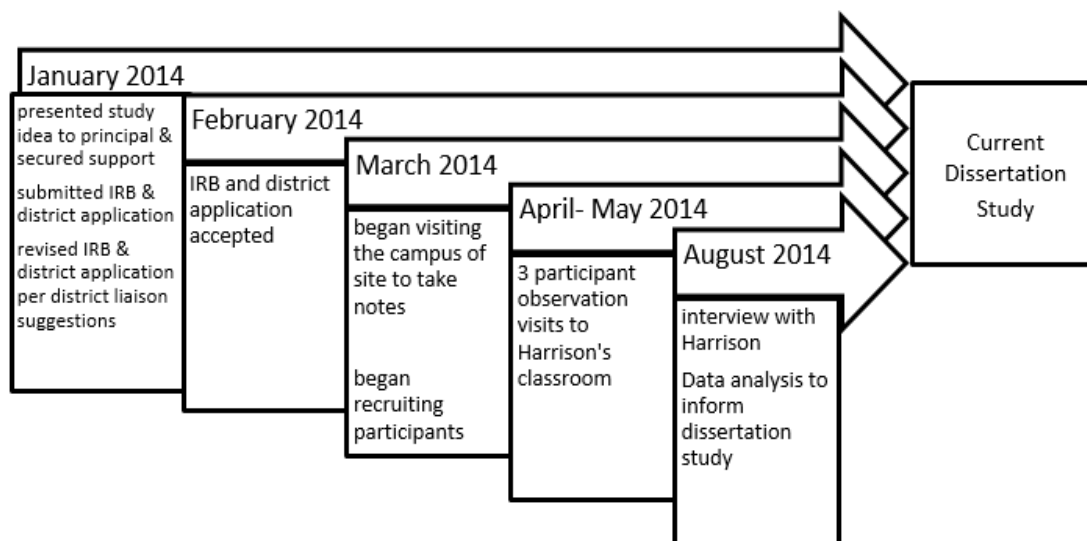Data analysis to inform dissertation study

Current Dissertation Study

Figure 1: Pilot study

Research Site: Easton High School

Easton High was nestled between an up-and-coming neighborhood and two busy streets where several students had been killed in recent years while trying to cross. While houses zoned for this district ranged from the $160,000s to the one million mark, there were also a number of low-income housing apartment complexes surrounding the gentrified neighborhoods. This was the part of town where you could buy banh mi at Thanh Huong's, bank at *Banca de la Gente*, cash checks at *El Cambio*, eat pupusas at *El Pulgarcito*, and buy your hallal foods at the *Le Shish Kebab deli*. Just around the corner swanky bars offered changing art exhibitions and even nude life drawing classes on Mondays. Hipsters rode double-decker bicycles and displayed their tattoos in "manktops" (male tank tops) at outdoor patios. Antique stores, breweries, art galleries, and an almost-completed light rail stop were all within minutes of the large Easton High campus.

I pulled up to Easton High on a warm, spring day and parked my car in the visitor's parking—spaces designated at the edge of a circular green driveway leading up to the school. The first language I heard was Spanish. A couple chatted with each other as they got into a rather old, red Ford pick-up truck with a baby seat in the truck bed (luckily, the baby was not on the scene). As I walked toward the updated glass and steel atrium, rap music from a black SUV with the windows rolled down drowned out the sounds of the Spanish couple.

The juxtaposition of Spanish and rap did not surprise me; after all, of the 1,502 students that attend Easton High, 30.1% were Hispanic, 55% were Black, 8.3% were Asian and only 4.5% of the school's population was designated White. (0.3% identified as American Indian and 1.5% as Multiracial). The school was defined as racially segregated based on the disproportionality when compared to the rest of the district's demographics of only 15% Hispanic, 44.9% Black, and 32% White. In addition, 82.7% of Easton's students were considered economically disadvantaged, while that number was just over 50% for all high schools in the district.

Although categorized as "urban" and located only minutes from the city's downtown financial district, the campus spanned more than 62 acres complete with football field and greenhouse on the property. The original building, designed by a prominent architect of the time, opened in 1959 and received facelifts in both the late

1970s and early 2000s, as well as the completion of a new central science building earlier in 2014. The original design was still evident throughout the open, airy campus despite some much-needed attention to old, drafty windows, leaking roofs, and a small rodent problem. Mobile units peppered the campus to accommodate the growing student population. Although at the time of the study, the high school was comprehensive, less than five years earlier Easton was five separate "small schools" sharing only a cafeteria, gym and sports teams. The five themed high schools had received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support the small schools initiative, but amid rumors that the district no longer wanted to pay for five principals, the schools merged back into one in 2011. In the following statement, I will attempt to express my biases or positionality that informed this study in regards to both Easton High School and teaching.

Subjectivity Statement

The qualitative researcher, particularly the participant observer, is not the semi-detached experimenter of the positivist paradigm, but rather a "vulnerable observer" who does not seek objectivity, but purposefully presents the subjectivity with which she starts, progresses, and finishes the study (Behar, 1996; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). This dissertation study starts with my story.

I earned my TESL license as part of a post-baccalaureate certificate program at a four-year university. During my coursework, I was required to diligently study the socio-historical factors involved in educating immigrant students. Many of the courses I took required open discussions about race, ethnicity, poverty, immigration, and personal beliefs about these often-controversial topics. Through these courses, I was able to delve deeper into understanding where my beliefs developed, and I positioned myself as a

teacher of immigrant youth. I continued my education to receive my Master's Degree in TESL while I taught at Easton High School. As I spoke more with my colleagues, I was surprised to learn that many teachers did not have similar coursework in their education programs.

Throughout my years at Easton High, I saw my students struggle over who they were as they developed new spaces and the unique hybrid identities that occupied those spaces. I also struggled with positionality as a teacher. During my first year teaching high school, the film *Freedom Writers* was released. The superintendent at the time encouraged all teachers to see the film, even allowing free screenings on the first few days of release. I eagerly went with a colleague and was soon inundated by the "teacher-hero" narrative in full force. Erin Gruwell, taught those kids, but she also took on three extra jobs to pay for it, and lost her husband in the process. I was one year into my relationship with my now husband when I saw this film, and I can honestly say, I did not want to choose my students over him. Yet, this left me conflicted, "Was I a bad teacher?" "Did I not care enough?" I rewrote my narrative in my head multiple times, each time falling very short of Erin Gruwell, the heroine of *Freedom Writers*, and yet I still felt that I was accomplishing a lot with my students. I convinced myself that I needed to be happy and have a fulfilling life outside of my classroom in order to be successful in the classroom. I authored my success in terms of the positive feedback that I received from my students, and the accolades that my colleagues gave me in response to my work with my students. However, according to the district, the test scores that my English I students received dictated that I was only 32% effective compared to the districts other English I teachers—who incidentally taught various levels of students, not just ELLs. During the

same school year that my ineffectiveness was released, I also found out that even though I had a Master's degree in TESL, I was no longer highly qualified to teach English Language Arts classes and could only be the teacher of record for English language development elective courses. These larger structural mandates left me questioning the success that I had felt over the past four years.

Although the district presented a portrait of me as an ineffective teacher—not even qualified to teach the three blocks of English classes I taught—I was in a unique position that enabled me to work with both my students and the teachers in the school in a way that enabled their voices to be heard and their needs to be met. As the small school's sole ESL teacher, with a population of over 130 English Learners (just over a third of the school at the time), I worked with my school to integrate these students into the core of the learning environment. I worked with teachers who previously had little understanding of what it meant to learn another language in a high-stakes academic environment. I watched as they began to teach in a way that both met their students' needs and positioned them as successful teachers of immigrant youth. My interest in the personal and individual narratives of both the youth and the teachers I worked with has shaped my research agenda. Through this dissertation process, I hoped to trouble some of the education mythology of "teacher as hero" and allow teachers to positon themselves in their own practices of success—and to complicate the narrative of what it means to be a teacher and specifically a teacher of immigrant students. I chose to work with the teachers in Easton High School because it was a challenging environment, and it was and continues to be, important to me to understand and narrate the stories of the teachers who

work with this special group of students, within the context of this diverse, urban high school.

<div align="center">Data Generation</div>

Participants in this study included three teachers working in Easton High School. Ideally, I would have used a cohort of teachers, in either the same Professional Learning Community (PLC) or subject area, but because of the nature of the study and the length involved, I used those participants with whom I was able to establish a relationship. Glesne (2006) suggests making contact with a gatekeeper to negotiate conditions of access. Because of my experience teaching at Easton, I established contact with an academic facilitator when I began my pilot study and used this gatekeeper to gain access to additional teachers interested in working with me. After recruiting my participants, I asked that each sign a letter of consent to participate in this study. Table 1 below illustrates the three teachers who participated in this study.

Table 1: Teacher profiles

Teacher	Age	Race	Gender	Current Year Teaching	Year at Easton	Courses Observed for study semester
Paul Roberts	28	White	Male	4	4th	African American History; Latin American Studies
Robin Miller	34	White	Female	13	4th	SIOP Civics & Economics
Adrianne Collins	38	Black	Female	15	9th	Math III (regular & honors)

Data collection began in August 2014 and ended in January 2015, with follow-up interviews and emails for clarification purposes during the spring 2015 semester. The primary source of data collected was in the form of semi-structured, audiotaped interviews conducted three times throughout the semester and arranged to accommodate

the teacher's schedule (either during planning periods or after school). I also conducted

25 classroom observations of 90 minutes each over the course of the study and spent

additional time on campus involved in tutoring, proctoring, and observing common areas

such as the cafeteria, library, and breezeways. Most often when in the classroom, I

remained a passive observer (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). However, in Robin Miller's class, I

took an active participation role and helped students with their work in the SIOP Civics &

Economics class. I went an additional five times to Adrianne Collins's class to work

specifically with her newcomer. Table 2 illustrates the time spent in each class and the

length and number of interviews.

Table 2: Data generation

Data Source	Frequency	Duration	Participants
Interviews	3 each	30-55 minutes	3 participants
Classroom Observations	25	90 minutes	3 participants
Observations of common spaces	7	20-60 minutes	cafeteria, library, courtyard, hallways
Tutoring & Proctoring	6	90 minutes	Collins's classroom

The interview and observation process was recursive as the interviews informed my

perceptions of what I saw in the classroom, and my classroom observations helped

generate questions for the subsequent interviews. I transcribed, analyzed, and wrote

throughout the process also generating new paths for data collection. Figure 2 illustrates

the recursive nature of the process.

During the classroom observations, I recorded field notes, using an Alpha-smart

keyboard. After each observation, I transferred the notes to Microsoft word and expanded

my notes to include asides, vignettes, and additional remembrances. Throughout the data

collection process, I recorded the dates, times, classes observed, or interviews conducted

in both soft copies in my computer and printed hard copies, which I kept in a data journal. I generated 50 pages of typed field notes throughout the observations.
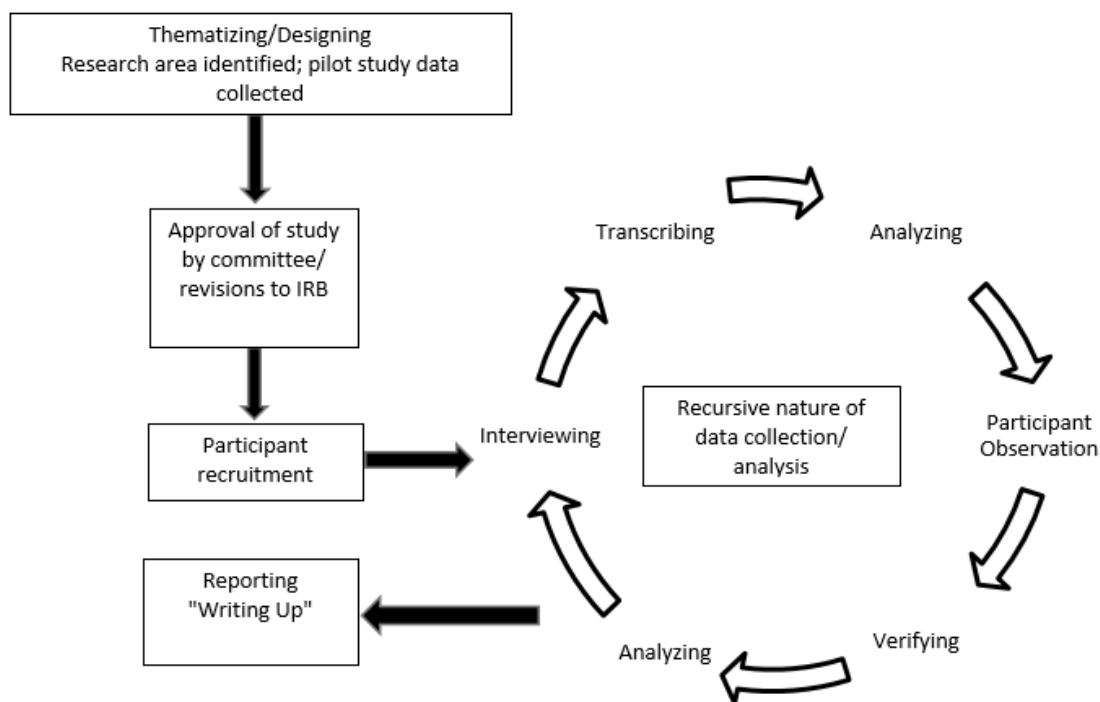
Thematizing/Designing
Research area identified; pilot study data collected

Approval of study by committee/ revisions to IRB

Participant recruitment

Reporting "Writing Up"

Transcribing   Analyzing

Interviewing

Recursive nature of data collection/ analysis

Participant Observation

Analyzing   Verifying

Figure 2: Recursive process of dissertation

Participant Observation and Field Notes

Throughout the study, I collected data as a participant observer, which DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) describe as data collection "in naturalistic settings by ethnographers who observe and/or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied" (p.2). The purpose of this form of data collection was to gain both explicit and tacit understandings by regarding the familiar as strange and questioning prior-held beliefs and assumptions (Glesne, 2006). Participant observation ranges on a spectrum from passive participation to complete participation. I went into this research with the intention of becoming a moderate participant with peripheral membership or one who is, "present, identifiable as a researcher, [and] occasionally interacts" (DeWalt & DeWalt,

2011, p. 23). However, in Adrianne Collins's class, I became a tutor on days that I was not observing, and in Robin Miller and Paul Robert's classes, I often worked with students during guided and independent practice.

During the observations, I collected data in the form of fieldnotes (see Appendix A) Emerson et al. (1995) describe the process of writing field notes, highlighting the interpretive nature of this form of data collection:

> Writing fieldnote descriptions, then, is not so much a matter of passively copying down 'facts' about 'what happened.' Rather, such writing involves active processes of interpretation and sense-making: noting and writing down some things as 'significant,' noting but ignoring others as 'not significant,' and even missing other possibly significant things altogether. As a result similar (even the 'same') events can be described for different purposes, with different sensitivities and concerns (p. 8).

In this sense, the researcher makes choices about what to include and exclude. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) encourage researchers to write descriptions to give a feeling of being there and to "include your own role so that you may understand how your presence influenced the unfolding of events" (p. 227). Throughout the fieldnote writing process, I followed this advice and wrote asides and commentaries (Emerson et al., 1995) to process my own thoughts, and evaluate my impressions about what I observed. I began this research with the understanding that I did "not claim [to] come to the situation like a 'blank slate,' with no preconception or guides for observation" (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, p. 578). Emerson et al. (1995) explain that:

> The reflexive lens helps us see and appreciate how our own renderings of others' worlds are not and can never be descriptions from outside those worlds. Rather, they are informed by and constructed in and through relationships with those under study (p. 216).

I engaged in reflexive practices, such as monitoring my subjectivity in order to remain clear about emotions, beliefs, biases, and ideas as they presented themselves throughout

the course of this study (Emerson et al., 1995; Hammersley, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Peshkin, 1988). Table 3 is an example of a fieldnote with my subjective aside.

Table 3: Fieldnote & aside

Fieldnotes 10-15-2014	Asides
Collins sits at her computer. What she writes is projected on the SMART Board. She is factoring binomials. One student offers a pencil to a student. He says 'what the f are you talking to me for?' Collins is writing something on the board, but some of the students are not listening or watching today. They sit with their heads down. A couple of students in the back volley insults about each other's hair. Collins has continued the factoring without talking, then tells the students that she will do the steps but won't say anything until they stop talking. They have now stopped talking and she is still not explaining the steps. She goes back through and explains the equation in great detail, and then shows them how to find the greatest common factor on their calculators.	*She told me earlier that the pens for her SMART Board no longer work, so she has to use the mouse on her computer to draw each number. I wonder if sitting behind her desk gives her less authority. She can't walk around and check for understanding.

*Honestly, I wonder when students will ever use this math, but at the same time, she clearly explains everything, so that students can see each step. Most of the students in front are paying attention now. I am a little bored. |

In addition, I used the methods described by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) to create *portraits of subjects*, *reconstruction of dialogue*, *description of physical settings, accounts of particular events, depiction of activities,* and to include my own behavior in order to generate the thick description necessary to recreate the classroom environment. On a regular basis, I transformed my fieldnotes into vignettes, or narratives of situations, people, or places I observed (see Appendix B). The more structured nature of the vignettes allowed me a creative space to review and reform my fieldnotes into stories or "tales of the field" (Van Maanen, 2011).

Semi-Structured Interviews and Transcription

Because this study was interested in the subjectivities of teachers and their

ideas about positionality and their students, the majority of the data was collected through

audio-recorded, semi-structured *topical* interviews. Glesne (2006) described the purpose

of topical interviewing as focusing on "opinions, perceptions, and attitudes. . . toward a

program, issue, or process in people's lives" (p. 80). I followed the seven stages of an

interview inquiry outlined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009): thematizing, designing,

interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. The first round of

interviews consisted of the same questions for all respondents but varied in terms of

second or follow-up questions allowing for the clarification of taken for granted

assumptions (see Appendix C). During the process of interviewing, I maintained a role of

an active listener, searching for both verbal and visual cues in the attempt to gain both

explicit (outwardly articulated) and tacit (outside of the participant's awareness)

knowledge (Spradley, 1979).

I entered the transcription process, much like writing fieldnotes, with an

understanding that this was not a purely objective event. Emerson et al. (1995) explained

that transcribing is in itself an interpretive process. They described talking as a

'multichanneled event' and writing as 'linear;' therefore the act of transcribing is the act

of translating spoken language to written language, which includes all the subjectivity of

making choices of how to display punctuation, visual cues, overlapping speech, etc.

(Emerson et al., 1995). With this in mind, after each recorded interview, I transcribed the

words I heard as well as wrote additional commentaries and asides in order to include the

atmosphere and non-verbal cues produced in the interview to add additional context to the interview (see Appendix D).

<div align="center">Data Inventory</div>

As data analysis is a fully recursive process, I read recorded fieldnotes and interviews and circled back to re-interview and re-analyze from different perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Geertz (1973) explained, the data analysis process will commence prior to the first field note and will only be finished by the objective nature of the project deadline. I followed first a process of data reduction, "the selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes"(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). This included the choices of what to record and then code, followed by an open-coding method or "read[ing] fieldnotes line-by-line to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues" (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 143). The coding used in this study was a combination of *in vivo codes*—those that come directly from the language used by the participants—as well as researcher-derived thematic coding (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). After the first analysis, I recorded additional notes, reflecting thoughts on themes and ideas, which I developed into integrative memos, a more involved analysis of the coded fieldnotes (Emerson et al., 1995). Through collecting and working with the data, I followed the process of a "close reading" to begin building narratives around the themes and further explore themes of significant interest. During this process, I asked questions of the data to, "see the familiar in a new light, avoid forcing data into preconceptions, and gain distance from our own as well as our participants' taken-for-granted assumptions" (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011, p. 45). Throughout the process, I sought to contemplate the relationships between the teachers,

students, school, and nature of school to describe thoroughly the figured world of advocacy at Easton High.

Summary

In this chapter, I connected the use of a neo-Vygotskian, figured worlds framework and the choice for using this framework as the lens for this dissertation study. I reiterated the purpose of the study along with identifying the research questions. I connected the framework to the methodology and explained the study's design. I briefly described the pilot study that informed this research and introduced the research site. I included my subjectivity statement before I detailed the processes and procedures including the data generation, analysis, and coding processes.

In the following three chapters, I display the data collected across the three participants' classes and during interviews. I first present in Chapter Four, Adrianne Collins, a math teacher "who would not give up." In Chapter Five, I introduce the pilot Latin American Studies class at Easton, and Paul Roberts, the fourth year teacher—who while entertaining tensions in teaching the class as a white male—advocated for students through his culture-inclusive curriculum. Finally, in Chapter Six, I conclude with the agency that Robin Miller enacted as an ESL leader in the school, and teacher of SIOP Civics & Economics.

CHAPTER FOUR: ADRIANNE COLLINS, OR THE TEACHER WHO WOULD NOT
GIVE UP

Easton High had a reputation in the neighborhood—and not a positive one. As

Adrianne Collins, an eight-year "veteran" of Easton and one of the math department's

only African American teachers, explained in one of our first conversations:

> I know the public thinks we're *Lean on Me* at the beginning when they're busting
> people's heads, you know that thing. But I see a lot of potential in these kids.
> Like, they work, so very hard; sometimes I think harder than the majority white
> school students do. Only because they have to—because a lot of them are trying
> to become the first person to graduate from high school and go on to college. So
> they're trying to break those cycles.

For Collins, because her students had fewer resources than their peers in Randolph Park

(a gentrified neighborhood where the children of banking executives lived), and because

they were black (mostly), there was a "stigma attached" to being a student or teacher at

Easton. Thinking about her students' sometimes-disruptive behavior, she pondered if

perhaps the students were simply trying to live up to the reputation of the school, "They

have to be bad because they go to a bad school."

Whatever Easton was or wasn't, Collins had established a routine with her

students. They entered her class each day and were engulfed in math. She focused on

developing clear lesson plans—direct instruction projected onto the SMART Board in the

form of a PowerPoint showing the steps to solve a particular math function:

$$Given\ cos\theta = \frac{12}{13}, find\ \sec\theta$$

Collins followed these initial presentations with guided and independent practice, culminating in unit tests to assess whether they "got it." Collins described herself as a teacher who expected her students to come to class, sit up straight, and make good use of what she could provide them. Most of all, she explained to me in her first recorded interview in early fall, they couldn't give up—even when it got hard. To help them, Collins tailored PowerPoints, guided notes, and worksheets just for them, and she tutored twice a week after school. If they didn't get the grade they had hoped for on a test or quiz, they could review and retake. As she explained, "They may not have the same opportunities, but they're gonna get it done." Collins was committed to helping them "get it done." This was her agency, how she understood herself, and how she wanted others to understand her work.

I begin the presentation of my findings with this data chapter surrounding Adrianne Collins' professional subjectivities and how she positioned the work she did in "preparing the kids" for college prep math. In this chapter, I describe Collins's positioning of teaching—"teaching is teaching across the board"—and the centrality of math to her professional identity, even when the arrival of a Limited English Proficient (LEP) immigrant newcomer challenged her instructional repertoire. I describe the interaction of state testing with her conceptualization of her success and her resistance to the failure that the "invalid" tests generated. Finally, I theorize within a broader literature of caring in urban schools (Noddings, 1999; 2002; Roberts, 2010; Shevalier, & McKenzie, 2012) her self-authoring as a teacher committed to "caring for" her students by providing a rigorous college-oriented math experience.

"All Schools are not the Same"

Adrianne Collins, a 37 year-old African American, was raised in what she described as a "middle-middle class," educated family in the U.S. South. She and her brother were sixth generation college graduates, something for which she was extremely proud as an African American. "Well, actually, that's really good for any type of family," she told me. Although Collins never described teaching as her "calling" or vocation, she explained that as a child she had only imagined three professions for herself. After dissecting a fetal pig in biology class, she no longer wanted to pursue a career as a pediatrician or veterinarian. She chose teaching.

Her high school career began in a majority African American city school which she described as having only one hard class—Geometry—"and that was tough for me, and it's funny because I'm a math teacher, but Geometry was so not math." She confided that much of her day at the school was spent copying notes from "disinterested" teachers; "Then sixth period was gym. All I had to do was dress out. I learned how to play Tonk [a card game] and three kinds of Solitaire." After her first year, her parents feared that her schooling was not "up to par" and transferred her to the majority White county school where she was zoned to attend. She explained, "Oh my god. I went from almost no homework to staying up until midnight doing homework. The change was drastic." Collins reluctantly finished her high school career at the new school eventually admitting that, "It was the best thing for me because I would have actually gone back [regressed academically] if I had stayed at the high school where I was."

Collins had been a "good" student. "I wasn't as good as my brother," who, she explained, had a photographic memory "Ah! So mad at that!" Yet, even if she wasn't as

smart as her sibling was, she explained that she always did well in school. Therefore, it was logical that since she would not be a doctor or veterinarian and because "education ran in our family," she would become a teacher. She liked school and was good at it, but during her middle school years, she began to rebel. She admitted to me, "I was trying to sound Black, and trying to be Black by not being as smart as I could be. I would get some questions wrong on purpose." This changed when she went to college at an Historically Black College and University (HBCU) a few hours from her childhood home; "When I got there and everybody was like me, I was over the moon." She enjoyed her education program which culminated in student teaching during the spring semester of her senior year, where she completed half of her student teaching in a Kindergarten class and later, observed and taught in a fourth grade class:

> In the half-day Kindergarten class, the teacher had the routine down pat. They knew to come in, put away their book bags and coats. They had a worksheet to do, and when some little bell would ring, they'd go to the carpet. It was amazing. And then when I got in there it kept clicking, so I didn't really have many problems teaching that class. But then I transitioned to a fourth grade class, and the teacher had no management skills whatsoever. The kids were off the chain—ohhh, they were off the wall. And me coming in didn't really change anything.

Teaching, she discovered, was hard work; and, her first year was a difficult one. She started in a third grade classroom, but because of her student teaching experience, her classroom management skills were "horrible." She explained that she did not have the support of a mentor, and was put on an action plan mid-year. "I got, essentially, fired at the end of that year," she said. Collins, however, would teach again. By the year's end, Collins had interviewed for a sixth grade position in an urban middle school. After five years of teaching middle grades math, she moved to Easton as a high school math teacher in a foundations level math class.

Although Collins never explicitly stated that she chose to work in an urban, Title I school she also did not entertain the idea of leaving Easton for a higher-performing school which she thought might equate to "jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire." She believed that all the students at Easton, had to work "ten times harder" than students at other schools because they didn't have the same resources. "All schools are not the same," she stated bluntly. She could draw from her own range of race-influenced experiences including a "sub-par" Black-majority high school, a "more rigorous" White-majority high school, and finally the realization at the HBCU she attended for college that, "Being educated didn't mean being White anymore. It meant being educated."

Collins appreciated the efforts her colleagues at Easton were making in order to show support and love for the school through small, but visible, demonstrations of caring. They began dressing up, and not just during spirit week. One of the teachers organized a day when teachers on the hall came dressed up as superheroes. "Mr. P dressed in an all Batman costume. I mean he was Batman from head to toe, and that kind of sparked the kids, with, oh these people are nice." However, she was still privy to the judgments students made about teachers based on race:

> I think the kids perceive me differently. Every time a white teacher disciplines a black student, the first thing out of their mouths is, 'She's racist!' And I'm like, come on, you know you weren't supposed to do that in the first place. If I had done the same thing, you wouldn't have said I'm racist. So, yeah, they seem to give the white female teachers the hardest time.

She was aware that students at Easton lacked trust in their teachers, but felt that they did not subject her to the same discrimination; "I think initially they see skin color and they think this teacher is not going to have my best interest at heart because she's White." Collins also thought her longevity at the school gave her a reputation with the students as

being "a pretty decent teacher;" the type of teacher that kids tell other kids not to "mess with" because "she's cool" and "she'll work with you." With nearly fifteen years of educational experience, Collins prided herself in being the type of teacher that "prepared students for the next level of math." Professionally, her goals were to "teach students persistence in the face of a challenge and the math skills to meet the next level of math" in their school careers, and, most of the time, she felt successful in this.

<div align="center">"Teaching is Teaching across the Board"</div>

When Collins started teaching third grade in 2000, her students were "mostly African American." By the mid-2000s, the demographics included more immigrant students. She said that she participated in SIOP training early in her career, and she put those skills to use during her first years at Easton teaching the foundations of math course. The foundations course was an introductory math course focusing on such concrete skills as finding the area and perimeter of objects and basic order of operations. Many of her students that year were newly arrived immigrants:

> I had four Vietnamese kids, and they couldn't talk to each other or me really. So, I did a lot of pantomiming. I would say the word and then walk around the table and say 'perimeter, perimeter, perimeter' so that they could get an idea that this means 'around.' And then I laid on top of the table and said 'area.' So, I did a lot of charades that year.

Chuckling to herself, she remembered enjoying teaching that class. However, she explained that with the higher level math she taught later in her career, the ideas were more abstract and, "It's like, how do I get you to understand this when you don't even understand the word." Both her immigrant students and her U.S.-born students struggled with the abstract concepts and academic vocabulary, so she tried to, "Correlate it with something they know about, like their sports people or musicians, and then I show

example, after example, after example." She believed that, "Teaching is teaching across the board, whether they're from El Salvador, Saudi Arabia or Cleveland, teaching is teaching. You just kind of have to get to their level, and reach down to the floor and try to. . . I don't know. I'm trying."

Collins's experience teaching elementary and middle school math helped her understand how teachers "lay the foundation" for math. "For example," she told me, "by second grade you have to hone in on what it means to be a ones place or a tens place." Because she understood this, she said that she could see some of her students were missing these essential building blocks. "A lot of kids have this leaning tower right now because they missed something. I feel like teaching ESL kids is kind of similar to teaching the regular ed. kids." They all needed support.

During their first year at Easton, students took math courses based on their eighth grade End of Grade (EOG) math or Algebra I exam scores. They followed a math sequence that led from either Foundations of Math or Math I, to Math II, then on to Math III, culminating in either Advanced Functions and Modeling (AFM) or the more rigorous Pre-Calculus and then Calculus. With the introduction of Common Core, Math was no longer divided into courses such as Geometry and Algebra II. Because of this new math sequence, most of the students came to each course with similar foundations. Collins's math class fell between Math II and pre-calculus or AFM. For the most part, Collins was able to integrate her immigrant students in the class, barely knowing which ones they were:

> I have two young men that sit over there. I want to say that they're Nepali or Vietnamese. I have another young man, [says student's name]. I don't know if he's, um, what his nationality is. Yeah, a good majority of my students I think are

either Latino or Vietnamese, or I think I have an African student. I have an
African student [says student's name]. He's from Africa.

However, sometimes students were misplaced—especially newly arrived immigrants.

Collins began the 2014 school year knowing that one of her students, Abed, spoke

Arabic and "not much English." She took the time to test his math skills toward the

beginning of the semester and then made the professional judgment that he was not

prepared for the Math III course.

> We did test him on his math skills, earlier and it seems to me that he just doesn't
> have the skills to master what we're doing here in this class. And, even if I put it
> in Arabic, like, I've tried Google translate, but I don't think it helps him much.

At first, she gave Abed the same work as the other students and pointed to his paper often

so that he could see where he was supposed to copy the notes. He sat in the front of the

class so that she could "keep an eye on him." Although he diligently copied the notes,

Collins said:

> He's not turning in his homework. I can't really grade his tests because he's not
> doing anything on the test, and if he did do something, it's looking at somebody
> else's paper and copying it. So, I'm not quite sure how to give him a grade.

After a few failed weeks of this, she attempted to work out a plan with the ESL facilitator

who told her that, she would provide him with login information for the student to work

on a "Math's Help" computer program. As weeks passed, it became clear that Collins's

efforts to move him to a math course for which he was better suited would not be

possible, and she never received assistance with the computer program that the ESL

facilitator had suggested. "I guess that's not happening. I tried to follow up," she told me

during the second interview.

As an aside, I note that it was then that Collins asked for my help. I began

working with Abed once a week with simple integer work, that developed into solving

one and two step equations. After each session, I would give her the work sheets and

math problems that Abed was able to complete and we would work out the next steps in

his improvised course. After one session, we discussed his work.

Collins: How'd he do today?

King: Better. We worked on one step equations. He understands when
             the variable is to the left of the equals sign, but he gets confused
             when I reverse the problem. I tried to show that it's the same
             problem. [ex: $7 + x = 10$ is the same as $10 = 7 + x$]

Collins: I had the same issue, and I tried to work with him during class, but
             then my other students need me to.

King: Have you thought about letting him use one of the computers—
             maybe we could find a website where he can practice one and two
             step equations?

Collins: The only thing I'm nervous about is when the kids figure out he's
             doing pre-Algebra stuff, and they're like why's he doing that and
             we're doing this. So I've kind of just stuck with the worksheets.

However, Collins admitted that sometimes she didn't get the worksheets printed

in time and so he sat there for the whole block with "nothing to do." His misplacement

was interrupting the important work that she was still doing with her Math III students,

and several times throughout the semester Collins spoke to administration, counselors,

and the ESL team about how to proceed.

Just before the winter break she told me, "As long as Abed 'passes' Math III, he

can substitute a computer course for his fourth math credit, but he still has to take the

MSL (the Measures of Student Learning state exam aligned to the Common Core)."

Collins confided that last year, "A student basically marked C's all the way down, and

passed." She felt bad about asking Abed to take the test when she knew she had not

taught him the material. The test, as she expected, was "curved severely." There were 38

multiple choice questions with 33 of them "counting"; the others were field test

questions. Of the 33, students needed to get eight correct to pass with a 70. Collins was

surprised:

> Abed got seven correct. He almost passed! How? I don't know. Maybe he's a
> great guesser. I think the test is flawed, but he had a high enough grade to pass the
> class even though he failed the final exam.

While Abed received the math credit for Math III, he did not have the skills to do much

beyond one and two-step equations. This was a disappointment for her. She had wanted

to do better for him, she explained. However, Collins nevertheless considered that she

had successfully advocated making sure that his mis-placement in her Math III class did

not penalize him as she continued to prepare her other students for pre-calculus.

"If You Fail, it Means you're Sitting Around Doing Nothing"

Collins expressed that she felt stress at the pace of the course, "Because we have

so much to cover, I gotta [snaps her fingers] boom, boom, boom." Part of her concern

was that she often made time to repeat her instruction until students clearly understood

the practice problems, usually leaving them a few days behind the pacing guide:

Collins:	Ok ladies, gentleman, let's go. Piece of paper out, adding and subtracting radicals. This is page four. Write it on a piece of paper. Copy only what's in blue. Do not write the equation yet.
Hector:	Only what's in blue?
Collins:	Yes, blue. [In a loud, slow voice] Alright, now do problems one and two only, then we'll go over one and two, and then you'll do three and four. Does everyone understand only one and two? One and two only. Let's go. One and two. [singing] If you need me call me, no matter how far…

One warm, November day Collins began instruction on synthetic division of

polynomials. A deep voiced boy in the back of the classroom dressed in an ROTC

uniform asked how she found the quotient of the problem she had just completed. Collins talked him through it, and told him to watch a few more examples.

Collins:	You got it?
Dequan:	No
Collins:	Ok, remember, first, write the coefficients only inside the upside-down division symbol. Take the first number inside—this represents the leading coefficient. Carry it down, unchanged, to below the division symbol. [she continued to explain how to find the answer]. Does that make sense?
Dequan:	Yeah.

They both smiled as he "got it" on the third explanation. She made sure that students understood. She patiently repeated answers, explained directions, reviewed basic math skills such as multiplication, and showed students short cuts on their calculators. Collins explained that students had to meet her half way; they had to "make an effort," but when they did, they were both successful.

A few weeks later in December, she started the direct instruction for six trig function. Two boys sat in the back of the room clearly watching something on one of their phones, laughing together. Another student was listening to music at such a loud volume that the beat was audible through his plugged in ear buds. He copied what was on the board as he danced to the beat. Two students lazily, passed a bag of cheese doodles back and forth, and a girl with braids leaned against another student's shoulder, her eyes closed. Collins was only teaching to the students in the first few rows. While she had patience to explain the problems until students understood, she was frustrated with those that seemed not to care. She began worrying about her health; "I physically got ill at the end of last year. I can't care more than these kids care. Otherwise, I'm gonna end up in

the hospital, and I don't want to end up in the hospital." However, she continued to worry about her students.

She often asked herself, were they motivated enough to succeed in her class? Were they motivated enough to succeed in school? She told me that one young man had asked if she would show motivational videos on Mondays—something that some of her colleagues had started doing on "Motivational Mondays." She explained that as soon as he had made the request, he put his head down. "I'm like, if that's your motivation, whatever video I play is not gonna help you," Collins said.

Collins, thought about where her students would find themselves after graduation. She wished that she could give them "future vision goggles" so they could see what she saw. She said that she felt many of them left Easton without being prepared for the rigors of a four-year college and suspected those that did graduate high school would go to community college, "And they'll probably be in remedial classes and they probably won't graduate from college. They might start, but they won't make it. Because it's gonna get progressively harder, and our kids, when they hit a wall, they give up." She knew that math was important, but her larger goal was to teach her students to ask themselves, "When you hit something that's hard do you give up, or do you keep working at it until you figure it out?" She wanted to teach them to figure it out.

However, during the final two weeks of the semester only three students were passing her class. She had given them a take home test over Thanksgiving break, and only ten out of a class of 26 students had turned in the test more than two weeks later:

> [The tests] keep trickling in, and then when I grade them, they're failing. And it's like, you had every resource at your disposal. You had notes, the computer; you could call somebody. You had five full days to get this done, and you either haven't turned it in, you've turned it in late, or when you turned it in there were

missing answers, or wrong answers. So of the ten that I got back so far, there was one 100, and the rest were failing grades, below a 50.

The test was on material that she had taught extensively in class, but it was the lack of effort that upset her the most. She gave them second chances. "A lot of my kids are re-testing," she explained. She also offered tutoring two days a week after school, test corrections, make-up tests, and per the administration, she would not enter grades lower than a 60% for any test grade. "Right now, I put in their actual grades, but the grades will improve when I enter the failing grades as 60s." She gave every opportunity, "It's really hard to fail my class because if you fail, it means you're sitting around doing nothing."

Collins also looked for new ways to improve her teaching. She told me that the PowerPoint slides she currently used were from a teacher that she mentored the previous year. Although Collins was this novice teacher's mentor, she took the time to learn from her. They planned together most days and because, "She's a A-type personality," Collins explained, the lesson plans and slides they developed together were extremely organized and detailed. Collins admitted, "I'm one of those people who likes to go on tangents, so the organization has helped not only me but my kids, too." She even began to organize her desk claiming that, "I feel like if I'm in order at school, then the kids are in order with their stuff and then we don't have any conflict." She explained that this newfound neatness in her classroom and organization in her teaching helped her students, "Kind of keep the information in order in their heads." Collins provided supplies, created scaffolded lessons, repeated instructions, and offered tutoring. She did this, she explained, because she cared.

Even though Collins found success in her style of teaching, she sometimes felt frustrated with this direct instruction approach. She wanted to experiment with the

flipped classroom, a teaching style in which the students listen to video lectures online to investigate the content before coming to class. In this way, class time would be spent practicing and discussing their understanding of the math. She explained:

> But this demographic—it's hard to do that because they don't have access to a computer at home. They can't get to the library, and so on and so forth. So then, I revert back to what I know I can do, and so for years I've been trying to become more of a facilitator teacher than a lecturer. And it's not working.

She felt that the students were more successful when she followed her routine of showing them how to solve a problem and letting them practice at home. She was concerned that this was, "probably the first time that they were ever challenged in a math class," and so she focused on the mechanics of math—not applied math, not math literacy, and not "flipped classroom" math.

She also found it difficult to apply the math to their real lives, which she said that she knew, was something that helped students relate to the content. She admitted that she was sometimes at a loss for where the math she was teaching could even be applied:

> For example modeling quadratics—you know somebody dives off the diving board, when do they hit the ground. I understand where that's applied. But we just finished completing the square to solve quadratic equations or imaginary numbers, and somebody asked when do you use imaginary numbers, and I said well they're used a lot with electricity because they're used with ohms and things like that, but beyond that I don't know where imaginary numbers are used.

She knew how to explain to students the relevance of understanding something like a budget and even exponential equations, "But then we do expanding the binomial, like three x plus one to the fifth power. When are they ever gonna do that? When? I'm not gonna multiple '3x + 1' five times." She knew that her students would benefit more from learning math that they could use in their lives, but this was the curriculum of Math III, and it was a course with a standardized test at the end of the semester.

Collins also felt conflicted about the state testing. She confided:

> I know this is bad for me to say, but I don't think those tests matter. Quite frankly, I'd rather them know the material and be ready for the next class than to pass some state tests. And the problem I have is, we teach it one way and then they word it so weirdly that the kids don't recognize it when they see it on the test.

However, she still felt tension from the testing as she tried to complete the required nine units in 90 days. Collins said that she thought much of her stress on the job was coming from the pace. She was also worried about the stress students put on themselves about testing. She explained that when, "You give them that state test and the kids, they want to succeed, they want to see success and then you put that test in front of them, and they're like, what is this? I've never seen this before, and they have. It's just worded in a completely different way than what they're used to and I just want them to be successful." Although she sometimes taught from released tests so that students could get used to the wording and questions, she was still, "A full believer that a lot of my kids have test anxiety. They are scared of tests. You put the word test on something and all of a sudden all of their knowledge goes out of their head."

To add to her frustration, she did not know by the first week in December whether her students would have a state exam at the end of the semester in January. "It would be nice to know" she mused. Because Common Core was "going away" in North Carolina, and the Math III test were aligned with the Common Core, Collins was able to assign it minimal importance in seeing herself as a successful teaching. However, she was concerned that the test gave the students a false sense of failure, and so she continued to teach the mandated curriculum, and "stuck" as closely as she could to the pacing guide in the hopes that her students would not be "tricked" by the test

It was at times like these that Collins became discouraged and considered leaving the profession. She said that sometimes she thought, "There might be other avenues I want to take instead of this teaching, but then that voice comes up and says these kids have horrible math backgrounds in the United States. Somebody needs to be there to prop it up." She said that she felt she was "propping up" her students.

One October afternoon as we chatted after an observation, a student walked into the classroom, and threw her arms around Collins. "What's that for?" she asked. The girl, with a huge smile plastered on her face, bragged about the SAT scores she received that weekend and thanked Collins for challenging her in math. Collins appreciated the positive feedback. She said kids would tell her, "You're the first math teacher that actually made me understand, blah, blah, blah." She smiled.

Discussion: What can we learn from Adrianne Collins?

How does a math teacher feel successful in a school where only 19.4% of students passed the Algebra I end of course exam[2] the previous school year? What does caring look like in an urban classroom? And did Adrianne Collins care? Noddings (1992; 2002) distinguishes between "caring about" and "caring for"—explaining that caring about is a one-way caring from the teacher about the student or larger concepts such as achievement gaps or standardized test scores. Noddings (1992) explains that in "caring for," however, the one receiving the caring, in this case Collins's students, demonstrate that they understand they are being cared for and in some way reciprocate the caring either verbally or through their actions. Teachers who care for their students understand their

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[2] Algebra 1 exam scores for the 2012-2013 school year was the most recent data available; test scores for 2013-2014 Math III MSLs had not been released.

unique situations (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012) and maintain "political clarity"

including understanding of the types of schools they teach in (Roberts, 2010).

In this chapter I presented the positioning of "caring for" that occurred in

Adrianne Collins Math III course, and Collins's ability to author both herself and her

students as successful through her methodical teaching of the curriculum. Her reputation

at Easton as fair, tough, and the type of teacher who "helped you out" and "challenged

you" had developed over the eight years that she taught there. Collins's explained that her

personal experiences as an African American woman in both predominately white and

black high schools in the South helped her understand her vison of education that

included wanting to challenge and push her students. She cared for her students through

giving them multiple opportunities to succeed, and she received satisfaction both in their

verbal affirmations of her teaching and in their success at the next level of Math. When

students reciprocated her caring, Collins worked with them to insure that they were

successful in her class, whether they had mastered the material or not. She said that she

was conscious of the fact that she knew her students would not use this math in "real

life," but she also believed strongly that she was teaching them persistence through

working out the "hard problems." Although she would have rather taught students

applied math skills, she was not sure how she could fit that in to the already tight

curriculum she was required to teach in one semester.

However, when a newcomer immigrant was placed in her Math III course, she

was faced with the challenge of how to differentiate instruction for one student who had

not mastered the skills to be in Math III. Although language was a barrier, the math was

the larger barrier. In the end, Abed received credit for Math III, but did not learn the

information the other students in the course learned. Collins justified this outcome through the belief that he should not have been scheduled to be in her class in the first place; While she tried to have him moved to a course more at his level, in the end he remained in the Math III course. She knew it was unfair to fail him, but she was also unsure of what to do with him given the limited support she received from the ESL facilitator and the administration. Her improvisation of using an outside tutor and one-step and two-step equation worksheets found on the internet allowed her to feel successful in "teaching him something" over the course of the semester. In this way, she was also able to envelope her newcomer ESL student into the fold of success that she created through positioning him as caring and successful in the accommodated curriculum that she improvised for him.

Collins positioned working with immigrant students as just "part of teaching" because she felt that all of the students at Easton needed additional support. While she did not find her curriculum particularly relevant to her students' future lives, she followed the pacing guide and worked through each unit teaching her students trigonometric functions and, even more, not to give up. She could have, and people could have given up on her. This was what she wanted from her students—to not give up. This was her agency and her demonstration of "caring for" her students. She was, therefore, able to position herself as a successful teacher even when her students failed a test because she hadn't given up; and her students, if they didn't give up either, would be ready for the next level of math—no matter what their test scores were. They would be ready. As such, Collins's students—for the most part—and colleagues—unanimously—respected her work and so, too did she because she, and they, had learned that they had to, "work ten times harder" at

Easton and in life. She did, and she would continue, to care—even if it seemed she was doing more of the caring than her students.

CHAPTER FIVE: PAUL ROBERTS: TEACHING (AND LEARNING) IN HIS
DREAM JOB

Paul Roberts opened the blinds to let in the early Monday morning August light. It was drizzling outside as students ducked into the 300 building for class where Roberts was waiting to greet them. He shook each of his Latin American History students' hand as they entered.

Roberts: Good morning; good to seeeeeeee yooooouuu! And big shout-outs to the football team! [Reading aloud to the class from off the SMART Board] Welcome to Latino American Studies! My first goal for you in the course is that you will have a better understanding of what happened in Latino American history and your place within history. Secondly, I want you to build on your skills in argumentation. An argument is an opinion supported by reasons. You will improve your ability to understand other people's arguments and construct your own arguments and counterarguments.

Paul Roberts was a Social Studies teacher, who, in his fourth year at Easton High,

began teaching the pilot Latino American Studies (LAS) class in a district with over

26,000 Latino students (18% of the total district population). By design, LAS was an

intentional space within the larger Easton campus for students to develop a sense of pride

in who they were and where they had come from. Committed to teaching with a social

justice lens, and eager for new challenges, Roberts explained that he was "ecstatic" to

teach the course. He found in LAS, and the challenge it represented, an affirmation of

why he had become a teacher, and, furthermore, he explained, a sense of liberation from

the omnipresent standardized testing that drove the non-elective required social studies

curriculum that he had known.

In the previous data chapter, I presented his colleague, Adrianne Collins, a Math III teacher who, I argued, despite her perceptions that the students did not always care as much as she did, "never gave up" and in so doing was able to frame herself and her teaching as successful. In this second data chapter, I turn to Paul Roberts and his experience of piloting the Latin American Studies at Easton—an effort aligned with the sort of "humanizing" pedagogies forwarded by urban education and, increasingly, a hallmark of activist pedagogies with Latino adolescents (Camarota, 2012; del Carmen Salazar, 2013; Franquiz & Salazar, 2004; Salazar & Franquiz, 2008). Grounded in Freirean notions of liberation, del Carmen Salazar (2013) characterized such instruction within a space of "not yet" wherein teachers and students "relentlessly strive for humanization, liberation, and transformation in education and society" (p.142).

Here, I theorize the uncertainty of Roberts's positionality as a successful teacher in the space of "not yet" that LAS potentially represented. My intent in describing the combination of excitement and hesitation that Roberts experienced teaching Easton's first LAS course, is to argue for more nuanced representations of the negotiation of early-career teachers attempting to incorporate culturally sustaining pedagogies within urban high schools.

"Urban Education: Where the Job would be more Important"

Paul Roberts, a white male in his late 20s grew up in a "lilywhite suburb" in New Jersey. Historically, the town was zoned for Whites only. Roberts explained that, "It's very public knowledge now. African Americans weren't allowed to live there. Jews were not allowed to live there. So when I was growing up, the legacy of that was still there." Although he had a few Asian neighbors, the town was still mostly White with very little

diversity in the public schools he attended, and his, "Bubble," he said, "Was severe." His older sister from his father's previous marriage had different experiences, and when Roberts began hanging out with her during his middle school years, she, "Awakened [him] to the inequality in the world" and the inequity so close to his home. Roberts began to see the neighborhood of his youth as two functioning systems; "And children born in either system have such disparate opportunities. I love where I'm from; I love the opportunity that I had, but I grew pretty well aware of what was going on," he explained.

In high school, Roberts's AP U.S. History teacher tried to, "Reframe the reality of the world" for Roberts and his classmates. Robert's explained:

> He was trying to break down that bubble. I mean we read Zinn—Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*—a left-wing perspective on history. So it was wonderful to have that class; a left of centered class to push ourselves. We needed to think for ourselves, but we needed that other perspective.

After high school, Roberts went to a local community college where he "joined a bunch of groups" including the Muslim Student Alliance, the Gay-Straight Alliance, and the Student Government. He said that he wanted to learn about, and interact with, people that were different from him. Roberts began studying Arabic, and after a year, went to Lebanon to continue his studies. "So I was 20 years old, and I left my bubble for real," he said, laughingly, of the experience. Roberts was in Beirut for one semester, studying the Arabic language, and he admitted that he, "Struggled enormously and figured out pretty quickly it wasn't for me."

For the remainder of the semester Roberts continued to go to classes and attempted to learn Arabic, but mostly he spent time hanging out and tutoring a Syrian refugee:

He was a friend of mine who worked in a café. He was trying to learn English because that's the language of opportunity; and so after class, we'd meet up at my apartment and we'd—he had a book—some kind of elementary school English book, and we would just run through the lessons together and practice speaking. And I loved it. It was great. So that's where I got hooked on teaching.

When Roberts returned to the U.S., he enrolled in an urban education program in Washington D.C. Tutoring in Lebanon had been his only teaching experience, but he decided that he wanted to try, and he specifically wanted to try, "Urban education where the job would be most important." He began his teacher education program and, being new to D.C., was warned, "There was no reason" to go across the bridge to Anacostia:

I understand where they were coming from. They wanted our safety; however, that's D.C., too. You're in the shadow of the Capitol; you have some of the most diverse communities in the country; the highest rates of AIDS in the country. So that's D.C., too. So it was really important for me to get over there.

He began tutoring in Anacostia "and fell in love with it." He said that he felt that his college education was valuable, and they, "did a good job of teaching cultural relevance from a critical perspective" that fit into his belief system of the inequity in schools. He completed his student teaching at a Title I high school in Washington D.C. and received his teaching certificate and degree in History and Second Education in the spring of 2011. That summer, he followed his girlfriend to North Carolina, where he eventually found a position just after the start of the 2011-2012 school year at Easton—his "dream job."

Latino American Studies

Roberts taught three 90-minute blocks a day for two 90 day semesters in the year. Students took his class for one semester. Second block was the elective course, Latino American Studies; "And the kids who are taking it are the ones who are genuinely interested in the subject matter." Roberts proudly stated, "That as far as we know we're the first high school to offer [LAS] in the district." The class was formed after the social

studies department at Easton decided that, "We have so many Latino students we ought to have it. It's in the curriculum somewhere and so we should offer it." Originally, a more senior teacher had taken the lead, but when he accepted another position at the end of the prior school year, Roberts got the course. "I had said if something falls through, I'd be happy to take it, so I was ecstatic to find out that I had it."

This was Roberts's first time teaching the class. "Can't you tell?" he joked. "It's very generic right now, but I'm gonna add more layers of complexity to it next semester. It just takes me time to get it all; to do it all; just not enough hours in the day." While there was technically a curriculum, it did not dictate his teaching. His instruction in the course was twofold. First, he wanted to teach students about, "Their history or Latin American history" and second, he sought, "To improve their skills in reading and writing." The entire course was an improvisation of readings that he collected from his college textbooks, films that he showed, and his own interpretation of history:

> So I choose interesting stuff from the time period, and what I want to find are readings that are high-level, like, college level, and well-written. School textbooks are so poorly written and not interesting, and they dumb it down far too much. I want high-level that's of some interest. I mean interest is relative, but I'm looking for good text that I can chunk to three or four paragraphs.

Instead of relying on a single text, he poured through his history books to compile packets, which he then photocopied for the students. For example, the topic on American Imperialism and Cuba included a short reading about the argument for manifest destiny, a paragraph about the Cuban War for Independence, and another short reading describing yellow journalism. After each chunk of text, Roberts asked students to answer direct questions to check for comprehension, including "What was manifest destiny?" and "who was José Martí?" He also added critical thinking tasks such as asking students to explain

a cartoon depicting the "white man's burden," and to write "an exaggerated newspaper

headline implicating the Spanish for the USS Maine explosion." Figure 3 is an example

from this reading packet.

The US Declares War!

In response to the revolt, Spain sent 150,000 troops to Cuba to restore order. As part of their strategy, the Spanish relocated thousands of Cuban citizens into concentration camps so they could not help the rebels. American journalists travelled to Cuba to cover the war. Newspaper owners William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer tried to lure readers by printing exaggerated accounts of Spain's brutality. Stories of poisoned wells and of children being thrown to the sharks deepened American empathy (understanding someone's feelings, beliefs) for the rebels. This sensational style of writing, which exaggerates the news to lure readers into buying newspapers, is known as yellow journalism.

Early in 1898, President McKinley ordered the *USS Maine*, an American battleship, to sail to the Cuban harbor of Havana as a symbol of US interest in war. In February 1898, the *Maine* was destroyed by a mysterious explosion and sank, with the loss of 268 men. There was no evidence every produced on the cause of the explosion, but excitement grew swiftly in the US to get involved in the war. "Remember the Maine!" became the rallying cry for US intervention in Cuba, and the US Congress declared war on Spain.

6) Create an exaggerated newspaper headline with text and pictures to implicate (blame) the Spanish of the *USS Maine* explosion in Cuba.

*text modified from: Great Projects Film Company, Inc (1999). *Crucible of empire: The Spanish-American War*. Retrieved from: http://www.pbs.org/crucible/

Figure 3: Example text and question from reading packet

His course spanned from learning about indigenous people of the Americas to

Colonization to the American Dream and current issues in immigration:

> So we started with the American Indians, even before talking about Spain, or
> Portugal, or White Europeans at all—what was happening here before 1492? And
> then its colonization—so Europeans come here—why did they come here? What
> happened with the interaction between Indians and Whites? Step 3, what happens
> next, when they're settling down creating a new civilization; how was the racial
> system created? And then, independence movements. And now we're into
> Imperialism—so the interaction between the United States and Latin America.
> And then the last goal will be the, like, the Latino Pride movements; the migrant
> worker movements, and modern immigration movements.

The course goals included on the syllabus were: 1) American Indian Societies; 2)

Colonization & Slavery; 3) Independence Movements; 4) US Expansion & Imperialism;

5) Great Depression & World War II; 6) The Latino Civil Rights Movement; and 7) The

Cold War & Modern Issues.

Although he wanted students to feel vested in the course, he was unsure of how

students saw him. "I'm a Gringo, so it's like, do they get what I'm trying to do? And

what are they trying to get out of this? What do they want?" He questioned whether it

would be better if someone else taught the course:

> Somebody of Latino decent, but that's not possible right now. But that would be
> better. Only in the South would a white person be teaching Latin American
> studies. I love it, it's great. I try to do my best every day, but it would be better
> with a more authentic voice—someone that could speak to it more authentically.

Working at Easton had not revealed his whiteness to him; rather, he explained that he had

been aware of it prior to working in this environment. He spoke freely on the subjects of

inequity and "codes of power," and how "not looking like" his students was part of the

problem of teaching in a school with such a high minority population:

> It would be fabulous to have more Hispanic teachers and Hispanic administrators.
> That's such a void here. And more teachers should look like the students. And I'm
> part of a problem in that sense that our entire [social studies] department is all
> White and mostly males.

Even though Roberts expressed a number of hesitations about teaching LAS, he loved

teaching the course and he loved what it could potentially represent for his students,

himself, and the larger Easton community. He wanted, he explained, for them to "get

their history right." That, he identified, was his goal. "Just trying to figure out what

happed, to the best of my knowledge, and then how to turn around and teach it to the

kids." I want to, "Get them to think about perspective and what they would do in

someone else's shoes if they were transported back in time. I don't always know," He

said, "but I'm trying my best."

Roberts explained that getting it right included processing multiple perspectives.

He wanted students to think critically in his course and have debates like he had in his

high school history classes. He asked questions such as, "If you were advising an

immigrant would you tell them to keep their culture as in cultural pluralism or lose their

culture and assimilate?" and "How does the media portray Latinos?"

Roberts:	Ok, so, how do the media portray Latinos?
Class:	[three-minute silence]
Roberts:	By media, I mean the news, magazines, even just TV shows. Portray means, how do they show them. What does it look like?
Class:	[two-minute silence]
Juan:	[tentatively] They have accents?
Roberts:	Good! Good!

Sometimes his students seemed unsure as to how to answer. Even after explaining

key words and concepts (e.g., 'media' and 'portray') students didn't always have a

response. They were often silent. Thinking about the difficulty in getting students to take

on issues in classroom discussion, Roberts explained:

> I don't know if it's a generational thing. When I was a kid, I loved this question of
> how races are portrayed in the media. Times change, but the portrayal is
> important—what's being put out there. I think they kind of didn't understand the
> question. What do you think?

Roberts continued, nevertheless, to pose hard questions throughout the semester. During

a lesson on "imperialism," Roberts asked, "When is it acceptable, or is it ever acceptable,

for a country like the United States to invade another country?" Again, there was silence

in the classroom. Hoping to push his students into deep thinking, he continued to probe if it had been acceptable for the United States to invade Germany during Hitler's reign. A student in the back tentatively raised her hand and asked, "Who is Hitler?"

Roberts later said he attempted to build background knowledge but was often unsure of what they knew or how to find out. He explained, "Every goal is new information, but some know this stuff already. Some of them have no idea. Some are in between. That's a good question for any teacher, how do you build background knowledge?" He said he tried to teach sequentially so that they could build knowledge together in the class, and that, "I only require them to learn what I teach, and the test is only on what I ask them to learn—so, no surprises or assumptions."

Roberts's position was that students needed both historical knowledge and argumentative skills if they were to have the sort of rich discussions he remembered having in his high school history classes. He wished they were "loud." He wished they would "just share everything they know."

Sometimes, he explained to me that it worked. Sometimes it didn't. Thinking about why it wasn't happening more, he speculated during an audiotaped interview in October:

> Those days when I can get—elicit those responses, is awesome. And I get them [the responses] I think, but if somebody else was teaching this class that was Latino, they could get a lot more out. I'm not saying they don't trust me; they trust me and I'm a good enough teacher or whatever, and they're learning, but in terms of really enriching themselves and really digging deep, the teacher would change that. I think.

Students were more energetic during a lesson on indigenous Americans. Roberts began by asking about South America before the Europeans.

Roberts: Ok, how many indigenous people lived in the Americas in 1491?

Daniella:	A million.
Roberts:	How many million?
Emma:	10 million?
Roberts:	Higher.
Carolos:	20 million?
Roberts:	Higher.
Diego:	60 million?
Roberts:	Higher
Carlos:	100 million?
Roberts:	Lower! [laughs] Ok. 80 million. So, who in here has indigenous ancestry?
Diego:	I do
Roberts:	For real?
Diego:	No, not for real.
Roberts:	Lame. [He laughed]
Diego:	Well, I guess we all do. Pretty much everyone from Latin America is *mestizo*.

Roberts knew he was educationally qualified to teach the course, but he explained that sometimes he felt that despite his knowledge and excitement about history, he was not the right person to teach LAS and that he never could be. He was not Latino.

He explained that his attempts at engaging the students in conversations of social justice and ethnic identity were often silenced, he felt, by his otherness. But then again, he speculated, there were also the issues of language, students' insecurities in their abilities to voice their opinions, their lack of knowledge about basic historical facts and contemporary issues, or quite simply their comfort level with silence.

Roberts said that in past semesters when he taught world history, he often planned with other teachers; "I tried to get them to assign more critical thinking and writing." He explained, "There was a lot of pushback. They'd say, but it's a tested subject, which is totally true, and we're not evaluated on writing essays, so they wouldn't do it." Required Social Studies coursework included: World History; Civics and Economics; American History 1; and a choice of American History 2 or Advanced Placement U.S. History.

These required courses for 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade respectively were accompanied by a state generated end of course exam or MSL. The elective courses could, however, be taken at any point in a student's high school career. "I get a mix of freshman through seniors because of that, and it's sometimes hard to know what they know," Roberts explained. Because LAS had no standardized test, Roberts said he took "a different philosophical approach" than his colleagues who, "Focused on [and] got the test scores." He explained that he wanted his students, "To write more—to make an argumentative task—to put ideas together and defend them. . . I see so much growth from their first essays to their last essays, and I've gotten a lot better at tracking that and figuring that." As the only LAS teacher, he did not plan with the other social studies teachers. "I mostly just close the door and teach," he explained.

Roberts was a fourth year teacher, and so he no longer had a mentor and was rarely observed by administration. He said, "I haven't found any conflict with my administration about how I do things or what I can do better, but there could be so much more support. Philosophically, I don't know where they [the administration] all stand. They don't make it clear." I asked him how his colleagues would describe the work he was doing, and he faltered; "I don't know. I don't know if they know. They—I don't know." Roberts viewed himself as a "good teacher" who received "positive feedback" from the administration, and so he continued doing the work that he saw as improving his students', "ability to read, write, speak, and just be better human beings to each other."

"Every Day They Read, and They Talk, and They Write"

Roberts found the content in his curriculum to be valuable to his students, but he also saw his class as a tool for literacy and language growth. Roberts stated, "I'm looking

for them to specifically grow in reading and writing; those are the two academic goals I have." He knew it was important to practice these skills in all classes—especially at a school like Easton. Data from the 2010-2011 English I End of Course test indicated that only 69.3% of Easton's students performed at or above grade level, compared to a district level of 81.3%; and the 2013-2014 school improvement plan indicated that only 26.6% of students taking the Common Core English II exam were on grade level.

Roberts was aware of this data, and he saw his course as a way to help students, "Write cohesive, correct English five paragraph essays, and be able to fully annotate any text." He assigned students a series of Document Based Question (DBQ) essays in which he asked students to, "Analyze a document from history and answer an open-ended question using the provided sources." Roberts spent ample class time breaking down the components of an essay. He told me, "Every day we do one piece of the essay." The specific DBQ prompts for this course included: "How should the US government reform immigration laws; Should the U.S. government normalize relations (become friends) with Cuba; and How real is the American Dream for Latino Americans?"

His tests were also writing intensive. He explained, "Because I teach electives, the tests are all mine, so by midterm, it's all writing." Roberts's writing-intensive curriculum however was, in his opinion, not validated by some of the veteran teachers:

> They're less interested in being English teachers and more interested in teaching the content. And I *get* that. Ten years ago when they were in school, or 15 years ago, they were taught to be Social Studies teachers—to teach the content—but today, we're coming up in school and it's about teaching English as well— reading, writing and speaking as inseparable from whatever it is that you teach.

His formal assessments in the course also displayed the literacy that he promoted. One project he was particularly proud of began with each student researching and choosing a

Latino/a leader from the United States or Latin America. He explained, "Then they

transformed the information into a first-person speech. We set up a podium, and

microphone, and seating in the library, and they delivered the speeches. The students

mostly performed very well. I was awfully proud of them." His ability to teach

communication skills alongside the content of history was a source of pride for Roberts.

"Every day they read, and they talk, and they write," he said.

Because of the focus of the course, and the high ESL population at the school,

Roberts also had several English Language Learners in his class. Roberts had charts that

included his students' WIDA[3] scores, and he knew which students would need additional

support; "Those numbers are really, really precise. This year I've got two newcomers;

everyone else on the WIDA scale is above 1." Building language proficiency with his

ELLs was something Roberts admittedly struggled with. He explained, "That's my

weakest thing, real newcomers—ones who don't speak a lick. That's my weakest. I try to

work with what I've already created, but they need something even—just basic English.

This stuff is sometimes too much." Roberts tried to support these students by helping

them talk through assignments, but he also relied on other students to help translate:

> What I like to do is start getting my better Latino student to start pairing up and
> assisting. I know it's not their job, but some are really great at it, and others are
> like, I need to do me. I'm not paid to do anything else, which I get, but I like to
> get them helping each other out.

During independent work, he always went to his ELLs first. He checked in with them

often and helped them talk through ideas. He encouraged them to speak, write, and

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[3] WIDA or World Class Instructional Design and Assessment developed from a grant in 2003 which partnered the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Center for Applied Linguistics. WIDA developed an English placement test, yearly proficiency tests, and "can-do descriptors" which are now used in 27 states around the U.S. More information on WIDA and the proficiency levels for ELLs can be found at: https://www.wida.us

discuss in Spanish, but he also said that he wanted, "To hear it in English." He articulated his belief that developing bilingualism was an asset, so he wanted them to use Spanish in class, but also to become confident in English. "So I do grammar mini lessons and say here's what good English looks like; here's what it sounds like. Here's what bad English looks like, and now let's practice, how we correct this." He explained, "English is the language of power, so it's interesting how to make sure to value someone with what they're coming with, what they have, and yet teach them the codes of power."

Roberts said he worried sometimes about his teaching, more specifically, if he could "cut it" at one of the more prestigious high schools in the district. He said he knew that the reading his students did that day, a ten paragraph chunk of text he adapted from John Charles Chasteen's text, *Born in blood and fire: A concise history of Latin America*, "would have been a warm up at another school." He looked down at his small notebook that he jotted ideas in, and he seemed dejected. He appeared to be questioning if he was in fact a "good" teacher or not and if he was preparing his students for the work that he believed they may encounter one day in college. However, with a graduation rate of 68% and data that fluctuated between only 26-70% of students performing on grade level in English, it made it difficult to require the large amounts of independent reading that more academically rigorous schools could require. For a moment, he appeared to question all of his advocacy attempts and his efforts to create a culturally responsive classroom. Then, he said:

> There's too many gaps; there's too many holes; you can't compare you know, [a high SES school in the district] and Easton. You just can't compare what you're getting in four years. There's so many factors that affect our students: what was their education previously; how much exposure have they had to extra curriculars; were they read to as children; enough food on the table; healthcare. So many things that Easton can't control.

Roberts knew that while he could not control those factors, he could provide his student

with "Just the best, the best lesson every day. That's it."—and one topic that students

always thought was "best" was immigration.

<div align="center">"What's Your Story?"</div>

Most of his students were either immigrants or children of immigrants, and

Roberts valued the unique cultural views that his students brought to the class. Only two

out of the class of 28 were not Latino/a. One student was African American and the other

was Burmese. The rest of the students he described as a, "Good mix of just got here,

being her a while, or born in the States." Roberts said that he understood that many of the

students in his class had personal and cultural struggles, and he wanted to create a space

in his classroom in which students would share with and care about each other:

> The kids need to know who they're sitting next to, what they've been through.
> Students at the E [Easton] have had it tougher than most in this city. It's just a
> rougher struggle. But there's all kinds of different struggles. And we should talk
> about that.

To find out more about who his students were, he said that he assigned a writing at the

beginning of the year, which he called "What's your story." He gave them questions to

prompt them to write about their lives including: Where are you from; What is the

location where you were raised; What is the best memory you can think of from your

childhood; What is a challenge from your childhood; and, who has always been there for

you? He explained:

> So many of our students are so transparent, so open; like you would never tell a
> perfect stranger the things that they would tell you, so that's the start. And then
> once I have that information, I first—I show them that I've read it, that I care, that
> I listened to their stories, and I go from there. I listen to them. And I go from
> there.

These stories were part of his deeper attempt at encouraging students to understand each

other, and because he took the time to ask, he said, they told him.

During our second interview, on October 20, Roberts's became frustrated as we

discussed the ongoing immigration debates in the news. While his students from Africa

were refugees, his students from Mexico were not:

> What's the difference between Mexico and Congo? Because it's connected to our country, we can't offer that [refugee status]? Bodies are piling up in Juarez. And so many of the families are mixed. You know, documented, undocumented. One of my students was talking about—she was born here. She's got citizenship, she's got access to FAFSA. But she lives in fear for her parents. So how do they fill out the tax form? And if you don't fill out the tax forms—even if you're born here— if you don't fill it out, they're not giving you a dime. Yeah, that's the essential question. What happens to these kids?

Although this was not an uncommon story at Easton, Roberts said he was unsure how he

could help these students. He described another student who had been in the United

States for over seven years, had limited English literacy, and claimed to not be able to

read or write in Spanish either. Roberts was not sure if this students was documented or

not, but was worried about what would become of him after high school. "I don't know

what will happen to him. If he can't get a driver's license, if he can't get a working

permit." He trailed off, and then asked again, "What happens to these kids?" He looked

down at hands and sat silent for several seconds, and then visibly perked up. He asked me

if I had heard about the DACA[4] program they had last week. He explained, "I don't know

how, but some alumni said, for our Easton DACA qualifiers, they'll pay for it—anybody

who is at the correct age and fits all the thousand parameters for the Deferred Action

Childhood Arrival paperwork." Roberts sounded enthusiastic at the prospect of efforts

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[4] The Deferred Action Childhood Arrival (DACA), announced on June 15, 2012, allowed certain youth who came to the United States as children and met several guidelines an opportunity to request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years. It was then expanded in 2014.

being made to help undocumented high school students. By the end of the interview he told me, "I try to be optimistic."

Discussion: Is "This" Working? Excitement and Hesitations in LAS

Paul Roberts said that he had a vison for his class. He wanted his students to be engaged in robust discussions about important topics. He wanted them to use their lived experiences to connect to a history that was their own, and he wanted to facilitate this. However, he articulated that his understandings of what affected his class included factors well out of his control such as his students' prior literacy learning, immigration laws, documentation status, and his own whiteness. While he claimed to be the type of teacher who would have loved to have students read *A people's history of the world*, he found that this text was not manageable in the context of the school where he taught. Most of the time, he explained, he was proud of the work he was doing and confident that he was helping his students make gains in writing and annotating readings through a culturally responsive curriculum. However, his hesitations occurred partly in his uncertainty of how his students saw his intentions as well as why he was not always able to get them to fully participate.

Roberts's narrative fell somewhere in between literature such as Salazar and Fránquiz's (2008) study describing how "Ms. Corazón" got her nickname because of the caring classroom she created through embracing linguistic and cultural resources, and Marx's (2008) description of teachers who still held deficit views of their mostly Latino/a students. Roberts never articulated a deficit view of his students, and he consistently incorporated linguistic and cultural resources in his classroom, but did not receive such a heartfelt nickname from his students. He was still trying to decide if what he was doing

was working in the classroom. He often turned to me during interviews and observations to ask what I thought about a particular assignment, his instruction, or how he could encourage more discussions. We also talked about immigration. The range of immigrant stories in the LAS course further highlighted the complex nature of Latino immigrants' stories at Easton, and the sense that he and other teachers were able to make of them. With the passage of Plyler v. Doe in 1982, the courts mandated that schools are not agencies or agents for enforcing immigration law, and the Latino population at Easton was a conglomeration of undocumented asylum seekers, migrant workers, split and mixed families, first-generation American born Latinos, and others along the spectrum between legal and illegal. Documentation status was something that Roberts grappled with as he tried to prepare his students for college or the work force, but found that options for many of them were limited. This was not an issue that he had encountered in his college education programs, and Roberts was unsure how to guide his students to success after Easton.

Roberts saw himself as the bearer of historical knowledge, but not of cultural authenticity. He often tried to draw on the wealth of personal knowledge that students had on the subject of Latin American history, but found that students' historical knowledge was so disparate that it was often difficult to find common ground. Ultimately, he was proud that he was teaching the only Latin American studies course in the district, but he still had hesitations including being a white non-Latino male teaching Latino/a students about their history and heritage. I argue that if colleges of education advocate for culturally sustaining or humanizing pedagogies, then teachers such as Roberts can represent the in-between or uncertainty within teaching.

CHAPTER SIX: ROBIN MILLER: PAYING IT FORWARD

Robin Miller shook her head in frustration. She had just come from
conducting an ESL training for the new teachers at Easton

King: What happened? You look upset.

Miller: I don't think they got it. I showed them the video of Pau.
               [This particular student, who participated on Tuesdays in
               an afterschool Southeast Asian youth community outreach
               program, had created a video displaying his "life in five
               minutes."] I wanted them to understand where our kids are
               coming from, and, like, this is for real. This puts in
               perspective why fourth period Pau was staring out the
               window like 'I'm done with school,' but what am I going to
               tell you after 12 years of being in a refugee camp that's any
               more important than your life experiences; that they tried to
               sell your dad into slavery essentially. Until you recognize
               that, your content, your anything, is not important to these
               children. So no, I don't think they know anything. I think
               they assume. [She shook her head again and we started the
               interview.]

        In 2012, TESOL journal published a special issue entitled "Teacher Collaboration

in TESOL." The articles featured, described the collaboration between ESL

professionals, content area teachers, administration, districts, and communities. While

Walker (2012) proposed that "one person can make a difference," she qualified that it

was actually the efforts of a single teacher who was able to, "bring together key

stakeholders who had the professional experience, the resources, and the personal

commitment to help both children and the community." (p. 482) Similarly, Verplaetse,

Ferraro, and Anderberg (2012) as well as Schneider, Huss-Lederman, and Sherlock

(2012) expressed the importance of collaboration among educators and professional

learning communities to foster the language, academic, and social development for immigrant students. Russell (2012) suggested that teachers can act as "institutional agents—or individuals with relatively high institutional status who are in a position to provide institutional and social support." (p. 464) However, without the support of administration which Walker (2012) described as a "crucial factor," and which both Russell (2012) and Schneider et al. (2012) underscored, support for immigrant students remained varied across individual classes.

In Chapter Five, I theorized the hesitations that Paul Roberts held as he—an early career teacher—attempted to incorporate a culturally sustaining pedagogy in Latin American Studies. In chapter 6, I introduce Robin Miller—a 13-year veteran social studies teacher who, in 2010, earned an ESL license to better support the growing immigrant population. In this chapter, I present a teacher whose commitment was "to meet her students' needs;" and, she believed that she could and did (to a large extent) by teaching the subject she loved. However, despite her subjectivity as a teacher who cared about and advocated for her students through the sheltered instruction that she offered, there was a larger system in place, and mediating contexts, that continued to render many of her students—often newly arrived immigrants—as unsuccessful in school.

In this chapter, I argue that Miller wanted, she explained, to create opportunities for her students to sense accomplishment. She wanted to nurture their civic voices, and to develop their literate selves—especially when it came to financial literacy. That said, her success as a teacher depended as much on those things she could control—such as lesson planning—as those that were out of her control—such as student attendance. In presenting Miller's story of working at Easton, I theorize her student advocacy in the

context of the current TESOL literature that underscores collaboration and creating

networks within schools and communities and how complex this can be in a space with

such high teacher turnover, little administrative and community support, and an ever-

growing population of high-needs immigrant students.

<div align="center">"So That's How I Became a Teacher"</div>

In seventh grade Robin Miller became "ungodly fascinated with the Holocaust;

like, sickeningly fascinated." It began when she pulled a book off the shelf in her social

studies teacher's classroom. The book was about a Jewish pathologist who worked for

Joseph Mengele, and it was "terribly graphic." Miller said she spent the rest of seventh

grade reading anything she could about the Holocaust and questioning, "Why did no one

stop this? Why didn't they do anything about any of this? Why are we just letting this

happen?" She sat in her upper-middle class house in an all-white, rural community in the

Midwest thinking about these questions, and at some point during that school year, she

told her parents that she was, "Going to teach in an urban setting. I got the idea in my

head that that was the path I was going to take."

King: Why not social work or criminal justice or politics? Why teaching?

Miller: So the other part of my life is that I come from an abusive family,
             so my teachers were the ones that saved me.

Miller had a hard time in high school. She had been emotionally and physically abused,

and she said she thought about suicide. One morning Miller came to school with a

swollen face from crying.

> I was walking into school and I saw Mr. Cabel. And he was a jerk. He was that
> teacher that nobody liked. But he looked at me, and he said, follow me. And I
> said, I just can't. And he took me around the back of the school, and up the back
> staircase, and he hid me in the science room—in between the two science
> classes—and he said, I don't want to know; just sit here. By the middle of second

period he came and he said, you look better; can you make it? And I said, yeah. And I went to the rest of my classes that day, and after that day, Mr. Cabel made sure that every semester I was his student aid and that he had one period with me so that he kept an eye on me to make sure that I was ok. He has no idea that he saved my life that day.

Miller understood the impact that a teacher could have on a life, so she moved eight hours away from home to attend college and become a teacher. When it was time to student teach, Miller asked for "the worst." She explained, "I got a school that was so bad, we had football games at eight in the morning on Saturday because the drive-bys were so bad on Friday nights." She completed her undergraduate program with a major in history, a minor in political science, "one credit away from an economics minor," and a license in integrated social studies education, grades 7-12.

After graduating, Miller and her husband, also a teacher, moved to North Carolina to find work. She intended to work in a low-income school, but she said, "The district lost my application three times," so she taught in a neighboring rural district for several years. Over the next nine years, she transitioned between rural, suburban, and urban high schools before contacting the former principal at Easton. "I needed a new challenge," Miller admitted. She was warned that Easton was a "rough school," but when she got there, she said:

> My response was, this is it? This is your worst? Ok. I mean it was chaos, but I had taught in Cincinnati schools; they're no joke, and I thought, oh these kids think they're bad. They are not. Disorganized and chaotic, yes. I came when the five schools were consolidating. There was more apathy than my other schools, but they're just like any other kids. You stick stickers on their foreheads, and they laugh, and they want things that smell good, and they want to color with markers. They just have less money. That's really all the difference is. And the money thing brings different social issues, but yeah, I don't know, I think they're pretty much the same.

Miller empathized with her students. She wanted to be the kind of teacher who would "open up doorways" for people, like her teachers did for her. She believed that "the only way out is education," and even though she had all the privileges that were associated with being White and upper-middle class, because of her disturbed family life she felt a connection with her students. She explained, "I get emotional because these kids are me, except without the money. So that's how I became a teacher. It's a story isn't it?"

"It's the United Nations, Come on in"

Miller taught the only SIOP Civics & Economics course at Easton. Unless there was a visitor to the class, she was the only monolingual European-American in her classroom. Her fourth block SIOP class was made up of mostly newly arrived immigrants from Vietnam, Nepal, Burma, Africa, Mexico, and Central America. Miller saw her class as different from other classes being taught at Easton. She explained, "I've turned my class into, like, a science experiment. People are stopping by—I hear about your fourth period class. I'm like, yeah, it's the United Nations, come on in." After having taught C & E multiple times over the past 13 years, she was well aware of the standardized test that came at the end of the course, but she said she developed a, "mind-shift" in her SIOP class; "Um, we're learning English and that's what I tell people. We're learning English and that's the main goal in that class is to learn English. And people say, 'Your standardized test, your standardized test.' And I said, 'it's fine'."

C & E held the largest curriculum of any high school course. The course was split into three subsections: Civics and Government included five standards; Personal Financial Literacy included two; and Economics included three. Among the standards were such broad themes as: Analyze the foundations and development of American

government in terms of principles and values; Analyze the legal system within the United

States in terms of the development, execution and protection of citizenship rights at all

levels of government; Analyze the concepts and factors that enable individuals to make

informed financial decisions for effective resource planning; and Understand economies,

markets and the role economic factors play in making economic decisions[5]. Miller

translated this to mean teaching her students "financial literacy, how to use their money,

how to make decisions for themselves, how to be active participants, how to advocate for

themselves, and how to move on to the next step in their life." Miller said that she knew

she had a lot to do in the 90 days she had with her students. However, she felt that

something special was happing in her SIOP class:

> I found out that one of my principals stands outside the door and listens to me
> teach and listens to the kids respond. She goes, sometimes I just come here during
> 4th period just because I know that there's learning happening with all of these
> kids. And I know that there's learning.

She said that other teachers were stopping by as well, she explained, "Because they don't

understand how kids with a level one WIDA score are writing in complete sentences.

And they may copy, but they're writing complete sentences and hey, welcome. And

we're gonna do this." Miller told me that even two of the five new ESL teachers came to

her room to ask for advice on teaching ELLs.

Miller had earned her TESL license in 2010, when the district began holding

Saturday schools to encourage content area teachers to take and pass the Praxis. Miller

explained, "I went through the six week course and it was every other Saturday from nine

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[5] As found in the North Carolina Essential Standards Social Studies – Civics and Economics Course which can be viewed at: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/acre/standards/new-standards/social-studies/civics.pdf.

to one and it was focused towards the Praxis test, but it was also—I felt like it was a lot

of cultural competency." She said that she learned:

> About different cultures and how to correct students without constantly being over top of them and go 'no, say this, say this,' or circling everything and finding every misspelling and things like that. Um, to let the language flow naturally. You're not supposed to get in the way of it and how people develop language and the process.

Miller utilized the skills she learned in her ESL professional development to support her

students' language growth. She said her goal for her SIOP class differed slightly from her

goal for her non-SIOP C & E course. For these students, she wanted to help them gain

confidence in English:

> My goal is that by the time they walk out of Easton high school, that they can exist in this country and not have to rely on a translator, because things get lost and people get manipulated and that's not fair.

> Miller valued bilingualism in the classroom and in her students. She even used her

students' skills to support her teaching in the classroom. At the beginning of the school

year, she felt that she could not adequately reach several of her students, so she

improvised.

> I went over to the other C & E classroom [across the hall] and I said I need three kids who speak Spanish and there were a ton of them in there and three kids raised their hands and I pulled them out and I said, ok, here's the deal. And I told them the story, and I said, so are you willing to transfer to my classroom to be translators? And I said, I know it's hard and I know it's a lot, but I said please know that you are going to be masters of C & E because you have to translate back and forth.

While her teaching reflected a range of strategies including creating foldables, acting

things out, using multiple images and pictures, and even writing and illustrating

important points on students' desks with dry erase markers, she still relied on her

translators to relay concepts too difficult for her to express through ESL strategies. Miller

often talked about her translators in terms of an ability that she lacked, both in their

maturity at the age of 15 and in their skill at not only translating, but teaching concepts

while translating:

> This lady [referring to herself] shows up and asks for three volunteers and they
> said yes. And they came, and they will never know how much that means to me,
> and how amazed I am that they can do this at 15 and 16 years old. . . I wasn't
> mature enough at 14 or 15 years old to handle anything that some of these kids are
> handling, and to just step up and go, 'yeah I'll come to your class and translate.'
> And that's what amazes me, and I wish people saw that side of our kids because
> it's so resilient and it's so cool what they can do.

She positioned her translators as having a responsibility but also a position of power in

the class mediated by their ability to translate and teach. She was also personally

influenced by their desire to help her and their peers. Although using translators to

support newcomers was not new to Easton High, Miller did not rely on the students in her

own class; she expanded her network by recruiting students from other classes. Her

genuine excitement when talking about her students was apparent.

<p align="center">"Kids in this Population Deserve Teachers Like Me"</p>

While Miller worked to develop her students' language proficiency, she also

understood that other factors influenced her students' success or failure in the classroom.

Miller articulated her beliefs that education policies that were made by "people in power"

who did not "know" her students ultimately hurt them. She explained that, "My students

are the ones that are disenfranchised, and I would love to go into more detail about what

the voting rights laws have done to them in this state and how to advocate, and who you

go to and let me show you their Twitter pages." She wanted to show them this because

their voices "needed to be heard." However, C & E was still relegated to one semester.

She thought the message was clear, "Give them C & E in one semester and maybe the

poor kids won't vote. That maybe if we don't teach them, then they won't, and they'll just be kind of sedated." She was concerned that her course which taught students financial and civic literacy was reduced to one semester, but American History was now required to be taught over two semesters.

Miller said that testing was also a component of the factors working against her students. She was visibly upset when she talked about the policies regarding state testing; "How dare you make a policy about testing and you don't know my kids who are a level one [in English]." She said that, "A lot more of the institutions and the policies that are in place actually hurt these kids without thinking about their needs and they're making a policy about children they've never met or never had experience with." She said that she felt if they just knew her kids, they would change the rules.

Miller made a point of learning about her students. She knew their stories. She talked to them and found out about their lives:

> One particular child stands out to me, and I had the biggest eye-opening experience of these kids were not like me and that I had so much to learn from them. He was from Sierra Leone, and there was a civil war going on and essentially what happened was, he was walking through the streets with his mom and a bomb went off, and he doesn't remember—he thinks he was about 4 years old, and a man pulls out a machete and cuts off an arm of somebody standing right in front of him, and he hid in the—like an alley-way and cried, and his mom had a conversation with him and said you're going to America, you have to leave here. And I taught two of that family, and spoke with the father and spoke with the mother—well, not the mother, the stepmother—the real mom was still in Sierra Leone and she loved her kids enough to pack them up and ship them off and said you're gonna go live with this man that you really have never met because he's been in the United States, and it taught me one, that sometimes my content isn't the most important thing in their lives, and it taught me compassion.

Miller had multiple stories that she shared with me about her students. She emphasized that she did not identify as just a teacher, but as a learner as well. She acknowledged that her students helped her explore the world and her ideas about it. She said that the students

she taught over the past 13 years "shaped the majority of my world view as an adult." She continued:

> I mean when you teach the Bosnian genocide and you have three Bosnians' in your class it changes the way you teach the Bosnian genocide. So the kids have changed, and impacted me the most and changed almost all of my beliefs. Everything I thought I knew was wrong. Everything [laughs]. There's nothing that I was raised with that is correct anymore. . . and my family doesn't understand it. They don't get why I will get emotional and I will get teary eyed when I talk about the kids or what they taught me or what I know now because of them and why I'll always fight for them, because somebody's gotta be their voice.

She explained that being a history teacher gave her a greater interest in understanding the world, but she was worried that the other teachers "didn't get it."

Instead of closing her door, Miller worked with the ESL department and her administration to lead professional development about the students at Easton. During a meeting, she showed the new teachers she was mentoring a video that one of her students had created through a Southeast Asian youth community outreach [referred to in the opening vignette of this chapter]. The first time Miller watched the video tears streamed down her face. In the video, the boy from Burma told about his father's internment in a work camp in Burma and his mother's escape to Thailand. The student had lived in a Thai refugee camps for 12 years before entering the United States. Miller showed the other teachers his story because she wanted them, "to understand where our kids are coming from and this is for real." She said the reactions were mostly some iteration of, "Oh my god, are you serious? Is this real?" Miller responded, "Yeah he goes to school here." She then began a conversation about the unaccompanied minors; "and they're like what's that? And it's on the news, I mean everywhere on the news and I don't know how you missed that." She continued:

They seem to assume all of our kids are Mexican which I think is funny because they're not. So they don't seem to understand and as we were sitting there talking to them, they were like, wow, I didn't know any of this. I was thinking, do you never wonder where your kids are coming from, because I do.

Her frustration was palpable as she described the rest of the PD. She stated that many of the teachers accused the students of pretending to not know English and had no idea of their abilities or proficiencies. "So we made them actually go through WIDA scores and plot all of their kids yesterday, and they were sitting their going, 'oh my gosh; this is why this kid's failing my class'." Miller was developing a space for advocacy and communication, but she also articulated that she was concerned about the school's ability to successfully serve all immigrant students, especially those that did not speak Spanish which was a language that several administrators and support staff spoke fluently:

And she [the ESL team leader] can mediate between the Spanish speaking—you know the Hispanic kids, but what about the Nepali kids? What about the Vietnamese kids? Who's going to mediate and make sure that they're taken care of?

About midway through the semester, Pau and six of Miller's Burmese male students stopped attending class. "I don't where they've been. They're still on my roster," she told me. Then, she asked me if I could try to find out where they were—she knew that I had tutored Pau at a Southeast Asian community organization. Weeks later, we found out that he began attending a vocational charter school, which later ran into financial difficulty and closed midway through the school year.

King: There was an article in the news about the charter school Pau attended for a little while. It closed down; something about having low enrollment.

Miller: Wait? A little while? Where is he now?

King: I haven't seen him since he left Easton. He stopped coming to tutoring.

> Miller: That just makes me upset. What do we do now?
>
> King: I'll ask around and see if I can find out.

I did ask, and it turned out that he had been staying home—not working or going to school. Miller said she did not know what to do; "I asked the guidance counselor, the ESL coordinator, administrators. They basically all said, good luck."

Miller also saw documentation status as something that she could not single-handedly change.

> I know. I have a girl in my first period. She's brilliant, and we were talking the other day; it didn't even cross my mind because she's very Americanized—it didn't cross my mind that she was illegal and I said something about college, and I said, well you know there's a difference if your legal or illegal and I was about ready to say that shouldn't be a problem for you—based on stereotypes—and she goes, 'but I'm illegal.'

Another day after school she showed me the tests and notebook of a student from El Salvador. "Look how good he's doing," she said to me. She explained that he was one of the "unaccompanied minors." Miller said that she talked to a friend who was an immigration lawyer. She explained, "He said there was, like, literally no chance of getting this child citizenship. There was nothing they could do. He will either be deported or stay in the United States with no legal status and limited opportunities." Miller knew that there were some attempts at Easton for creating networks in the school, specifically for undocumented students:

> So we do have, we have lawyers who work here and one of the counselors is doing a support thing. And one of the things we talked about was getting a motivational speaker especially for the Hispanic kids that will talk to them, and we want to do one for the Nepali kids and we can't ignore it anymore. I mean, they're everywhere.

Miller said that she talked often to the ESL coordinator and tried to create teams to help the students. She said that she thought it would be better for the newcomers to be in SIOP classes. She explained, "And let those teachers collaborate for a year together to best meet the needs of our students. I think they should be in a school within a school setting with the same core teachers to tell you the truth." She said she felt that way they could build relationships over time to better help them.

She was also knew the poverty that most of her students lived in. With a free and reduced lunch rate of over 87% reported—many students did not turn in the forms to become eligible— Easton's population was almost exclusively low SES. As Miller stated, "we don't have very many 'haves' on campus." Miller was aware of this statistic, and aware of the ability within her C & E curriculum to teach financial literacy. Miller had had a conversation with the state's secretary of education a few years ago in which she argued for the C & E curriculum to be split across two semesters rather than taught in the 90-minute block for 90 days as it was currently scheduled. Ultimately, she wanted her students to rise out of poverty, and she believed that education was the key, but structural practices that were out of her control also defined their education.

> The institution at the federal level and the way we run education is horrible. It ignores the number one indicator—I mean obviously we know that teachers are an impact in the classroom, but the number one indicator as to how well a child is going to learn is poverty, and we refuse to address the issue of poverty.

Miller tried to create spaces for advocacy and she attempted to expand her network to find resources for her students, "but, honestly," she said, "the new ESL teachers are coming to me for guidance and the administration—well, in *words* they say what needs to be said." However, Miller explained that they did not actually follow through. "They say that we need to do everything that needs to happen for our kids, but they get away with

things because they are our kids. I mean our kids didn't have schedules for the first few days of school." Limited school and community resources, as well as larger political structures sometimes blocked her attempts at helping her students.

No matter what Miller could or could not do on a school level, she said that she saw herself in these kids because of the abuse that she had suffered, but she also said that she was changed by working with her students:

> These children. These stories. That's the biggest blessing about working here. There are so many things that make you not want to work here. And in the end it's changed my life. My life's gone on a completely different path than I would have ever expected it. And it's because of these kids and because of them I feel—I feel very indebted to our kids. They've opened up the world to me and working here is one of those things, where I'm fortunate. I'll be forever changed by this experience.

Miller said that she liked teaching at Easton. It was important to her, even when her husband "didn't get it." She felt that she was making a difference in her students' lives and she felt strongly that they were making a difference in her life. Miller said that she did not intend to leave the classroom. This was where she belonged "Because," she said, "I believe wholeheartedly that kids in this population deserve teachers like me— somebody who's going to do anything in their power to make them succeed." Even though most of her SIOP students failed the final state exam in C & E, they still passed the class, and Miller said she knew she was hard on her kids, but that, "they'll be better for it in the end."

<div align="center">Discussion: Every child. Every day.</div>

The moto plastered across the district's website states, "Every child. Every day. For a better tomorrow." Robin Miller echoed that belief; "All kids can learn. Every single one of them can learn." Or as she explained in one of our last interviews that semester,

"Every single one of them has the ability and the second you lose sight of that, is when you've lost sight of education and teaching in general and it's time to move someplace else."

Miller's lived experience had taught her that a teacher could save a life. A teacher had saved hers, and she explained, opened her to the world and its possibilities. She too wanted to be such a teacher—to pay it forward; and, consequently, she chose to teach in "the worst of the worst." Miller enacted advocacy in the form of receiving district training to pass the Praxis and earn an ESL license. She modified her curriculum so that she taught students the elements of financial literacy and civics and economics that would help them understand their civic voice and rights. She created spaces for openly talking about the students at Easton and their particular needs. In essence, she was an "institutional agent" (Russell, 2012) leveraging her position as an experienced teacher, and later as an ESL professional to enact advocacy for her students. Miller sought to spread advocacy across the school in the form of coaching teachers in SIOP and like the teacher advocates described by Schneider, Huss-Lederman, and Sherlock (2012), "believed that all teachers needed to hear the concerns of the high school ELLs in their own voices." (p 384) However, as much as one person can enact change, Miller recognized the limits of her advocacy. She could not bring Pau back to school or provide citizenship for the unaccompanied minors—and these things haunted her.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

I began this dissertation study with a description of the current politicized discourses surrounding undocumented immigrant education in North Carolina—one of the fastest growing immigrant centers in the New South (Camarota, 2012). As immigrant populations are involved in the re-writing of what urban education could be/become in New South spaces, teachers likewise negotiate their understandings of themselves as professionals and the potentiality of their work—casting and recasting successful teaching and successful students. Teachers' mental lives are mediated by the diversity of their lived experiences as well as the dynamics of the schools in which they teach and the students housed in those schools.

With that in mind, I designed this dissertation study as a way to explore the figured world of advocacy in the setting of a high-immigrant population high school in the New South. This participatory qualitative inquiry leveraged a Neo-Vygotskian (Holland, et. al, 1998) theoretical lens for understanding localized and contextualized teacher thinking to explore the following research questions:

- What are the ranges of classroom teachers' professional subjectivities— internal judgments and realities shaped by their lived experiences— surrounding immigrant students in the setting of an urban school in the New South?

- What additional contexts mediate those subjectivities?

- How are teachers' positions of success and advocacy constructed, reconstructed, and potentially "improvised" in institutional and classroom settings?

Because school is an arena in which most everyone in the U.S. has participated, teaching is a profession that is often scrutinized. This scrutiny leads to sometimes critical representations of teachers as well as only highlighting the teachers who have found above-average success in their classes—as is evident by the multiple "teacher of the year" awards given to the "best." School districts ask teachers to teach "every child, every day," but with mandates such as NCLB and confusion over state exams, teachers negotiate individualized constructions of what success signifies and what it might also include. The potentially conflicted constructs of teaching to the test, caring for students, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and basic skills comes to a head in high school classes when teachers are also introduced to a range of children of immigration.

In the New South, immigrant populations, and political and economic refugees from Southeast Asia, South and Central America, Mexico, Central and Eastern Europe, and Africa of both first and second generations have reconfigured the classrooms of urban schools in the New South. Within these larger—and often overlapping fields— teachers construct and re-construct spaces in their classrooms in which they establish advocacy acts for transnational adolescents.

In this context, it becomes important to understand what and how multiple factors mediate teachers' understandings of success and how they position advocacy in their classrooms. The range of research on classroom teachers often describes teachers as either "getting it" or "not getting it," and then either "performing it" or not "performing it" with standardized data to back those binaries. However, the thick description generated from entering a teacher's classroom troubles the hegemony of "highly

qualified" teaching and can extend the discourse surrounding the positionalities of teacher advocacy and success in individualized contexts.

In Chapter Four, I began the presentation of my findings by introducing Adrianne Collins—an African American math teacher and eight year veteran at Easton. Collins's story began with her own experiences with attending both a highly racialized black and then white high school, and her decision to attend an HBCU. Data analysis revealed that while Collins was acutely aware of the demographic shift within the district, she nevertheless did not frame her immigrant students as needing more than their U.S.-born peers. Positioning "teaching as teaching" across the board, Collins worked with her students with the idea that they too would reciprocate the caring attitude she afforded them. For Collins, Easton had it rougher than most. She, thus, constructed her class around what she found worked for her students, namely, direct instruction, plenty of practice, and additional second chances through tutoring, test corrections, and exam re-takes. To that end, Collins's was able to improvise by using me, an outside tutor, when she found that she was unable to "reach down to pull up" one of her students—the newcomer immigrant who inexplicably was misplaced in Math III. Chapter Four concluded with a discussion of Collins's positon that she would not give up on her students as long as they did not give up—even when it got hard.

In Chapter Five, I examined Paul Roberts' experiences piloting the school's first Latin American Studies course at Easton. Roberts—a non-Latino, white teacher—had ideas of what a history course should look like based on his own high school experiences and the vision he was given in his critically framed college of education. I theorized his positonality in the space of "not yet" (del Carmen Salazar, 2013) in which he attempted

to produce a course driven by culturally sustaining pedagogy. However, the analytic narrative underscored the complexity of working with students at varying levels of literacy, knowledge of history, and English proficiency. Furthermore, Roberts was unsure if his students would understand the work that he, a "Gringo," wanted to do with them. In addition, contexts beyond his control, such as immigration status, affected his understanding of student success after Easton, undermining largely the promise that if he taught them well, they could succeed after high school.

In Chapter Six, I turned to Robin Miller, a social studies teacher whose goal was to make a difference in her student's lives. Influenced by the teachers who "saved her" during her high school years, Miller was determined to pay it forward. Her solid reputation as a Civics & Economics teacher in addition to her ESL license and training in SIOP allowed her to act as an "institutional agent" (Russell, 2012) in the school. She sought to teach her colleagues about their students so they could see beyond language and know the multiplicities of immigrant experiences that Easton held. Miller's analytic narrative complicated her agency, though, when an immigrant student, Pau, suddenly stopped coming to class. While her understanding of teaching included giving each child a chance, her goodwill, and individual agency fell short of creating such chances within the complicated structures of an urban high school. There was only so much, she realized, that she could do.

I reiterate here that the objective of this study was not to evaluate or assess this team of teachers or their distinct approaches to working with immigrant students. They became my friends, and I respected them as individuals and professionals. I am grateful to them for sharing with me who they were and what their work signified to them. Rather

than gauging teachers on a spectrum of "getting it" or not, analysis underscored the generative fluctuations and hesitations within the three teachers' advocacy in an urban high school in the New South. As a former Easton teacher, I was personally moved by who Collins, Roberts, and Miller were and what their stories represented. I left my positon as one of Easton's ESL teachers with many of the same questions as my participants: "What will happen to these kids? Am I doing enough? How do I get them to care more than me?" I returned to this site as a researcher not with a solution, but with these questions in mind. This research has not resolved these questions, but I hope that it has furthered a space for dialogue about the complexity of teaching at high-immigrant urban schools in the New South such as Easton.

The stories of these teachers bring home the complexities of teaching and understanding teaching in a high-immigrant, New South urban context. As I discussed in Chapter Two, teacher representations both in educational research and the popular media are too-often dichotomized with teachers rendered as either oppressors or heroes. What the Collins, Roberts, and Miller's narratives suggest is the grayness of the profession and the complexities of their shifting subjectivities as professional educators across a spectrum of experience and content areas. As Holland et al. (1998) explained, individuals' sense-making of themselves in contextualized activities, "reveal a multitude of selves that are neither bounded, stable, perduring, nor impermeable" (p. 29). Rather, "cultural discourses and practices both position people and provide them with the resources to respond to the problematic situations in which they find themselves" (p. 32). Collins, Roberts, and Miller, as illustrated in the data chapters displayed "the interplay between the social and embodied sources of the self, in what might be called the self-in-

practice, or, the authoring self." (Holland et al., 1998, p. 32). They were teachers; they contained multitudes.

Teachers' self-authoring occurs in a discourse of past, lived experiences and present contexts, revealing a developing self-in-practice. To that end the representations of these teachers intentionally pushed against their potential erasure in a time of all things data-driven where teachers are categorized as "highly qualified" or not. The analytic narratives that I present here are meaningful in a larger dialogue of how teachers perceive and improvise their understandings of their success with immigrant students in an urban high school in the New South. Understanding these generative tensions and hesitations—the grayness of teaching and teachers—potentially informs practice and research. In the section that follows, I discuss the study's multiple implications.

<div align="center">Implications for Practice</div>

Beyond strategies: Raising awareness for contemporary immigration issues

Earlier in this dissertation, I quoted Valdés as she described her work with Mexican families living and "schooling" in the U.S.. Valdés (1996) wrote, "I naively still thought that difficulties experienced by non-English-speaking children had primarily to do with language" (p.6). While many teachers received district training in SIOP and WIDA Can-do Descriptors, there is still little being done at the district level or state level in colleges of education to distinguish between language learners and children of immigration.

Public schools do not track documentation in schools—rightly so—but this makes it difficult to determine how many students every year are graduating or dropping out of high school with limited ability to go to college or ability to work. The larger context of

society right now has halted the Dream Act, only recently stopped fighting DACA, and is still trying to (and successfully) deporting the unaccompanied minors. Although immigration laws are federal, this is a recent phenomenon in the South because teachers and schools did not have to think about issues of documentation in the Black and White past. Data analysis revealed that Roberts and Miller were aware of their students' documentation status. Nevertheless, even with that knowledge, they found difficulty in understanding their role in the success of students who were limited by virtue of this documentation status after graduation, questioning "What happens to these kids?" Equally problematic was Collins' underestimation of citizenship status and how being undocumented might influence student motivation.

In addition to the extensive Latino/a population, Easton also had other groups of refugees who needed more attention than they were receiving. Miller's description of the professional development she provided for her colleagues revealed that she believed that many of the teachers she worked with saw ESL students as only having a language barrier to overcome. Miller's focus was not merely linguistic. Rather, her understanding that many of these students lived in refugee camps for years, with instability in schooling, motivated much of her advocacy. Talking about her colleagues, she explained, "I wanted them to understand where our kids are coming from, and, like, this is for real because," she continued, "I don't think any of them get it." Roberts, Millers, and Collins's narratives suggest that schools, such as Easton, might move beyond language strategies and also emphasize teachers coming to know who their students are and the larger structural contexts that mediate immigrant student opportunities in postsecondary education.

Spaces for dialogue and collaboration

Rather than simply relying on strategies-oriented professional developments, teachers should be given opportunities to have conversations about how they feel in their roles at an urban school. As Roberts indicated, he did not share his successes or concerns with other teachers; instead, he "closed his door"—sometimes with hesitations concerning the advocacy he enacted in this important pilot course. In addition to the need for introspection and subsequent sharing of thinking about teaching, teachers need a supportive administration and an understanding of how to utilize community organizations to help their students.

The teachers at Easton were attempting to enact change and were creating pockets of success in the school—Collins was providing opportunities for students to become internally motivated in Math III; Roberts provided a humanizing course structure; and Miller shared the individual stories of her students with the Easton faculty. However, without the "crucial factor of administration support" and networks of stronger community ties (Walker, 2012), these teachers were left to perform advocacy in isolated classrooms. Collins, Roberts, and Miller at some point all sought to work with and collaborate with fellow teachers, or in Miller's case, community organizations in her attempt to find legal aid for the unaccompanied minors in her class, or to find her lost Burmese boys. However, the narrative I heard from these teachers was that even when they tried to collaborate, they were left without answers. After the ESL coordinator stopped communicating with her about Abed's movement to another math course, Collins gave up. "I guess that's not happening. I tried to follow up," she explained. The conversations that they hoped to have—and in Miller's case, tried to lead—did not

include how to teach their content, but rather, how to understand, share and rewrite, collaboratively the successes they saw with their students.

Differentiation in high school

Colleges of education promote and teach pre-service teachers how to differentiate lesson plans. This differentiation may come in the form of language support through such programs as SIOP and ExCELL—in which all three teachers in this study had been given some form of training. Pre-service teachers are also taught to differentiate through content, process, product, and learning environment while considering students' readiness level, interests, and learning profile (their preferred method of learning) (Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005). The detailed guides and unit examples provided by Tomlinson and Strickland are excellent in explaining how teachers can differentiate their lessons. However, Collins still had to teach Abed in her Math III class and Miller and Roberts had newcomers that relied on their Spanish translators for instruction. Teachers in these situations essentially have to not just differentiate a lesson, but also develop entirely different lessons to accommodate the learning needs of such disparate students. Collins, Roberts, and Miller all indicated that they were at a loss on how best to instruct students when their background knowledge and language needs were at such varied levels. As Collins explained, "You just kind of have to get to their level, and reach down to the floor and try to. . . I don't know. I'm trying." Teachers need more practical guides than simply "get to their level and reach down." Additionally, teachers need practice with implementation—specifically at the high school level and in schools of high need—to plan lessons beyond differentiation and SIOP to meet all of their students' needs.

Implications for Research

Teachers' conceptualizing of advocacy

Advocacy not only supports student success, but leads to feelings of success and satisfaction for teachers as well. In high-needs urban schools, teachers can often feel as though their advocacy goes unnoticed or unsupported. In the case of the teachers at Easton, their feelings of advocacy fluctuated as they made attempts to support all of their students. Understanding their advocacy, clarified reasons why they were able to stay at a "failing" high school like Easton. More participatory, "humanizing" research is needed to understand teachers' complex positionalites and their individual and collaborative advocacy, and how such inquiry might inform teacher education for urban contexts.

Students' conceptualizing of advocacy

This study purposefully focused on teachers' mental lives—how three professionals self-authored who they were as educators and what their work achieved. Analysis revealed sometimes conflicting positionalities about their advocacy and success. In short, teachers' thinking was complex and fluid. Future research might also include students' conceptualization of teacher advocacy. This dissertation study was limited to understanding teachers' positionality of advocacy at Easton. Additional insights into student success, or perceptions of success, can be gleaned from understanding how students feel about their teachers and the advocacy they perform. The teachers in the study taught students from remarkably different lived experiences. What one student sees as advocacy may not be the same for another. Further research adding the voices of refugee children and children of immigration would add to the richness of data that informs teaching practices and school structures.

Ultimately, Easton's teachers presented a complex story of success and advocacy. Within their "spaces of authoring'' (Holland et al., 1998; Holland & Quinn, 1987), Collins, Roberts, and Miller leveraged their ability to make sense of their improvisations in the classroom through the internal and external dialogues that occurred during their teaching. In this way, even though Abed did not receive the skills needed to proceed to Math III, Collins was able to provide him with pre-Algebra math skills so that she found success in "teaching him something." Roberts was able to find success in his students' increased abilities to write DBQs even if his class discussions were not as robust as he would have liked. Although Miller "lost" her Burmese boys, she had created a C & E course that was accessible to newcomer immigrant students.

As North Carolina continues to grow as a gateway for new immigrants; as refugees continue to resettle into new ways of life here; and as the unaccompanied minors continue to seek refuge here, teachers are going to continue to have the task of making North Carolina home to everyone. There is much to learn from qualitative inquiry of teachers, their lived experiences, and how these contexts interact in the larger structure of an urban high school in the New South. This dissertation study intended to use the thick description generated through interviews and participant observation to begin to complicate the narrative of the figured world of advocacy of these three teachers in the hope to extend the dialogue beyond the ESL classroom to include more teachers as they make sense of who they are and who they could become.

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APPENDIX A: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FIELDNOTE SAMPLE

Observation of Robin Miller's SIOP Civics & Economics Class
10-22-2014 (12:40-2:15)
4th block SIOP C & E

I walk in to the school on a beautiful warm fall day. I stand with Ms. Miller and chat as the students file into class.

"Hey best friend!" yells a student down the hall at Ms. Miller.
"Hey best friend," she yells back. "We have to get those necklaces—the heart ones that best friends get."

She then tells me that one day this girl got kicked out of class and came to her class instead of getting sent to in school suspension. And after that, she just started stopping by her room on a regular basis to just say hi.

We talked about Pau, the student who left to go to a charter vocational school. She said she emailed about 400 people before they went to check on this. She said that someone is checking to see if he and another Burmese boy are really there and to un-enroll them from Easton. [*I will check into this again when I get home, too.*]

Miller is wearing teal pants and a white blouse under a light grey v-neck, boyfriend cardigan. Her hair is—as always—pulled back with sunglasses. The temperature in the class is just right and the sun streams into the room through the one blind pulled up. However, with all the lights on, it is difficult to see the directions she has projected on the SMART Board. Most of the Asian students sit on the right side of the room and the Latinos on the left, with the few Africans sprinkled through the class.

The students are taking an open-note quiz. They flip through their overstuffed notebooks, unfolding squares of paper (the multiple foldables that Miller does with them) to find the answers to the quiz questions: What is a natural citizen v. a naturalized citizen? What happens when a president vetoes a bill?

The phone rings. Miller walks across the class to answer it. She looks down at one of her students as she walks by her desk. "You're amazing Thao," she says.

As the students are doing their quiz, we hear a commotion in the hall. Miller steps outside. She comes back a few minutes later to say that there was a fight across the hall that she broke up. She told me that she broke up another fight the previous day. Then she walks across the room. She pretends to fight a student. He jumps up and yells, "I'm Bruce Lee!" They play fight for a few seconds.

"Ok let's finish up our quizzes. Five more minutes."

The noise from outside in the hall gets louder. Miller looks out and closes the door again. One of her students stands up and opens the door. Miller reprimands him and he sits back down.

Music is playing softly in the background. Students ask about the last question, which asks what the major document that the U.S. governs from is. They don't know the word document. So she tries to explain document. "You know, like an important bunch of papers. Important papers with important information on it."

"Three more minutes."

Students are mostly finished with their quizzes and walking around.

"Two more minutes." (But she doesn't put up a clock or anything)

Two girls walk up to the stool where other students have already turned in their quizzes. They look at the other student's answers and then go back to their desks. I see them erase their answers and write something else.

"One more minute. You have one more minute to finish up."

It is 1:16. Class started at 12:40.

"Alright. I need all quizzes in 10, 9, 8…"

APPENDIX B: ANALYTIC WRITING SAMPLE: VIGNETTE

"The White Man's Burden" Lesson

The students file into class complaining of the cold "This is Easton. We don't got heat," Marcela says. She is dressed in tight faded jeans tucked into the top of her white, chunky sneakers. She has on a cropped long sleeve shirt with a tank top underneath. She is not wearing a jacket. She says something in Spanish to another girl and they both laugh. Mr. Roberts stands at his usual station by the door, holding a stainless steel travel coffee mug. One of the school's security officers runs by yelling, "Move, move." Students duck into Mr. Roberts's class to get out of his way, but they don't seem phased.

On the board, Mr. Robert's has a warm-up question displayed: If you were advising an immigrant, would you tell them to keep their culture, as in cultural pluralism or assimilate as in the melting pot theory? Class begins and the students think and write in their notebooks for five minutes. "Ok, so what do you think?" Mr. Roberts begins. There is silence in the room. He waits, then says, "Remember when we talked about cultural pluralism versus assimilation in the United States? We talked about the salad bowl and the melting pot?" Luis tentatively raises his hand. "I mean, keep it. Either way you'll be treated the same—like in a negative way. And, like, I'm Mexican, and if I stop following my culture, I'm still gonna be Hispanic." Another two students answer the question with similar opinions. No one in the class advises assimilation.

Mr. Roberts frowns at how quiet his students are today. He suddenly jumps up on a desk in the front of the room startling a nearby student, and begins to recite the poem *The white man's burden* by Rudyard Kipling. "Take up the White Man's burden; Send forth the best ye breed; Go send your sons to exile; To serve your captives' need." He

finishes the first stanza and turns to his students, "What is the white man's burden?" he

asks. They sit quietly and stare at him. He quickly moves around the room handing out a

reading packet—*American Imperialism in Cuba*—and asks for three volunteers to read.

Jose raises his hand and begins reading in a clear voice:

> Cultural factors were also used to justify imperialism. Some Americans combined the philosophy of Social Darwinism in the business world with a belief in the racial superiority of Anglo-Saxons. They argued that the U.S. had a responsibility to spread Christianity and civilization to the worlds' inferior people. Supporters of Anglo-Saxon superiority used Rudyard Kipling's poem, White man's burden, as an argument that Anglo-Saxons, particularly, those in England and the United States had a moral obligation to civilize foreign people.

"Ok, thanks Jose. Class, what is the white man's burden? Let's look at this political

cartoon from 1899. What do you see?" The students stare at the cartoon depicting John

Bull and Uncle Sam carrying a baskets of indigenous peoples up a mountain. There is

silence in the room. Mr. Roberts waits.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol: Initial Interview
The figured world of advocacy in a high immigrant population urban school in the New South

1. Tell me about yourself and how you came into teaching and, specifically, into this high school.

2. How would you describe yourself as a professional? Give examples.

3. What are your professional beliefs and personal practice theories about your work with adolescents? Give examples. Do your beliefs/practices change for different populations?

4. What has shaped those professional beliefs and personal practice theories?

5. What is your vision for your students? Give examples. Is your vision reinterpreted in regards to specific populations?

6. Where does that vision come from?

7. How have your beliefs/vision/belonging/identity evolved over time in this particular school setting?

8. How do you and your beliefs and vision intersect with those of the institution and your colleagues? Give examples.

9. What tensions have you encountered between your beliefs, vision, and sense of belonging and those of your colleagues/community?

10. How might your colleagues describe your work with your students, and specifically Latino immigrants?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT

Sample of Adrianne Collins 3rd interview
December 11, 2014

[*already in progress*]

EK: What do you think kids like that are going to do after graduation? Will they graduate?

AC: They might. Um, I have heard of some. . . finagling going on because it's a stat, so you want your stat to be high. Not saying that it happens here, but not saying that it doesn't happen here. But I feel like, a lot of our students will probably go into a community college of some sort, and they'll probably be in their remedial classes. . . and they probably won't graduate from college. They might start, but they won't make it. Because it's gonna get progressively harder, and our kids, when they hit a wall, they give up. And I read, one of my friends posted something on Facebook a letter to the students what the teacher really wanted to say to the kids. And the teacher said, the whole point of school is to test your work ethic. Like when you hit a problem, what do you do? Yes, the history and the math, and the science are all important, but when you hit something that's hard do you give up, or do you keep working at it until you figure it out. So the kids that keep working at it until the figure it out, they'll be successful. Those who quit, we'll see them on the corner somewhere, or in our jail cells. It's just, yeah, I have a handful here that I will not be surprised if I see on the news.

EK: When you talk to them, do you think that they get that?

KB: Oh, they sound like—they spit back what they think I want to hear, but really, I don't think they understand. Like, they think they understand, but I don't think they really understand. They say back to me what they think I want to hear [mocks students] 'Oh I need to do better. I need to turn in my homework.' Cause I used to have the reflection piece on the test. How do you think you did on the test? 'I did bad.' What can you do to—'study harder. Do my homework.' But then they don't do it, so it's like, yeah, you're telling me what I want to hear, but do you really believe in what you're saying? So, it's kind of—at some point and I know in my career now, I don't want to keep harping on it. If you're not gonna get it, I'm not gonna keep saying it. It's just, it's just— like I said, last year, I physically got ill at the end of the year. I can't care more than these kids care. Otherwise, I'm gonna end up in the hospital, and I don't want to end up in the hospital. [laughs]

EK: How many of your students are passing the class right now?

[9:36] AC: Which one? This third block. Oh, my gosh, three I believe. And I showed them that the other day, and I pulled up everybody's grades.. . .and I have one, two A's.

Um, [student] right now has a B. But I need to add another grade. And [student] has a C. So, if the people doing my work, three are passing. Everybody else has F's.

EK: And you said you gave them a take-home test for Thanksgiving? How many turned that in.

AC: Oh yes. [counts] Ten out of a class of 26. And they keep trickling in, and I—and then when I grade them, they're failing. And it's like, you had every resource at your disposal. You had notes, the computer, you could call somebody. You had six –five full days to get this done, and you either haven't turned it in, you've turned it in late, or when you turned it in there were missing answers, or wrong answers. So of the ten that I got back so far, there was one 100%, and the rest were failing grades—below a 50%. It's like—

EK: And your tests, are—you just have to do the problem you've done in class. No tricks?

AC: Exactly. I'm a full believer though that a lot of my kids have test anxiety. They are scared of tests. You put the word test on something and all of a sudden all of their knowledge goes out of their head. You don't put the word test on it and they can do it no problem. But another thing is, I do put on some things on there that make them think, like error analysis. This person did this problem and she checked her answer and it's wrong. What's her error? Or true false. Um, blah blah if it's false, explain why or something like that. So they do have to kind of analyze and think. But otherwise, it's kind of like, if you can figure out who we did the problem, you should be able to answer it. On today's test, it was a lot of being able to set up a proportion, to solve proportions. Being able to solve Pythagorean theorem and you're trig functions. So I can't go any easier than that. That's pre-Algebra, Algebra I. . . .I have a lot of kids. I think who expect. That have been used to being given answers instead of working for answers. Because I've heard one of my girls say, 'this is the first math class where I failed a test.' Well, I guarantee you her previous math tests have been nothing but calculations. No thinking whatsoever. And then I also guarantee you that the material that the teacher probably gave is really simple. I'm probably the first time that they were ever challenged in a math class. And they're not stepping up to the challenge, so they are feeling inferior because they keep getting these tests back that say, 32, or 38 or 50 and they're not coming to me and saying well, how can I bring this up. Well, stay after school and we'll go over every single problem you had wrong and they you can retest.