EXPERIENCING THE CRUX OF AGENCY AND STRUCTURE IN URBAN EDUCATION: ON BECOMING A TEACHER EDUCATOR

by

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ABSTRACT

BETHANY LYN SALYERS. Experiencing agency within an urban education doctoral program: A hermeneutic phenomenological case study.
(Under the direction DR. ROSLYN A. MICKELSON)

This research seeks to understand the experience of agency among those being prepared to be teacher educators and education scholars. It investigates how doctoral students negotiate their agency when they discover a difference between the promise and reality of their doctoral training. This critical, hermeneutic phenomenological case study was designed to answer these questions: 1) What fosters and/or inhibits agency among students in the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte? And, 2) how do students negotiate issues of power within this program as it pertains to their agency?

Participant selection was purposeful and based on convenience. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 17 advanced or recently graduated UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral students. Findings suggest that a doctoral student's disposition and prior experiences foster agency. This relationship appears strongest when the student's disposition was critical and prior experiences included operating within a variety of organizational structures within the field of education. Current relationships with people in positions of power and the traditional bureaucracy that pervade the UNC Charlotte urban education program inhibited doctoral student agency. However, this negative effect was weakened if the student's identity negotiations entered the agency-negotiating process. Finally, doctoral students who were able to find space and/or create space within the structure of the doctoral program experienced greater satisfaction with their graduate experiences.

Parallels are drawn between the experience of agency within the urban education doctoral program and the experience of students in urban K-12 classrooms. The importance of the mediating role of the teacher/professor in facilitating student agency is discussed. Recommendations are proposed for the future development of urban education doctoral programs and for the preparation of urban classroom teachers.

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I would like to thank my friends in the urban education doctoral program. I end this dissertation with words from a friend who notes the loneliness of the doctoral process. I agree. It can be lonely. But we quickly realized it was better to travel and work as a group. To my cohort of fellow students and most importantly friends, thank you and I love you. Lori, Kerri, Sequoya, Ashley, Victor, and Heather. Thank you. And I wish it upon no speaker to have us in your audience, sitting together. We have too much fun.

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encouragement, advice, and down-to-earth style help provide a safe space. Drs. Perez, Salas, Kissau, and Kolano: it was an honor to work with the TESL faculty. I liked that you all were not afraid to be loud. To Micki, Terri, and Michelle, the backbone of this department, when something is successful it is because of ya'll.

And above all, I would like to offer my gratitude and love to my family. Mom – thank you for being my rock of support throughout this whole process. You always answered the phone, gave me a hug, and celebrated my little successes. This is your degree too. Thank you. To Katie, ma soeur, my best friend. Are there even words? I love you. Thank you. Cheers to sisters kicking ass all over campuses. I am so proud of you. To Jeff, my brother. What a journey it's been so far. You are a best friend, my words of advice, and my source of reason. Dad – thank you for the love and support. The conversation is a blessing. To Ron, thank you for your support, your example of hard work, and your love for our family. To Connie, thank you for living joyfully and encouraging others to be joyful as well. To my Claire, there is no way to think of my family and not think of you. Cheers to enjoying the good stuff in life. And, to Shawn. I may not have known you this time last year, but I can't imagine life without you. Thank you for being my friend even though all you've known is dissertating-Beth. Cheers to our team.

To my grandparents, this is for you: Beverly Williams, Donald Williams, Odette Salyers, and Troy Salyers. Thank you for the opportunities.

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PREFACE

I found out that I had been accepted into the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte on March 29th, 2008. It was a Saturday. When I received the congratulatory email I began to cry and then collapsed to the floor in relief. Then I got up and danced.

There are several reasons for why I chose education as my professional field. However, one reason stands out as the definitive moment I made the commitment. I was in an English composition class entitled Art and Argument as a freshman at the University of North Carolina – Greensboro (UNCG). I had a professor who was at the time working on her doctorate in English literature. She asked me what I thought about the texts we were reading, print and non-print, and cared about what I thought. She pushed me to think and not just regurgitate. She taught me to love the act of thinking, writing, and stretching one's mind and work. That is what I wanted to do. I hated most of my academic classes in middle- and high school. For me, secondary academic schooling experiences had been an exercise in tolerance for disengagement: from teachers, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Once I became a teacher myself I experienced a growing disengagement from the numbing effects of many polities, unproductive professional development, and witnessing students bear the brunt of poor decision making by adults.

I taught secondary English for seven years in three different school systems in North Carolina. The best part of teaching was when I was able to facilitate student engagement with the curriculum. The worst part was realizing that the structure of public

education did not facilitate student engagement with the curriculum. And I had issues with what administration and people with power were regulating as 'the curriculum.'

I was standing at my whiteboard on an early Tuesday morning in November 2007 writing the agenda and the mandated objective when I knew I could not do it anymore. I physically collapsed. I had been struggling emotionally for some time. When I mentally ignored the call, my body stepped in and forced me to address the tension I was experiencing. I took two weeks out of the classroom to find out that my pain was internal – not external. I was diagnosed with depression and told I needed to find a way to distress from my job.

I had been experiencing a contradiction or dissidence between the promise of schooling and the realities...for both teachers and students. And I was part of it. I could not excuse my role in the system of public education, as teacher or citizen, any longer. If I were going to participate I needed to figure out a way of reconciling this tension.

With this hope of reconciliation, and so I could answer my professional calling, I applied to the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte. I needed to go to a place that would replenish me and provide me with the knowledge, skills, and ability to negotiate and reconcile the schooling contradiction between promise and reality. Admittedly, I realize in retrospect, I was looking for a silver bullet in the same vein that policy makers today seek silver bullets like testing, standings, choice, teacher merit pay and other schemes that will trigger gains in student achievement scores.

The urban education doctoral program, of course, did not provide the silver bullet any more than policy makers' attempts to improve outcomes. But the doctoral program did provide the time and space to experience and investigate the contradiction or

dissonance between the promise and reality of urban schooling. In short, this dissertation is a product of that dissonance and of my exploration of how students can engage their agency as a means of negotiating education - related, felt tension through actions that range from withdrawal, analysis, deconstruction, and transformation.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines dissonance as "the quality of being in want of concord or harmony…an inharmonious or harsh combination of [things]" and in this effort offers synonyms as jarring and absurd. Etymologically speaking the term evolved from Latin *dissonāntia* meaning discrepancy. Such definitions are little more than fodder for a boring seventh grade vocabulary quiz.

Rather I believe it beneficial to study dissonance experientially. To orient ourselves toward dissonance, I will begin by engaging with seven expressions of the experience:

Sometimes legislation is passed to negotiate dissonance. For example, signs during segregation make no attempt to hide hatred and fear. Arguably, such legislature reproduces racism as normative and regulates actions contrary to the policy as deviant.

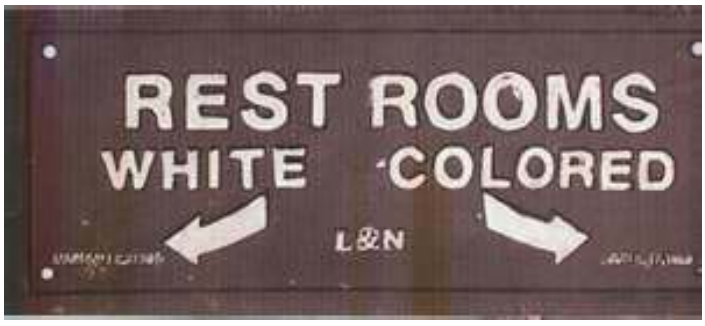

FIGURE 1.1: Segregation Sign

Sometimes the dissonance is confronted with brute force, as in the killings of four students at Kent State University by the National Guard on May 4th, 1970. Students were protesting President Nixon's plan to send American troops into Cambodia. In response to these killings artists documented the dissonance in photography, prose, and verse.

1971 Pulitzer Prize; John Paul Filo
Courtesy: John Paul Filo

FIGURE1.2: Kent State Shooting

Sometimes the dissonance is captured by an artistic style that seems to mimic the chaos and the contortions of the artwork's subject, as is the case with Picasso's *Guernica*. The painting was the artist's response to the April 26th, 1937 bombing of the Basque town of Guernica by German and Italian forces during the Spanish Civil War. The painting's massive size holds the eye and the soul of the observer, forcing the observer never to forget the violence of war. The grip never relinquishes even if one is far from its current home in Madrid, or the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) where the painting bid time until 1981, six years after Franco's death.

FIGURE 1.3: *Guernica*

Sometimes dissonance produces a bodily reaction. Tears roll down the cheek of a face watching the visual component to *Let it Be* in Julie Taymor's *Across the Universe*. Detroit becomes more than the Motor City or 8 Mile. It becomes a reminder that children die from the actions of adults.

Sometimes the dissonance is expressed through music. Beats and verse. The meter of Matisyahu reverberates, "…it's not about win or lose, 'Cause we all lose when they feed, on the souls of the innocent, blood-drenched pavement, Keep on movin' though the waters stay ragin'…"

Sometimes dissonance is expressed in a classroom. A teacher stands before a classroom of fourteen minority male students, tracked as losers and poor, labeled as disabled and angry…a sharp contrast with the group of students that occupied the space

just four minutes ago: vast majority of whom were white and upper-middle class, tracked as advanced, labeled as well-behaved…I left the classroom five years later.

Sometimes dissonance is expressed internally: The vibrating feeling one's body takes on after swallowing the weight of the words of a professor, "It might be that you are not smart enough to be in graduate school."

The magnitude of these moments of dissonance is perhaps unequal. Contexts do intricately shape any given situation and the people experiencing them. But their architectural foundation is common: the intersection of structure and agency.

What does the experience of dissonance have to do with an urban education dissertation?

Upon transitioning from a student engrossed in coursework to one who acquired the proverbial label of *all but dissertation* (ABD), I found myself cognizant of three perceivably dissonant situations experienced collectively by those of us in the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte: 1) interpersonal, 2) intrapersonal, and 3) project specific.

All three situations are further complicated by the differences in power and status that exist between faculty members and doctoral students. Not only do doctoral students contend with dynamics that result from two groups' dependence upon each other for their status, but also, from the fact that one group is seeking admittance into the other group. Put another way, faculty members serve as both gatekeepers to the academy and as mentors for ascension of doctoral students into the academy. There are two processes occurring: 1) students and teacher interdependency, and 2) doctoral students entering the professoriate. What interests me in this study is how doctoral students negotiate this

dissonance. How do these students experience their agency within the structure of the urban education doctoral program?

But what does this have to do with urban school reform?

Reliance on urban schooling reform measures such as standardization, merit-pay, school choice, testing, and extending the school day are problematic (Ravich, 2010). Educational scholars have illuminated the "flickered and faded" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 10) outcome of many similarly grounded and executed reform measures. The fact that there remains a crisis in urban education denotes a failure in these policies, in isolation, to produce a solution. This can be seen in the reform measures focused on by legislature such as No Child Left Behind, ABCs accountability in North Carolina, and in the Obama Blueprint for Education. Furthermore such neoliberal values are validated (Stromquist, 2002) through the prominence given to the Broad Prize.

Anyon (2005) and Noguera and Fine (2011) suggest that any viable reform requires the empowerment or engagement of teachers and students, and their communities. I believe it is the exclusion of teachers and students in urban education reform that requires more attention. Bandura's work on self-efficacy and agency (1997; 2001; 2004) as well as Freire's (1970/2005) conscientização help to operationalize the agenic contributions of urban teachers and their students.

FIGURE 1.5 illustrates how teacher and student agency fits into the prescription for urban school reform. Notice that percentages are kept equal in terms of the effect a policy has on the effort to improve urban schooling. This is purposeful because the argument is that teacher and student agency should be included in reform efforts, rather

than arguing how much each reform measure should contribute to the overall mission of improving outcomes for urban students.

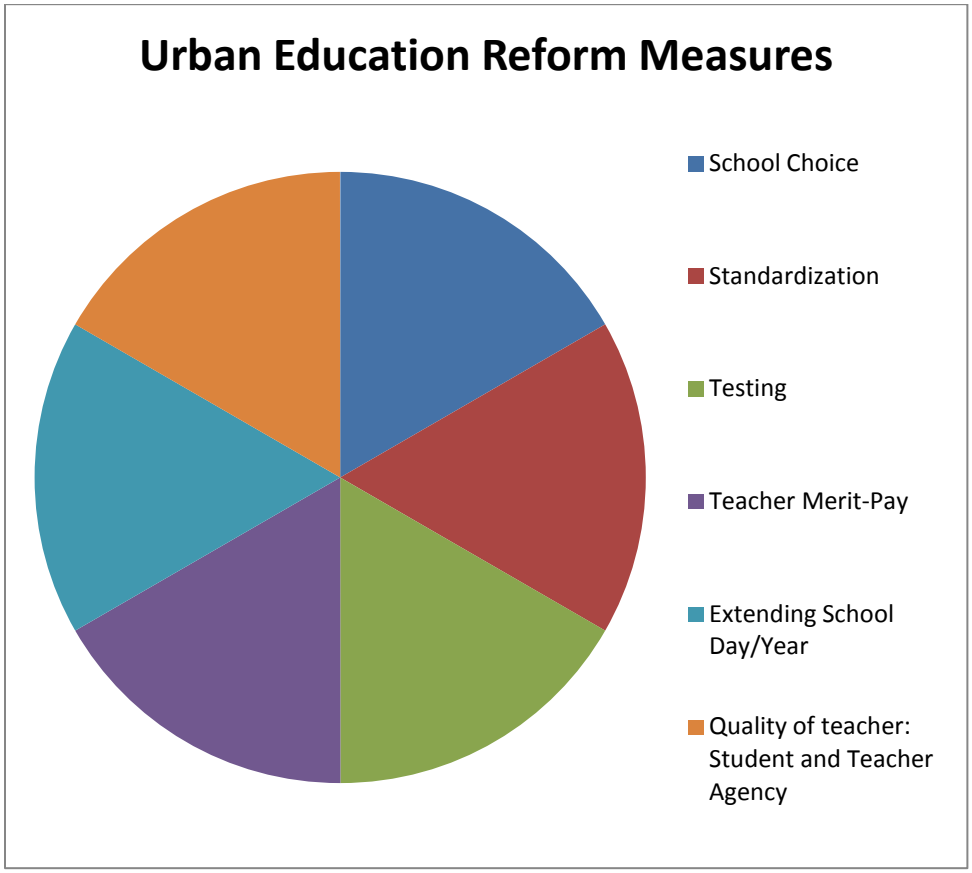

FIGURE 1.4: Urban Education Reform Measures

Why should classroom teacher agency be included?

There is a crisis in urban schooling that requires transformative actors whose agency is activated. The most significant school factor in student achievement is the classroom teacher (Delpit, 1995) and this is only amplified for our students of poverty (Haberman, 1995). In addition to test scores, the classroom teacher also affects students' affect towards school in general and a course in particular (Teven, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy, 1998). Teachers in urban schools must model agency in order to engage and motivate their students' agency. Urban students whose agency is

activated are more likely to become engaged in school in productive ways that lead to achievement, graduation, among other schooling outcomes. This is the missing piece of the design for urban school reform.

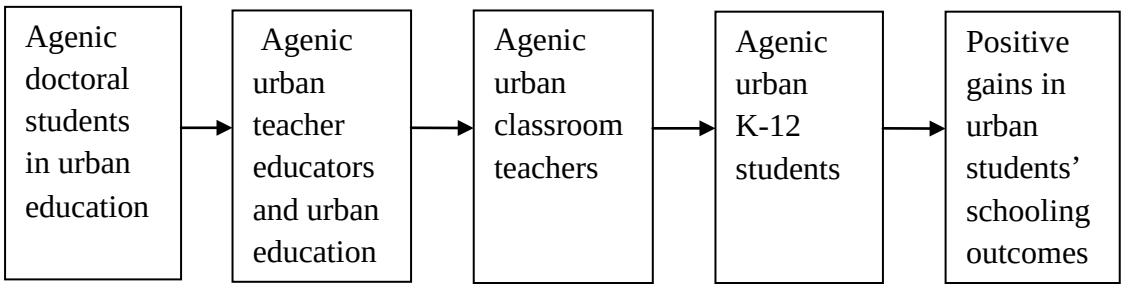

FIGURE 1.5: Academia – Urban Schooling Pipeline

What does this have to do with the preparation of urban teacher educators?

It follows that teacher education programs in the United States provide training and support for future and current classroom teachers using a variety of pathways (NCATE, 2008). In 2004-2005, 85% of future teachers came through a traditional teacher education program (U.S. DOE, 2009). According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001, every classroom teacher must have a highly qualified teacher. This scenario places teacher education programs in a key position to impact the agency of urban teachers who, in turn, will influence the agency of urban students. And since the vast majority of teacher educators and education scholars in institutions of higher education hold either a doctorate of philosophy (Ph.D.) or a doctorate of education (Ed.D.) in their specialization (Lucas & Murray, 2007), it holds that the doctoral experience is consequential in preparing agenic teacher educators and education scholars.

However it is imperative to note that while this dissertation study is based upon the premise of the academic – urban schooling pipeline illustrated above, of which is

based upon theoretical and empirical research, the study herein only investigates the first part of this process, the agenic experiences of urban education doctoral students. Furthermore I must be explicit with the fact that the arrows or the transfer of agenic ability from one level of the process to the next is based upon the theoretical work of Paulo Freire (1970/2005), conscientização, or rather the dialogical co-existence of reflection and action. It is oustide the scope of this study to investigate the actual transfer between levels of actions within urban schooling, but rather to situate the experience of doctoral students in urban education within this liberatory framework.

This study examines the experience of agency among doctoral students enrolled in an urban education Ph.D. program designed to prepare them to be teacher educators. Also illuminated is the contradiction between the promise of a transformative urban education doctoral program that appealed to so many of us compared to the traditional style, tone, and power relationships that we found in practice. This contradiction is, arguably, present in the urban public schooling experience as well. The abstract promise of education does not always match the concrete reality of schooling (Mickelson, 1990).

I used the following questions to guide this study of the experience of agency by those being prepared to be teacher educators and education scholars, as well as to better understand how graduate students negotiate their agency when the promise and reality of their doctoral program are experienced as dissonant:

1) What fosters and/or inhibits agency for students in this program?
2) How do students negotiate issues of power within this program as it pertains to their agency?

To answer these questions, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with 17 advanced or graduated UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral students. The interviews asked about the intersection of their agency with the organization and structure of the UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral program. Findings arose from my analysis of their interview using a postmodern framework. My findings suggest that a doctoral student's disposition towards education and prior experiences foster agency. This relationship appears strongest when the student's disposition was critical and prior experiences included operating within a variety of organizational structures within the field of education. I also found that current relationships with people in power and the bureaucratic structure of the doctoral program that pervaded the UNC Charlotte urban education program inhibited doctoral student agency. However inhibition of agency appeared reduced when the student's identity negotiations entered the negotiation process. And finally, in order to enact one's agency, doctoral students experienced greater feelings of satisfaction when they were able to find space and/or create space within the structure of the doctoral program. This allowed them to be able to sustain themselves in order to maintain and maneuver within that space.

Brief overview of chapters

The next chapter (Chapter 2) situates this research study by providing an overview of the UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral program in theory and in practice as experienced by 17 advanced or graduated students. I utilize the program's mission statement, formal documents, and personal narrative I wrote in partial fulfillment of my comprehensive exams requirement to present the program's promise. I then present brief descriptions of the three types of dissonance-provoking incidents most often

experienced by the doctoral students who participated in this study. I then introduce the participants that I interviewed for this study.

In the next section of this chapter, I provide an overview of the theoretical lens through which I view this context. Following that is a discussion of the complexity of involved structures in terms of higher education, how Weber's model of bureaucracy can help explain the elements of the lived experiences of participants in this study, and the experience of graduate students. I conclude by presenting the parallel crux of structure and agency I perceive between the crises in urban education and UNC Charlotte's urban education doctoral program.

Chapter 3 sets forth the research design and methodology used in this study. This is a case study of advanced and/or graduated UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral students' reactions to the dissonance-provoking incidents they experience. I conducted open-ended structured interviews with 17 self-selected individuals. The findings emerged through my thematic analysis of the interview transcripts using analytic interpretive practice (AIP). This hermeneutic phenomenological methodology illuminates the doctoral students' interpreted experience of agency.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study discussed in relationship to the theory and prior research reviewed in Chapter 2. In the discussion I make an effort to better understand the dialogical process of enacting agency in response to dissonance felt within the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte.

Interviews with the 17 advanced or graduated urban education doctoral students revealed that one's past experiences foster agenic actions within the doctoral program and that a critical disposition among students is common, possibly due to the fact that it

contributed to participants self-selecting the urban education program for their doctoral study. My analysis revealed that all participants (n = 17) were able to recount at least one incident related to doctoral students or a professional role in the past where he/she exercised agency. Specifically all participants shared at least one experience related to exercising agency within an academic space, whether in the role of student or teacher.

Numerous students reported being provoked by perceived unjust, arbitrary, unethical, racist, sexist, or unprofessional actions. And many participants related stories where experiences did not mirror expectations. The lived reality of UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral program was discrepant from a romanticized promise of the program being a critical silver bullet for the problems in urban education. Several interviews shed light on experiences where participants anticipated validation of their dissenting voice, but were met instead with coercive and traditional exercises of administrative power. Such responses revealed to participants the need to either find or create a space in order to foster individual or collective agency. Once they inhabited that space, they were able to maneuver within the program from that space. In other words, participants recall having to call upon their creativity, identity negotiations, and social and cultural capacities to bolster their agency in response to the dissonance they experienced within the structure of the urban education doctoral program.

I conclude this dissertation in Chapter 5 by using the study's findings to illuminate and help inform the design and practice of a more transformative urban education doctoral program that will better prepare urban classroom teachers, who in turn, will be better able to facilitate the agency of their students. The chapter concludes

with a discussion of the study's limitations, but more importantly, my recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review serves four main purposes. First, it provides an overview of the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte that served as the site for this study. Within this overview is a description of the promise of the program, as gleaned from formal documents, interview data, and my personal narrative written in partial fulfillment of my doctoral comprehensive examinations. Then to explicate the lived experiences of the urban education doctoral program I provide a description of three tenuous relationships commonly experienced by my participants, namely interpersonal, intrapersonal, and project specific. Second, this literature review provides explanation of the theoretical framework through which I conceptualized, designed, and conducted this study: critical postmodernism. Third, I provide a discussion of literature relevant to my findings, specifically higher education, the experience of doctoral students, the construct of agency, and how experiences within the College of Education can be better understood with the help of institutional isomorphism. Finally, I spend some time making explicit some parallels of the experience of dissonance in the doctoral program and in K-12 urban classrooms.

Overview of the UNC Charlotte Urban Education Doctoral Program

In Theory

Formal documentation. At this time it is necessary to provide a stasis of the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte and its promise. The degree is

technically called the Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction, but maintains a core focus on urban education, hence the repeated use of the phrase, urban education doctoral program as opposed to the curriculum and instruction doctoral program. Specifically, the program's mission:

> "is to prepare excellent professionals who are knowledgeable, effective, reflective, collaborative, and responsive leaders, and who can contribute uniquely and significantly to the field of urban education within a selected strand of study. This mission nurtures student and faculty partnerships with schools, communities, and university colleagues, in response to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's commitment to children, and schools."
> (Ph.D. Handbook, 2011, p. 6).

This mission appears to have resonated with participants in this study. When asked about motivation for entering this urban education doctoral program, the response given most often was the desire to gain the knowledge, experience, and credentials required to make significant contributions to the schooling experiences of urban youth.

Journey stated,

> "I felt there was more and in order for me to try to obtain that for kids in urban schools maybe I needed to go to school again…get my credentials."

The acknowledgement of dissonance as an urban public school teacher led many to the doctoral program at UNC Charlotte in order to grow their capacity for agenic actions within the field.

Maria's revealed that,

> "If I have to get a Ph.D. for someone to listen to me say what's right for kids then that's what I'll do…so that's what brought me to [the doctoral program at UNC Charlotte]."

Roxie explained that for her,

> "the main thing was just wanting more. I just needed to know more. I needed to know why these things were happening and what could be done about it."

Such points of dissonance seemed an integral part of the process of self-selecting into the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte.

For myself,

> "No matter where I was teaching, it was still coming up that there were total discrepancies in what kind of education people got and the hypocrisy of it."

As students enter the doctoral program they select a strand of specialization within the context of urban education. The six possible

specializations are: urban, mathematics, reading/literacy, English, teaching English as a second language (TESL), and elementary education. The urban focus that unifies all strands:

> "provides students with the opportunity to more closely examine factors affecting schools and communities in our major cities. These factors include but are not limited to: race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, school finance, tracking, segregation, immigration, and marginalization. In addition, urban education explores issues of cultural diversity, social stratification both local and global, and structural inequalities that impact the lives of many families living in our cities." (Ph.D. Handbook, 2011, p. 6).

The majority of the participants (n = 14) interviewed in this study were part of the urban specialization, meaning the in addition to the core urban courses required for all doctoral students in the Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction, their specialization courses were also oriented towards issues in urban education. For this reason, below is a table that provides course requirements for the urban specialization

TABLE 2.1

Urban Specialization Requirements

Required Core Courses (15 hours):	Research Course Requirements (minimum of 15 hours):	A Sample of Specialization Courses Offered (minimum of 21 hours):
Critical Issues & Perspectives in Urban Education	Descriptive & Inferential Statistics	Transformative Black Education
Power, Privilege, & Education	Advanced Statistics	Social Deviance, Delinquency, & Urban Education
Globalization, Urbanization, & Urban Schooling	Multivariate Statistics	Urban Schooling, Curriculum, & Pedagogy
Social Theory & Education	Qualitative Research Methods	Political Economy of School Reform
Social Context of Schooling	Advanced Qualitative Research Methods	Advanced Curriculum Theory & Development
	Program Evaluation	History of Urbanization & Its Impact on Schooling
		Critical Readings in Urban Education Research
		Comparative Education
		Independent Study in Urban Education

This coursework is indicative of how the program course requirements have been designed to fulfill the mission statement of the doctoral program and maintain an urban education focus. All of this information is available online to the public, therefore providing prospective students multiple points of reference for the transformative and critical mission and design of the program.

Personal narrative.

In partial fulfillment of my comprehension examinations I completed a portfolio that documented my growth and learning in the urban education doctoral program. This portfolio included artifacts that addressed the following: conference presentations, publications, courses taught, service to my professional community, service to the

university, grant activity, awards and recognitions, selected coursework, and my research agenda. Each section had its own narrative summary, introducing artifacts and relating them to my overall development as an emerging scholar in urban education. However the part of the portfolio that I will be utilizing in this dissertation to provide additional insight into the urban education doctoral student experience, is the personal narrative that I wrote as a reflection of my experience in the program up to that point.

I chose to organize my personal narrative as a soundtrack. In other words, I selected twenty-one songs that I perceived as being representative of my evolution as a doctoral student. I used the music and lyrics as a catalyst to reflect upon my experience up to that point in the urban education doctoral program. My personal narrative in its entirety is in Appendix A. My process of experiencing dissonance and activating my agency was represented by the song, *Not Ready to Make Nice* by The Dixie Chicks. This section of my personal narrative reveals the dissonance that I felt as a classroom teacher was similar to that which I was feeling as a doctoral student,

> "The lit flame afforded two choices: to succumb to numbness or to act. When I finally tried to be numb I was diagnosed with depression, thus beginning my citizenship in the Prozac nation. So I must act. I could change my classroom. I couldn't change the structure of education from the classroom. Maybe some teachers can, but I couldn't give my all on two fronts. So I entered this program to change the way we do education in this country."

But it is clear that after two years of coursework I had realized I could not run from the tension,

> "I find myself, though, in another bureaucracy
> (not really surprised) where the structural change is
> also needed in terms of teacher education programs.
> It appears to be the whole damn thing. But I'm closer now.
> Closer to the spaces where impact can be more direct on
> policy and structure. Closer to the degree that will permit
> me access to the opportunity to make the changes needed
> for the benefit of all students."

At this point I had come to the notion that it is the ability to remain with the dissonance that afforded the greatest opportunity to make sustainable, structural change. I renewed my determination; I did not run from the doctoral program but rather made a decision to engage with the dissonance. In fact this dissertation is a product of that decision. I decided,

> "I could play nice and pretend that the interaction
> of macro factors and micro trends do not matter in
> the education of a secondary student or a post-secondary
> student. I could try to bend myself into an odd and
> perverse shape so that I fit into the structure built
> on agriculture, industry, and commodities.
> But I already tried that. I refuse to play nice because
> nice will not challenge the status quo; nice will not face

> issues of power and privilege. Nice refutes the importance of social context, is hell bent on shaking hands post-sanitizer, and keeps popping pills for an artificial high or, in the least, the norm."

The motivation to include this part of my comprehension exam portfolio's personal narrative in my discussion of the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte is because it expresses the parallel of dissonance experienced as a classroom teacher and as a doctoral student. The contexts were different; the players, power structure, and aim differed greatly, but the feeling experienced was the same. There is something there to be phenomenologically investigated so that urban students, teachers, and their teachers can be better prepared to engage with the dissonance.

In Practice

In analyzing my data, three relationships emerged as being common experiences among the participants of this study. Interestingly for fulltime student participants, all three relationships were experienced within the context of the urban education doctoral program. Part time student participants experienced these three relationships either within the urban education doctoral program or within the context of their current or most recent employment, a local public school. Below is a brief description of the common elements that comprise each of these commonly experienced relationships.

Interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships refer to experiences that participants had with someone of a higher professional status within the urban education doctoral program or a local public school. These relationships are distinctive in that the participant represents the person who is professionally subordinate to the other person.

For experiences within the doctoral program, it consists of the participant – the urban education doctoral student, and a faculty member. The faculty member is either a professor or administrator within the College of Education at UNC Charlotte. Experiences ranged from in-class interactions, one-on-one meetings, hallway chats, and email exchanges. Participants noted instances of perceived racism, sexism, attacks on religious beliefs, and having class contributions belittled.

Interpersonal relationships experienced in local public schools consisted of the participant – a teacher and an administrator. Experiences ranged from a teacher seeking administrator support for curricular or pedagogical support or permission. Although some participants are currently administrators in local public schools, experiences categorized as interpersonal are inclusive of only those told in regards to their classroom teaching experiences.

Intrapersonal relationships. Intrapersonal relationships refer to experiences in which a participant is engaged in an internal struggle with regards to the urban education doctoral program or with being a classroom teacher. The range of experiences in this category is wide. For the continuum includes wanting to quit and leave the doctoral program or teaching as well as wanting to publically lambast a professor, organizational structure, or public school policy. Participants described the feeling of this struggle and the process taken in order to find resolution. Often participants sought to find a ways to work within the structure to enact their will but also to remain in the program or job. The majority of experiences related to participants' self-doubt of their ability, validity, and potential within the doctoral program. These experiences were often cyclical in that they

occurred throughout participants' tenure in the urban education doctoral program or classroom teaching career.

This category of experience contained the greatest number of examples provided by participants during their interviews. Many participants spoke of questioning their presence in the doctoral program in financial concerns, identity concerns, intellectual ability, as well as times when the experience did not reflect the transformational and critical urban education doctoral program they had envisioned. And often the residual impact of interpersonal relationships and project specific relationships often influenced the intrapersonal relationship. The intrapersonal relationship can be regarded as relationships that required a general agenic disposition from the participant.

Project specific relationships. While I can try and pretend that one project did not dominate the conversation of four participants, it would be dishonest and deny validation for a significant incident that impacted the personal lives and professional aspirations of this involved cohort. Therefore in terms neutral as possible, I will explain the project that sent a group of fulltime, vocal, and passionate female urban education doctoral students – into action.

In summer of 2009, a faculty member at UNC Charlotte forwarded a request for proposals from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) to a handful of students who had expressed interest in researching student achievement levels for urban students. Four doctoral students responded by developing an intervention. This came together around an idea generated by one of these students' idea to address student achievement levels. Three of the four women had no prior experience with grants, and the woman who had experience was working fulltime and also a part time

instructor for the University. The four doctoral students wrote the grant application over the course of three months. Upon completing the application close to the submission deadline, they learned that a faculty member at UNC Charlotte would need to serve as the Principal Investigator (PI). With the submission deadline approaching, this group of students invited a faculty member who held a key position in the urban education doctoral program to be the PI on this grant. The faculty member agreed. The grant was funded.

Admittedly, this group of students was unaware of typical grant funding and budgeting practices and they were not consulted. Thus, they were dismayed when they later learned that the PI had moved around budget lines to create summer salary for the faculty member, funding to pay for the PI's conference travel, and to purchase laptop computers. These items were not part of the original grant and were not in the list of needed supplies originally identified by this group of doctoral students. Such actions by the PI, because not anticipated, diminished the funds available for the key intervention the grant funded. With little to no prior experience with grants and no experience with university procedures on budgeting practices, this group of students sought administrative support. Expecting, perhaps naively, that administration would sanction the faculty member and restore the original budget, this group of students instead was made to feel deviant and invalidated. To resolve the conflict, a second PI was added to the project. The doctoral students trusted this second PT, and communication with the original PI was suspended. However this resolution in practice proved to be a continual source of frustration for this group of doctoral students because the secretive budget changes were never wholly retracted. The administration's lack of righteous anger towards this faculty

member, the absence of any validation of this group of students' anger, and communication was still problematic because access to grant funds had to go through the PI. The accumulation of anger felt by the students throughout the duration of this project became palpable, negatively altering communications between these students and the faculty member as well as between the students and administration. The anger and feelings of betrayal also appeared to resonate with some other students in the program whom were not directly involved with to the project. This relationship produced a need to task-specific or micro level agenic ability by participants.

However, let it be noted that the project was success in terms of the students targeted for the intervention did receive it and the individual and collective agency it required of the doctoral students was a meaningful and bonding experience.

Participants

The seventeen participants were self-selected doctoral students. The following section introduces them. Most elected to choose their own pseudonyms, and I chose the remaining participants' pseudonyms.

Sunshine. Sunshine is a single, African American female in her 20s who became a certified teacher through Teach for America (TFA). She attended undergrad at a well-respected state university in North Carolina. She taught middle school science in Miami, Florida and holds a Master's degree in educational leadership. She is a fulltime doctoral student in the urban strand, has a graduate assistantship, and teaches an undergraduate course on diversity in the classroom. Sunshine was not part of the writing of the grant, but did join that group of students in the implementation of the intervention.

Louise. Louise is a single, white female in her late 30s who taught English at the high school level in several different states and also opened up her own experientially-based school. She was a fulltime student in the urban strand at the time of the interviews, but has since graduated. Louise was part of the group of students who wrote and implemented the grant, described earlier under the heading project specific relationships. Now she works as an English teacher, coordinator of high school curriculum, along with other leadership duties at a local urban charter school.

Coco. Coco is a married, white female in her 30s who has taught at the elementary school level for many years in several different cities. She obtained her teaching degree from a small state school in Pennsylvania and her Master's degree from UNC Charlotte. She volunteers at local schools to establish school-community partnerships. Coco is a fulltime doctoral student, in the urban strand, and is currently entering the dissertation phase.

Rose. Rose is a married, white female who was a classroom teacher for many years prior to becoming a school principal. She attends the program part time and is in the reading/literacy strand.

Matilda. Matilda is a married, white female who has worked as an English instructor and as well as an admissions counselor at the post-secondary school level. She entered the program part time, but has since enrolled fulltime and also teaches as an adjunct instructor. Her strand specialization is English.

Maria. Maria is a single, white female in her 30s who taught at the elementary school level in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools for many years. She earned her teaching licensure and Master's at a well-respected state school in Pennsylvania. She is a fulltime

doctoral student in the urban strand and is currently finishing her dissertation. For the majority of her time in the program, Maria held a graduate assistantship and taught undergraduate courses in curriculum and instruction. Maria also works as a curriculum director for an afterschool tutoring company that targets low-income, immigrant and refugee students.

Journey. Journey is a single, African American female who taught mathematics at the secondary school level prior to entering the doctoral program. She earned her teaching credentials at a well-respected state university in North Carolina. She attends the program fulltime and is a graduate assistant for the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research center in the College of Education. Her strand specialization is mathematics and focuses on family – school partnerships in STEM education.

Sasha. Sasha is a single, African American female who entered the teaching profession laterally. She attended a well-respected state university in North Carolina where she earned a degree in History before teaching middle school social studies and earning her lateral teacher licensure at a historically black college – university (HBCU). Sasha is a fulltime doctoral student in the urban strand and is currently finishing her dissertation. At the time of the interview, Sasha held a graduate assistantship and supervised student teachers. Currently she is a teacher recruiter for the College of Education.

Rick Flair. Rick Flair is a married, African American male who taught mathematics at the high school level for several years in CMS prior to taking the job of director of education outreach for the College of Education. He received his teaching

credentials at an HBCU in North Carolina and his Master's degree at UNC Charlotte. Rick Flair attends the doctoral program part time and is in the urban specialization strand. He is currently finishing his dissertation.

Bishop. Bishop is a single, white male who taught mathematics at the high school level in CMS for a few years prior to joining the doctoral program fulltime. He came to the United States approximately a decade ago to attend a doctoral program in Pennsylvania, but realized he wanted teaching experience, thus his move to Charlotte, North Carolina. His specialization strand is mathematics. He teaches mathematics courses as an adjunct instructor and is currently working on his dissertation.

Jackson. Jackson is married, white male who attended the doctoral part time while also working as a principal at an area middle school. He is vocal about his Christian faith.

Lisa. Lisa is a single, African American female who taught English at the high school level and worked with teen-mothers. She held a graduate assistantship her first year in the program, but now works part time at the University. Lisa is in the urban strand specialization and is finishing her coursework.

Phoebe. Phoebe is a single, white female who was a classroom teacher prior to becoming an administrator. She currently attends the program part time and is a principal at a local public middle school. Her strand specialty is urban and is currently in the dissertation phase.

Trey. Trey is a married, white male who was a classroom teacher prior to taking a position at a local museum as the director of education. He attended the doctoral program part time and graduated a couple of years ago.

Zara. Zara is a divorced, African American female who earned her undergraduate degree at a well-respected state university in North Carolina. She currently works as an advisor for pre-service education students, teaches an undergraduate course for the College of Education, and is attending the doctoral program part time. Her specialization is the urban strand and she is currently working on her dissertation.

Roxie. Roxie is a married, white female who recently graduated from the doctoral program. She attended fulltime while also earning her Master's in educational leadership at UNC Charlotte. Her specialization was urban and she is currently an administrator at a local charter school. Roxie attended CMS schools and later taught in CMS at the elementary school level. She entered the teaching profession through TFA and earned degrees at a well-respected state university in Virginia.

Bethany (me). I am a single, white female in her 30s who taught middle and high school English in in North Carolina prior to entering the doctoral program, urban strand. I earned my undergraduate degree and teaching license from UNC Greensboro and my Master's degree from North Carolina State University. I have attended the program fulltime and currently hold a graduate assistantship and teach a Master's level course on diversity in the classroom. I am currently finishing my dissertation.

Review of Literature

I begin this literature review with an explanation of the theoretical framework that guides my dissertation. Following this I review literature relevant to the research questions and the context of my study.

Theoretical Framework

Postmodernism. As does Ezzy (2002), I believe that research is political. I think teaching is a political act, too. And according to Weber (Lemert, 2004) the political is a mode of access into a governing bureaucracy which makes the execution of one's agency possible and influential. In the paradigm of critical inquiry, which values emancipation, lay postmodernism which views emancipation through the technique of deconstruction of grand narratives which can subvert one's agency (Later, 1992; Lemert, 2004). Thus context and subjectivity are of great importance in a postmodern interpretation (Ezzy, 2002). Ezzy (2002) adds that "sophisticated postmodernists are not attempting to deny the existence of reality – they are attempting to demonstrate that interpretation of it is a complex process and that there is not final or absolute truth" (p. 16).

A hegemonic center is rightly fearful of its status because power, as Foucault states, is everywhere, "not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Lemert, 2004, p. 466). This construct of power, akin to the idea of perpetual motion, resists the oversimplification of binaries, suggesting instead that forces are interconnected (Lemert, 2004). Under the urging of Foucault (1972), "we must reconstitute another discourse, discover the silent murmuring, the inexhaustible speech that animates from within the voice that one hears, re-establish the tiny, invisible text that runs between and sometimes collides with them" (p. 27). But to enter into a state where such discourse, such engagement within dissonance is nourishing and critical, Sun Tzu offers sage advice in that "those skilled at the unorthodox are infinite as heaven and earth, inexhaustible as the great rivers. When they come to an end they begin again like days and months; they die and are reborn, like the four seasons" (Clearly, 2988, p. 6970).

In terms of my dissertation, this perspective on power is significant, for the understanding that power "comes from everywhere" elicits the interpretation that all persons and organizational structures possess power within the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte. This is an important aspect for my dissertation because it positions the doctoral students as having power or agenic capacity. Of course the capacity is different compared to the agenic capacity held by faculty members, the legitimizing power held by the University and the traditions of higher education, but present just the same. If this perspective were not taken with regard to the power or agenic capacity of doctoral students, then the experience of agency would reduced to something akin to reproduction and subordination rather than transformation and intersubjectivity.

Weber's metaphor of the iron cage is helpful here (Weber, 1953). According to Weber, organizations work best when efficient by means of considering the connectivity of economics, education, politics, and defense (Lemert, 2004). Weber's treatment of power is explained through class, status, and party, each contributing to the overall efficiency of mass behavior, or in the case for study, the experience of agency within the doctoral program(Lemert, 2004). In this sense the bureaucratic becomes so efficient that it become difficult to move beyond it, hence it functioning like a cage (Lemert, 2004; Weber, 1953). It is postulated that a balance must be maintained for a person to remain a subject and not become encapsulated within an iron cage (Bidwell, 1965; Lemert, 2004).

Tension, Dissonance, and Power

Historically, divisions and borders have been constructed for the purpose of maintaining traditional centers of power and oppressing potential means of resistance.

Under this process lay the means of legitimizing a grand narrative as truth through the indoctrination of masses and a de-legitimization of countering discourse (Lemert, 2004). This process suggests that organizations and people in power, such as the organization of higher education and faculty members, perform actions to sustain the system in place that provides them with legitimization. However it is not necessarily a performance by an individual's choice, but rather co-constructed with the pressures of institution of higher education. The force of organizational structures on a person's identity cannot be neglected.

Specifically, through means of exclusion such as laws, distribution, and the cultivation of fear, space available for countering a new dialogue is squelched (Lemert, 2004). Thus it would appear normal for doctoral students to feel limited in their agenic capacity because of programmatic policy, access to knowledge of the organization, and a fear of negative consequences for challenges to authority. Foucault (1972) argues however that it is precisely within this dissonance, where doctoral students feel subordinate to faculty members and the traditions of higher education and thus cannot freely exercise their will that space for greater agenic capacity is conscientized. It is the lack of fluid movement within the organizational structure that makes one more conscious of the impact these structures have on a person's actions, despite desires.

Also advanced in the notion of justice being perverted into a modern discourse through techniques of legitimization (Lyotard, 1979/1984). The modern narrative spins a climate which dampens sparks of ingenuity and dissonance, as for Lyotard observes, "the decision makers…attempt to manage these clouds of sociality according to input/output matrices, following a logic which implies that their elements are commensurable and that

the whole is determinable. They allocate our lives for the growth of power. In matters of social justice and of scientific truth alike, the legitimization of that power is based on its optimizing the system's performance – efficiency" (1979/1984, p.xxiv). In the case of inter-, intrapersonal, and project specific relationships experienced by doctoral students, this can help interpret aspects of graduate assistantships, one-on-one meetings with faculty members, and the agenic efficacy one has while in the urban education doctoral program.

The rate at which one is included in a discourse can be seen as deplorable if connected to brute force, disciplinary power, or ideological control (Cho & Lewis, 2005). Specifically, disciplinary power remains intact through a promulgation of binary constructs – as can be seen in the power construction of doctoral students being subordinate to faculty members. But Cho and Lewis (2005) point out that binaries are unstable in that they conceive power as a commodity to be exchanged, not created. Therefore any attempt at creating power, creating discourse, without a prerequisite of destroying the power of another, is invalid and viewed as a threat to all by those in traditional positions of power. In other words, for some, the notion that doctoral students could create their own power without diminishing the power of the faculty is deemed unacceptable, thus reinforcing the traditional boundaries of higher education.

As expected, this binary construct eventually weakens the resolve a doctoral student has in seeking other ways of perpetuating dissonance or challenging the status quo. Foucault (1972) describes this phenomenon as finding oneself caught up in the details of the discursive and blind to the events of the discourse. A zero-sum neocolonialist stance is sustained via Machiavellian rule, where if threatened values fear

over love (Machiavelli, 2003; Stromquist, 2002;). This operation, according to Fanon (1964/2004), is an exploitation of those who have nothing to lose and everything to gain, a sick mockery by the ruling class to control dissonance, to keep political considerations in view, and to ultimately control liberty. This posits the tradition of higher education, the legitimizing goal of the urban education doctoral program, and faculty members, as not necessarily discouraged to utilize fear and dependency over doctoral students. The fact that this was experienced by students in an urban education doctoral program that proclaims to address issues of marginalization, inequalities, and social stratification, proved frustrating for many participants in this study who felt that instead of working to combat these issues it appears to be reproducing them.

El Saadawi (1997) provides insight into why it is important to consider the experience of agency rather than just an intellectual investigation of it. For a postmodern treatment of dissonance that remains in the realm of rhetoric without the context of experience is a fallacy of fragmentation and denies the interconnectivity required for liberating change (El Saadawi, 1997). Freire (1970/2005) and Mehta (2000) agree with El Saadawi (1997) in that to keep dissonance within a context of liberation, language requires demystification with continual critical attention to politics and economics. This suggests that by studying the experience of agency within a specific context using a critical framework will help illuminate political and economic pressures in the organization. Put differently, the doctoral students' experience of agency within the urban education program can help illuminate the contradictions between the mission of the program and the organizational forces and faculty practices.

Cosmopolitanism: Turning toward dissonance. Appiah (2006) offers cosmopolitanism not as a solution, but as a process that positions a person to face towards dissonance – margins of discourse – and to find ways of engaging in its construction. Part of this process requires the recapitulation of terminology with attention to its political ties, for Appiah (2006) contents that no term is neutral and that this action will help mediate the challenge of recasting our beliefs in our relationships with others. Within the context of this dissertation study, this process is identifiable through the critical thinking – and related actions – that participants went through in negotiating contradictions or dissonance experienced within the urban education doctoral program.

Appiah (2006) further advocates for narratives of dissonance for the purpose of keeping one's language skills fresh, values continually reflected upon, and other ways of knowing illuminated. This helps to validate my decision to utilize the voices of my fellow urban education doctoral students to investigate the experience of agency within the program. It also aligns with the mission of the urban education doctoral program to prepare scholars to engage critically and significantly with the field of urban education.

Mehta (2000) contends that such processes must be radical and be willing to destroy that which exists for what is possible or else a dominant structure will prevail. He argues that contemporary cosmopolitanism does not reach levels of hybridization, but rather acknowledges distance and difference. This suggests cosmopolitanism to be a viable method for doctoral students to make sense of the dissonance experienced within the doctoral program. Specifically, this form of cosmopolitanism seeks to disarm critiques of historical ties to universalism, and connotatively imperialism, and Mehta

(2000) argues that “cosmopolitanism, is by contrast, a willingness to engage with the ‘Other’” (p. 622).

Arguably then this tenant could be helpful in analyzing the actions taken by doctoral students and faculty members at times of experienced dissonance. At some level it begs the question, how do different parties engage dissonance, or in other words that which is unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or unknown? Light is shed on this by Foucault’s (1972) characteristic of discourse, in that cosmopolitanism must keep all things within the space for dispute, claiming no privilege for itself. This definition suggests that all three common relationships experienced by participants contained varying levels of willingness by faculty members and doctoral students to risk their current or future status and legitimization for the realization of the mission of the urban education doctoral program.

Hansen (2004) refers guidance on navigating such dissonance, pointing out that cosmopolitanism urges one to have “reflective openness to the global and reflective loyalty to the local” (p. 65). Hansen, et al., (2009) posit cosmopolitanism as “neither the individual nor the community…[but] rather, it is the ever-changing space between what a person and a community are in the present moment and what they might become through a reflective response to new influence juxtaposed with an understanding of their traditions and roots” (p. 588). This, arguably, places the responsibility of agency and legitimization of the urban education program on the shoulders of faculty members and doctoral students. In other words, it is not the faculty’s responsibility alone to live the mission of the program nor is it solely on the backs of the students, but rather dependent upon the interactions between the two groups. This works for the interpersonal and

project specific relationships. For the intrapersonal experience this interaction would be internal, existing between multiple felt pressures that a doctoral student is experiencing. Such perspective however must be brought into action.

In an attempt to seize cosmopolitanism from the trusts of abstraction and to bring about its real-life, or sociopolitical nature, three offerings from the living arts are induced: hope, memory, and dialogue (Hansen, et al., 2009). The position of hope as "rooted in the present interaction with others in the world" (Hansen, et al., 2009, p. 595) begs solidarity with the notion of hope from Duncan-Andrade (2009) in that hope is a participant sport in which there is no end time, only changing seasons, which holds out space, always, for another day.

Using the art of memory "allows people to more fully enter life rather than merely regarding it" (Hansen, et al., 2009, p 596) which with hope, create a dissonance that can induce agency. This mindfulness is the aim of cosmopolitanism, to be neither closed off nor wide open, but rather embracing dialogue as the opportunity and the method of dwelling in tension in order to shed a richer, more natural light on the past, the present, and the future (Hansen, et al., 2009). Therefore the dissonance experienced by the participants in this study is most identifiable through differences within and between people, are to be regarded as a gift, and a key to the opportunity to live the promise of the urban education doctoral program.

Key Definitions

Before I move on to tease out the relationship between teachers and agency, it is first necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the three concurrent elements of agency, as inferred from relevant literature.

Structural Core of Agency

Defined herein, agency is the execution of one's intentions within an organization. Agency is important because it fuels mobility within an organizational space or discourse. Without spatial mobility, one can be type-cast into a grand narrative (Foucault, 1972; Monahan, 2005). Agency allows one the freedom to either perpetuate the norm or to dislocate the norm (Derrida, in Lemert, 2004). The elemental composition of agency consists of creativity, identity construction, and cultural and social capital.

Creativity. As a core element of agency, creativity operates as "the ability to cast a situation or challenge or problem in a new light and thereby open up possibilities that were not evident before" (Weston, 2007, p. 3). Thus creativity informs one's sense of agency of the spatial and temporal domains of a structure, or in other words, its malleability. Florida's (2002) work on the relationship between creative ethos and the environment postulates that "we cannot create out of nothing. Creativity for us is an act of synthesis, and in order to create and synthesize, we need stimuli – bits and pieces to put together in new and unfamiliar ways, existing frameworks to deconstruct and transcend" (p. 185). Such a position can be viewed in tandum with Bandura's (2004) arguement that human agency consists of "intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness" (p. 618). Such mindfulness and activity requires self-efficacy, of which Bandura (2004) believes plays "a key role in shaping the courses lives take by influencing the types of activities and environments known to cultivate valued potentialities and lifestyles" (p. 623).

To deepen the inquiry into intellectual creativity, Marginson (2009) operationalizes three constructs: *volition*, *condition*, and *position*. *Volition* is rendered as

the space in which the imagination brings forth a conceptualization that marks a departure from that which has come before (Marginson, 2009). However, Marginson (2009) reminds that "although [this] creative leap forward appears as a blaze of novelty, a sudden intuition, it rests also on an accumulated refusal of what was done before" thus warning of an oft unwarranted focus on novelty. Nor is this construction to be taken as a purely individual or collective process, but rather an interplay along these different social spheres (Marginson, 2009). Therefore it is plausible to posit the creation of new, interdisciplinary doctoral programs an outcome of volition. And, perhaps to the disappointment of the functionalist, "there is an irreducible element of agency in the radical-creative act" (Marginson, 2009, p. 93). Rather the creative person calls upon his or her depths of tradition and experience, similar to what Bourdieu refers to as habitus (Marginson, 2009). Heath and Heath (2010) echo this sentiment in their *Switch* framework, in that motivation and a sense of efficacy are attributed to a combination of appeals to both logos and pathos, and assurance that there are viable means to the end.

The place where such creativity occurs is referred to as *condition*, of which includes knowledge-forming organizations, such as the university (Marginson, 2009). And due to the preeminence of the university for cross-disciplinary teaching and research, much of which is connected to initiatives and organizations outside university walls, the creative abilities of its professors, students, and administrators hold a wide-range of potential power (Marginson, 2009). In order to capitalize on the diversity offered in urban centers, it is argued that universities in such locations, creates greater potential output in terms of intellectual creativity than universities in less-populated, less diverse *positions* (Marginson, 2009). Palmer and Zajonc (2010) add to the discourse on

the significance of the growth rate and the university: “the urban press of the future is one more reason that the heart of higher education needs to liberate individuals’ capacity for compassion and community and provide them with the skillful means to inhabit these capacities” (vii.). This ideally situates the university as not an isolated pause away from the world, but rather as a free space that interacts with the world, thus rendering creative power, agency, to those with little legal, economic, or social status (Heath & Heath, 2010). The urban education doctoral program appears to fit in this space.

Identity Construction. It is well-founded that a student’s or teacher’s identity endures a significant role regarding issues of equitable access to learning opportunities, to discourse (Anzaldua, 1999; Delpit, 1995; Freire, 1970/2005; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2004). According to Gollnick and Chinn (2009) cultural identity is composed of one’s ethnicity, age, language, class, ability, gender, race, and religion. However such classifications do not adequately represent the complexity, or multiplicity of identity formation without a contextual validation of our pluralistic society (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009). It is here where the work of democracy on one’s identity “means that the self is permanently engaged in a process of ‘losing’ and ‘finding’ itself” (Hansen, 2007, p. 26). This dialogical process demands open horizons, preparation toward navigating such openness, and the agency to follow one’s intention within that horizon. Hansen (2007) borrows from Dewey a perspective of the moral as a way of keeping the horizon of openness, the space of dissonance economically and politically situated because it denotes the “willingness to learn from all rather than just some of the contacts that people have in life” (p. 29). Freire (1970/2005) argues that liberation or conscientização can only be the result of one’s own work and that via continual reflection

and praxis, a process termed dialogue, agency within a marginalized space can be achieved.

Said (2000c) illuminates the potential of a contrapuntal knowledge of an identity that "gives rise to any awareness of simultaneous dimensions" (p. 186) and is located through "places of activity and praxis" (2000b, p. 214). It is plausible to note here a process of materialization, or practicality, of postmodern theory in terms of identity discourse. El Saadawi (1997) advances this contextualization through modes of dissonance and creativity. In order to be dissident, creativity is essential and that the amount of creativity require is in direct proportion to the degree of the struggle (El Saadawi, 1997).

Three theorists in particular become helpful here in furthering the understanding of this process. Freire (1970/2005) provides the limit-situation in his problem-posing education for the liberation of the student. Under this view, the person, who is a sum of multiple, dynamic discourses, can become conscious of these discourses by engaging in situations that challenge his or her way of knowing and being in the world, and therefore way of knowing and being his or herself (Freire, 1970/2005). The act of engaging in discourses in a democratic fashion, requires Habermas' work on intersubjectivity (Lemert, 2004). Intersubjectivity offers the existence of dialogue through equal power of the speakers which is defined as having symmetry of value of the speakers' opinion, self-identificaion, and ways of knowing (Lemert, 2004). These elements are stated as corresponding to "truth, freedom, and justice' (Lemert, 2004, p. 382). When inequalities exist, Gramsci's application of hegemony can be applied and thus a consciousness of those structures realized (Lemert, 2004). Such helps reveal that "every culture, whether

national or organizational, is shaped powerfully by its language…[and that]…the reformers had the space and the language needed to brew a new identity" (Heath & Heath, 2010, p. 247).

To restructure one's identity, like doctoral students in the context of this study, Cho and Lewis (2005) call upon the Lacanian notion of the fundamental fantasy and posit its disruption a first step in the process of aligning one's identity with the agenic aims (Bandura, 2001) one holds within an organization.

To relate back to Heath and Heath's (2010) *Switch* framework, this would be understood as an attempt to conscientize the cognitive dissonance. After a rupture of the fundamental fantasy, Cho and Lewis (2005) prescribe that one exert personal power to subvert his or her identity against the status quo, recalling something reminiscent of Freire's (1970/2005) limit-situations within an intersubjective space (Lemert, 2004). Such action through requires motivation (Ogbu, 1992; White, 2008) in which Dooley (2008) and Eberly, Rand, and O'Conner (2007) recommend a process built upon micro-transformations, which consist of first knowing self, then knowing others, and then redefining the relationship between self and others. Heath and Heath (2010) reinforce the idea through their focus on 'bright spots' and the scaling up of successes. This (de)construction is not to be assumed an effortless task, but instead a violent experience which requires a part of one's identity to be destroyed (Cho & Lewis, 2005). Naturally a radical fear of loss can usurp any attempt at reconstructing an identity, whether at the individual or organizational level.

Social and Cultural Capacity. Social capacity in this study refers to the access or legitimization afforded to a doctoral student. I postulate that "the relationship between

various sub-systems is established only through the mediation of class membership, i.e. through the actions of agents disposed to actualize the same basic types of habitus in the most diverse practices (fertility, marriage, economic, political or educational conduct" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 33). Cultural capacity in this study refers to the ability one has to manipulate or participate within a given structure. In this light, one's linguistic and behavioral repertoire influence the maneuverability one has within a discourse and their effect on the discourse itself (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

In keeping with the postmodern framework that guides this study, one must be open to subjecting all knowledge and terminology to critical scrutiny. The word capital regarding one's social and cultural currency is laden with economic values. This dominant narrative must be deconstructed in order question the term 'capital' used in a social context, such as education. Smith and Kulynych (2002) argue that "the term *social capital* has important ideological consequences that, whatever one's normative position on the merits and demerits of capitalism, require acknowledgement" (p. 151). The term capital in an economic sense denotes a concrete level of existence, where social and cultural capital demand a more abstract and relational interpretation – that which is not bound by a zero-sum (Peet, 2003; Smith & Kulynych, 2002). In order to deconstruct the connotation of the terms social- and cultural-capital from one that legitimizes capitalism it is advisable to utilize instead the terms social- and cultural-capacity (Smith & Kulynych, 2002). Therefore within the context of this study, the terms social- and cultural-capacity will be utilized in order to divorce the benefits of resources from an economic perspective and acknowledge the existence of other relationships between resources and agency.

In sum, one's social and cultural capacity operates as a mode of access and then mobility within an organizational discourse (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973; Smith & Kulynych, 2002). The capacity required to operationalize one's agency is dependent upon the environment or discourse of the organization (Foucault, 1972) and the transferability of learned skills or capacities.

Transfer in Learning. According to Catterall (2002), transfer occurs when denotes learning within one context helps the learning process in another context. The transfer in experiences affects multiple senses, response capacity, and motivation and can show itself in several different forms. *Near transfer* refers to learned and resulting skills in similar contexts; *far transfer* occurs when learned and resulting skills are unrelated. *Cognitive transfer* refers to the transfer of academic skills and *affective transfer* refers to intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation that causes someone to use his or her skills.

Modes of Agency. Bandura (2001) offers three modes through which we can view the intersection between agency and an organizational structure: direct personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency. Direct personal agency with that which is practiced by an individual within a specific field, proxy agency refers to when an individual is unable to execute his or her intention and requires the aid of someone with access (due to status, expertise, resources) to enact on his/her behalf, and collective agency signifies the dynamic power that comes out of a group of people acting intentionally toward a common aim (Bandura, 2001). In addition to this access a person's agency is dependent upon one's ability to resist objectification and spiritual and/or economic force (Gee, 2005), which can be viewed in terms of one's habitus (Golsorkhi, Lounsbury, & Ramirez, 2009).

However in order to act or resist, one must first be present to, or, in other words, able to access the particular context. Gee (2005) professes here the fundamental importance of individual agency, stating that because of the dynamic nature of an assembled meaning, based on situational context, sociocultural patterns, and relationships between existing discourses, new "performance, negotiation, recognition work that goes into creating, sustaining, and transforming" discourses is attainable by a single person because no two people will contribute in the very same manner" (p. 30). In fact, in their meta-study, Heath and Heath (2010) report that when there is more than one person present in a situation, group consensus will override an individual's natural reaction. Such findings highlight the importance of how structure and agency intersect within an organization. Especially when one's status is institutionalized.

An individual's agency can also be regarded in both macro and micro forms, as personal disposition and as task-specific, respectively (Bandura, 2004; Bidwell, 1965; Weber, 1953) as a means of accounting for one's efficacy in his/her ability to exercise intent within a given structure. Within the context of this dissertation study, this translates to the prior disposition of participants that influence agenic acts (macro – or general sense of agency) and the project- or task-specific skill sets (micro – or context specific) that influenced participants to agenic acts.

Higher Education

The classical, traditional university is/was conceptualized as a 'pause' for intentional study and reflection (Ballantine, 2001). Under a functionalist argument, the disconnection between theory and practice at the university is not only expected but desired because it is within this construct that it perpetuates its own survival (Bourdieu &

Passeron, 1977; Foucault, 1972; Lemert, 2004). In fact it is the ability to identify such a structure and name it as 'university' that provides its legitimizing power and presupposes a grand narrative within a national and global context (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, and Schofer (2007). Situating higher education as a grand narrative (Meyer, et al., 2007) and as an institution (Altback, 2011; Hearn, 2007; Meyer, et al., 2007) provides opportunity to better understand the forces that impact the experiences of a doctoral student. This posits a holistic viewpoint, characterized by Weber's iron cage metaphor, and helps to explain "how forces in [an] environment lead to isomorphic or new legitimized patterns of structure or process" (Peterson, 2007, p. 178).

Doctoral Studies in Education

Doctoral students in education enter their programs with a multitude of expectations of what the process will be for them (Hall & Burns, 2009). Such envisioning can range from the importance and relevancy placed on the role of research to the lifestyle, pressures, and collegiality of the professoriate (Hall & Burns, 2009). This envisioning process is not a singular state for doctoral students either, they and their advisors "need continuous opportunities to reflect together on how they identify themselves and each other as researchers, how they justify and negotiate their layered identities, and how they might take advantage of the range of alternatives available for doing research" (Hall & Burns, 2009). However, an organization's bureaucratic tendencies often lead people within that organization towards conformity or a validated norm.

Doctoral Students and Identity Construction. The models of identity for doctoral students "are situation inside the figured worlds of academia" (Hall & Burns,

2009, p. 52). And it is found that students who emulate these models or norms are often perceived as more successful within a doctoral program. Conversely, students who "fail to acquire or openly resist the norms will likely risk being marginalized" (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 53). Prior lived experiences also impact one's identity negotiations within the field of urban education as well as within the doctoral program (Hall & Burns, 2009). Stacy (2006) and Hall and Burns (2009) add that people from traditionally marginalized groups often find themselves within a dissonance between normative expectations of being a researcher and the identities that these students envision for themselves, both professionally and personally. Identities are further stratified in the field of education by the historical dominance of white males and the legitimization of their behaviors and orientations toward schooling (Hall & Burns, 2009; Pinar, 2004). This suggests that not only does gender and race impact local doctoral student experiences, but is in part due to the grand narrative spun that positions males and particularly white males in positions of power.

Also complicating an identity negotiation within the field is that "doctoral students in education are far more likely to enter their degree programs with extensive prior experience and lived experience" (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 56). This sets up two important factors in the experience of doctoral students in education: 1) these people enter programs with an already established career identity (often, as was in the case of my study, as classroom teacher) and 2) have more professional and lived experiences than doctoral students in another field (Hall & Burns, 2009).

In order to be more agenic in one's doctoral student experience, Davidson (1973/2008) stipulates the importance of being "intellectually honest in [one's] graduate

work" and surviving by being able to accurately size-up professors to see if one's authentic being can enter and survive within the program's organization and practice. In line with literature on identity negotiations in both organizations (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006) and school environments (Gumport, 2011; Hall & Burns, 2009), Davidson (1973/2008) adds that experiencing too many executions of one's authentic being raises the potential of dropout. To compound this, access alone does not equate validation (Davidson, 1973/2008) but rather tactics of organizational assimilation rise up to manipulate student access into status quo acceptance. Hall and Burns (2006) add that "students whose culture and/or racial backgrounds do not match the tradition of mainstream academia may be more likely to recognize the significance of acquiring this capital" (p. 58) and thus be motivated to either comply or resist with institutional norms.

The postmodern critique by El Saadawi (1997) and reiterated by Hall and Burns (2006) requires the continual acknowledgement that marginalized students are not a monolith or always within an experience of marginalization. Hall and Burns (2006) remind that "although minority students have undoubtedly been marginalized historically, some find considerable power in their differences from the norms of mainstream (white and male) discourses in academia. Their different perspectives and ways of communicating can result in important insights that transform academic cultures and practices" (p. 59-60). Such counters the notion that there is one correct identity for a student to occupy within a doctoral program or as a teacher educator. This breaks the grasp of the grand narrative of higher education as well as the norms proliferated throughout doctoral programs.

Bieber and Worley (2006) noted that their participants repeatedly spoke to the dissonance between idealized promises and the real practice of faculty members, especially at the graduate school level. Despite these experiences, their participants were either "adamant in their projections that they would never display similar behaviors or adamant about not putting themselves in a situation where living their ideal would be impossible" (p. 1023). Furthermore, Bieber and Worley (2006) found that "examples of behaviors that ran contrary to the idea of a faculty member these students had scripted did not cause students to abandon or modify their idea" (p. 1023).

It is also important to note here the parallel between the validation of self in doctoral studies and the validation of self in urban K-12 classrooms. Dissonance experienced by subordinate populations is not a resolvable issue, but the intensity of the experience can be lowered by being able to navigate multiple spaces and identities (Davidson, 1972/2008; Lorde, 2007), similar to Carter's (2005) multicultural navigator. What is so vividly illustrated in Davidson's (1973/2008) work is the "dissonance-like tension" (p. 48) stemming from contradictions between individual mobility and group mobility, again getting dirty in the crux of structure and agency at both individual and collective levels.

Doctoral Students and Organizational Change. Universities are increasingly including interdisciplinary aims in their mission statements, degree programs, and course offerings (Graybill, Dooling, Shandas, Withey, and Simon, 2006). This connects to the hypercomplexity (Baker, et al., 2006) of education in that it adds additional layers of legitimization and codification for a program, its faculty members, and its doctoral students.

The UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral program is an example of this interdisciplinary design. To negotiate one's identity within this hypercomplexity, Graybill, et al., (2006) recommend that doctoral students ask themselves three questions: 1) "where is my home? (or naissance)," 2) "what do I prioritize? (or navigation)",, and 3) "how do I integrate and represent my scholarship? (or maturation)" (p. 760). Such critical reflection of the process of the doctoral student experience can help alleviate issues with cognitive dissonance, organizational silence (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006), environments of hypercomplexity (Baker, et al., 2006), and efforts to conceptualize organizational change (Keiny, 2008). Based on their meta-study, Heath and Heath (2010) argue that the participation and experience of dissonance is a likely trigger for change within an organization. Typical assumptions on organizational change situate objective analysis as the trigger, but Heath and Heath (2010) argue that "we usually know there is a difference between knowing how to act and being motivated to act (p. 112-113). In other words, it is the process of participating, and experiencing dissonance that predicts the potential for change rather than an analysis detached from felt and lived experience.

Organizational Forces

The site of this study is UNC Charlotte's urban education doctoral program in the College of Education. As a new doctoral program in a young university, issues of program legitimacy is central to the urban education and curriculum and instruction program. At the same time, the urban education focus of the doctoral program seeks to be different, critical. This tension is in part constructed by issues in organization structures, power, and student agency.

Nuances of Organizations

An organization "consists of its structures, polities, and corporate culture, all of which can become dysfunctional in a rapidly changing business environment" (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 47). And within any organization whether a corporation, a hospital, a place of worship, or a school, there are situations, dynamic relationships, and structures, as well as norms, statuses/roles and power dynamics that affect the behavior of people who work in them. However this relationship is not unilateral. People within the organization also affect of the organization's goals are brought to fruition. Thus the interdependent relationships between a person and the organizational space he or she occupies or seeks to occupy is affected by the person's sense of agency.

Operating within an Organization

Baker, Day, and Salas (2006) demonstrate that the role of teamwork requires high degrees of reliability in service-related fields. Education as a service-oriented professional field fits Baker, et al.,'s (2006) definition of a hypercomplex environment: "an extreme variety of components, systems, and levels, each having their own standard procedures, training routes, and command hierarchy" (p. 1586). Henriksen and Dayton (2006) add to this discourse with the concept of organizational silence, which "refers to a collective-level phenomenon of sying or doing very little in response to significant problems that face an organization" (p. 1239). They suggest that organizational silence occurs in response to three factors: a "fear of retaliation, an inbred cultural censorship, and a desire to maintain harmonious working relationships" (Henricksen & Dayton, 2006, p. 1541). The trouble of silence is that it stunts the potential of organizational

change because according to group-think, dissenting or perceivably dissenting voices are discouraged (Heath & Heath, 2010).

At this time it is important to reiterate the importance of validating the voices of all members of an organization or risk alienation of a person from the organization and from his or her own identity construction. Within the context of this study, there is a normative property of identity negotiations within organizations in that those who behave in a way consistent with the values of the field or institution, are more likely to gain additional leverage within the field or institution (Hall & Burns, 2009). This reinforces the adoption of identities by doctoral students that reproduce the current program (Hall & Burns, 2009; Mizruchi & Fein, 1999) rather than validate the diverse identities of students (Delpit, 1995; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

To counteract against forces of reproduction and alienation, Henriksen and Dayton (2006) argue for the "explicit recognition and examination of other alternatives" (p. 1544). The pull of organizational conformity is strong, especially when there is a significant status difference between knowledge holders and knowledge seekers (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006), such as in a doctoral education program. However, though not simple nor easy within such an organization, "once a single person visibly breaks conformity and offers an alternative point of view," a change in organizational operations gains momentum (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006, p. 1554). As Heath and Heath (2010) point out, "people don't like to act in one way and think in another" (p. 255) and that buy-in can often be found by helping people relieve this cognitive dissonance.

In an effort to eradicate inconsistencies that create cognitive dissonance, Kotler and Keller (2009) state that authorities or people in positions of power should "identity

and encourage fresh ideas from three groups that tend to be underrepresented in strategy making: employees with youthful perspectives; employees who are far from company headquarters; and employees who are new to the industry" (p. 48). Such management would combat spatial immobility of actors within an organization, would limit the power of ritual and tradition, and would allow for greater sustainability in the alignment between an organization's goals and the agency of the employees, subordinates within that organization. Dewey (1938) would analogize this process and value system with democracy. Heath and Heath (2010) advocate for "free spaces…[which are] small-scale meetings where reformers can gather and ready themselves for collective action without being observed by the members of the dominant group" (p. 246).

Organizational Social Networks

The concept of transfer is based upon the theory that the brain's neural pathways, receptors, and various functions of the brain are reorganized by experience. This notion that experience changes how the brain functions is similar to Aristotle's concept of catharsis, which states that through experience there is a transfer of feelings. For instance, for Aristotle, watching a play reorganizes the viewer's emotional (and moral) character (Aristotle, 1884). This connects to how social networks within organizations can offer catharsis for people within an organization who are experiencing dissonance.

Under a postmodern framework, transfer of catharsis or agenic efficacy can be viewed as a viable source of power and networking (El Saadawi, 1997; Lyotard, 1979/1984).

Fit within an Organizational Social Network. Gardner (2008) address the importance of fit in socialization practices on doctoral students. Specifically, the concept

of fitting the mold of the organization is dependent upon a person coming into accord with the values and rules of the organization (Gardner, 2008). Rivera, et al., (2010) caution though that more research is needed to look at what happens with the binary of homophily and heterophily may prove too simplistic for the myriad of social networks that a person within an organization operates. In conjunction with the literature on social and cultural capacity, the social networks to which one belongs share tacit knowledge (Burbules, 2008). It is with tacit knowledge that operational membership occurs (Gee, 2000) therefore making one's social and cultural capacity a significant factor in one's membership and maneuverability with social networks in an organization.

Foucault notes specifically the role of ritual and tradition in defining "qualifications required of the speaker" (Lemert, 2004, p. 410) and that a protective 'fellowship of discourses' becomes doctrine to the masses in perpetuating the organizational structure. It is the social and cultural capacity of social networks at the margins of an organization where the "most radical and interesting stuff" originates, and conceptualizes a creative ethos which can undercut the dominate organizational structure (Florida, 2002, p. 192). In the context of this study, the social networks investigated are those comprised by the doctoral students in order to better understand the mediating function of social networks on one's ability or inability to exercise agency within the urban education doctoral program.

Rivera, et al., (2010) posit that the more connections one has with an organization (relational mechanism), the more likely a person is to remain in line with the organization's values. Added to this is the role of proximity (which stipulates that physical distance from the organization impacts commitment) and social foci (which

constitute common interests) trump gender, race, and position of power (Rivera, et al., 2010).

In this light, one of the criteria for participation in the case study was that interviewees be in the final year of course work or engaged in dissertation hours. Such positioning provides an opportunity to better understand the experiences of participants who have experienced a similar moment in the story of this program and can assist in teasing out the relationship between individual and collective agency.

The strength and architecture of a social network can also impact a person's individual and collective agency, for the "evolution of the concept [of] self-organization can be traced in the discourse as a growing web of interactions, connecting multiple perspectives from different discipline" (Keiny, 2008). In other words, the reality experienced within an organization by an individual and as experienced as a part of one or many social networks, will impact the perception of one's capability to execute intentions (Ferrer, 2010; Keiny, 20008). In turn this impacts one's identity construction which reciprocates by further impacting future decision making (Heath & Heath, 2010).

Parallels to Urban Schooling

The question of how this all relates to urban K-12 schooling demands explicitness. The connection is the experience of dissonance, between promise and reality. In the doctoral program the dissonance is illustrated using three common relationships or experiences had by participants in this study. Within K-12 urban schooling, there are seven dominate issues that help illustrate the dissonance experienced.

Dominate Issues in Urban Schooling

Urban areas are marked by inequalities on social, political, and economic levels of which impact one's access to opportunities to education (UN-HABITAT, 2008). Within this context, such inequalities are "intensified at higher levels of education [i.e. secondary education, higher education], perpetuating and reproducing an unfair system that restricts the physical and intellectual potential of millions of young urban dwellers" (UN-HABITAT, 2008, p. xv.). What follows is a brief description of seven pressing issues within urban schooling. This demonstrates topics of focus of students within the doctoral program at UNC Charlotte and demonstrates the dissonance experienced in urban schooling.

Dropout/Pushout. The Schott Report on Public Education and Black Males (2010) found a 31% gap in graduation rates between black males (47%) and white males (78%) for the 2007-2008 school year in the United States. This reality is perhaps not a surprise when one considers the gap between grade 8 reading NAEP scores between black and white males: 24% (Schott, 2010). Specifically, only 9% of black males score proficient on this test where as 33% of white males score proficient on the same test (Schott, 2010). The dissonance can be felt in the reality of these statistics; and one could argue most deeply felt by the students themselves.

Dei, et al. (1997) found that the following five circumstances were most often cited by students as factors of dropping out: 1) problems at home, 2) economic factors, 3) racism, 4) inefficiency in handling school pressures, and 5) behaviors of teachers. Conversely it was determined that a culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy, not one of additive nor contributive markers (Banks, 2001), as well as parent and community

support/involvement, and the validation and agency provided to students would positively impact a student's engagement and decision to stay in school (Dei, et al., 1997). Thus, teachers of urban students are in pivotal roles that influence student outcomes, reinforcing the importance of urban teachers to be able to facilitate agenic development for students in their classrooms and schools.

Teacher Retention. Experts recommend focusing resources on teacher retention in urban districts (which have notoriously high rates of turnover) because it is in these spaces where "the greatest potential for a high return on investment, both in terms of resources and school performance" (NCTAF, 2007, pg. 6). A study by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2010) found that "the influx of more new teachers increased the speed of the revolving door into the teaching profession, but did not stabilize the teaching workforce, and did nothing to improve teaching quality in high-need schools" (p. 9). Such regards teaching and learning as a quality issue, a sustainability issue, and a teacher retention issue, not a numbers issue.

Furthermore, it was found that costs of teacher turnover are significant, especially in urban districts where costs to the district ranged from $15,325 in Milwaukee to $17,872 in Chicago Public (NCTAF, 2007). The numbers are even more impressive when looking at a loss over a total year for a large urban district like Chicago, which averages $86 million dollars spent on teacher turnover (NCTAF, 2007).

Resegregation. Even if teachers are being retained in an urban district, the current incarnation of resegregation is also wreaking havoc on urban schooling experiences. Historically, court rulings and societal temperaments have influenced the racial and socioeconomic composition of secondary schooling (Chemerinsky, 2008).

White flight in the 1970s left many urban schools not only segregated but also underfunded as the upper- and middle-class moved to the suburbs and took their tax dollars with them (Chemerinsky, 2008; Meyer, 2000). Additionally, courts ruled that the burden of proof in matters regarding purposeful discrimination tactics on school composition, is left upon the shoulders of the plaintiff, one who is often a member of a minority group or of lower socioeconomic status, thus rendering his or her resources for such a case (i.e.: money, networks, time) quite difficult (Chemerinsky, 2008).

By allowing this trend to continue, gains made in the active-desegregation work of the 1960s to mid-1980s will be denied today's students (Chemerinsky, 2008; Holme, et al,, 2008; Mickelson, 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Specifically, Mickelson and Bottia (2008) found that a diverse school composition resulted in higher levels of achievement for all, but especially for minority students in mathematics and that high concentrations of poverty resulted in lower levels of achievement for all students. Furthermore, it is important to note that no negative effect and some findings show gains on the achievement levels of whites attending diverse schools (Mickelson & Bottia, 2009). It is not enough though to integrate schools, however. Classrooms must be racially and socioeconomically integrated as well, therefore tracking practices must also come under scrutiny (Mickelson, 2006; Oakes, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Tracking. The curriculum and pedagogy that a student experiences in school does impact his or her life chances (Carter, 2005; Kozol, 2005; Metz, 2008). Racially segregated schools often employ tracking where students are pushed towards service-oriented jobs, therefore keeping such students out of college prep courses and destroying opportunity for higher education (Kozol, 2005). The importance is not racial balance, but

of the ability for anyone to live where he desires and can afford without threat or fear (Meyer, 2000). And in residential relations, race trumps class (Meyer, 2000).

Over the last two decades, in the name of rigor and excellence, graduation requirements have risen and with it the offerings of honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses (Planty, Pravasnik, and Daniel, 2007). However, also growing is the disparity of who is taking these classes, a trend showing the gap widening between gender, race, and ethnicities (Planty, et al., 2007). For students not in honors or AP courses, who attend a high-poverty and/or high-minority school, there is a significant chance that regular or remedial classes are being taught by an inexperienced, non-certified teacher (Wirt, et al., 2004).

Economics of Education. When it comes to making policy, educational research findings are often trumped by the desire for higher profit margins for school boards and legislators through an increased efficiency, of which drives policy towards privatizing as much of public education as possible (Stromquist, 2002). This extends to media sources, school lunches, furniture allocation, custodial work, and take-overs. Curriculuar impacts of such policy are seen in the dismantling and devaluing of humanities and arts (Stromquist, 2002). Such measures impact the overall schooling experience for urban students and the agenic space available for their teachers.

A critical policy approach to unveiling neoliberal education reform points out that according to this dominate discourse, schooling goals are deemed met when test scores are proficient, thus indicating that he process is good (Lipman, 2004). Zhao (2007) adds that in meeting hegemonic educational policy and perpetuating the privatizing process, states and districts have limited the definition of intelligence, forcing schools to cut non-

tested subjects, and negating the potential of technology. Consequently identity formation is impacted, creativity is stalled, and an 'us verse them' mindset prevails. This binary restricts the agency a classroom teacher can exercise.

Such dispositions are then further shaped by controlling sites of schooling. The physical space of schooling is contorted in order to monitor the structural range of innovation and intellectual freedom that is attainable through permissible curriculum. Such can be a force in raising the dissonance experienced by urban students and their classroom teachers. The prevailing effect of global economic policy on schooling is its highly rationalized system of surveillance and accountability (Lipman, 2004; Monahan, 2005).

Housing. Meyer (2000) exposes the importance of housing in the last 100 years of America's racial history and its centrality to the understanding of race relations today. It is argued that racism and discriminatory laws prevailed in all regions of the U.S. (Meyer, 2000). Kozol (20005) illustrates the negative effects of racial segregation, concentrated poverty, and insufficient funding. With an orientation towards standardization and privatization (Stromquist, 2002; Zhao, 2007) of which often directs school and district level decisions, the arts, recess, geography, social studies, and science are often abandoned in favor of appeasing legislature and raising test scores (Kozol, 2005). In response, many wealthier neighborhoods privately supplement their schools, widening the funding gap that already exists between urban and suburban schools.

Racism during desegregation spawned discriminatory housing restrictions (Meyer, 2000). This impacts property taxes which help fund schools and perpetuate segregation (Meyer, 2000). Many times deed restrictions were drafted by local

governments who wanted to keep the peace between the races instead of seeking justice. In this vein, ghettoizing through real estate – lenders – and home association deals were drafted to keep neighborhoods white (Meyer, 2000).

And this reality is still present today. Recently, National Public Radio (NPR) reported that the Meyers Park Homeowners Association (MPHA) here in Charlotte, North Carolina was conceptualized in the 1970s to control the rezoning of its neighborhood, and incorporated in 1984 to "preserve the *original, historic layout and preserve the value of its stock of single family homes*" (NPR, 2010). The Charlotte-Mecklenburg branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) along with the North Carolina chapter of NAACP filed a Fair Housing Complaint. Deed restrictions were revealed that mandated, "the lot hereby conveyed shall be used for residential purposes only and shall be owned and occupied by people of the Caucasion (SIC) race only" (NPR, 2010). Furthermore it was found, "MP [Meyers Park] is dedicated to seeing that the deed restrictions are observed and enforced. MP has a substantial legal fund and will, for example, provide financial backing for strategic lawsuits filed to enforce those restrictions" (Draft Memorandum, 2009).

This reality is suspected in other neighborhoods in Charlotte as well, in addition to its probable presence in urban areas around the nation (NPR, 2010). This demonstrates that despite Supreme Court decisions and Fair Housing Laws, desegregation is not over and as a result there is now a steady migration back to segregated schools (Chemerinsky, 2008), increasing the possibility of dissonant-provoking incidents. Thus the ability of teachers, and their students, to exercise their agency remains significant. For if

dissonant-provoking incidents increase, so needs the efficacy of a classroom teachers' agency.

Urban Schooling Issues and Students' Identity Negotations. A popular construction of urban schools and its students includes violence, drugs, decrepit facilities, low achievement, and uncaring teachers and students (Rubinson, 2004). However it is imperative that such preconceptions are dispelled because they perpetuate stereotypes and inhibit the identity negotiations of urban teachers and students. Negative assumptions and consequential treatment by mainstream America is destructive to an urban student's academic achievement and raises the risk of dropout (Rubinson, 2004). Mickelson (1990) also demonstrates this negative impact on abstract and concrete attitudes of schooling which result in lower student motivation and achievement, arguably in part to resulting experiences of dissonance. But what role do teachers have in this? This is the situation in which urban teachers work. They need to be empowered in order to empower their students. Educational failure in urban schools may be turned around if teachers and students are empowered.

Teachers and Agency

Researchers have determined that some traits are consistent among successful teachers of diverse, urban students: a solid knowledge base of the sociology of education, open-mindedness to inclusivity and what is required to nurture that inclusivity, the ability to connect and integrate theory and practice, a sophisticating knowledge of their content area, and a belief that identity construction is dynamic, complex, and multi-faceted (Cline & Necochea, 2006; Grant & Gillette, 2006). Griffer and Perlis (2007) and Levine-Rasky (2001) add to this research the importance of a teacher having personal experience with

injustice, oppression, and external and/or internal struggles, as well as the motivation and ability to learn more about his or her own identity, the dynamic cultural identity of others, and the practice of critical pedagogy. Burbules (2007) notes the importance of pedagogue's ability to know when and how to listen and validate the voice of each student in the classroom.

Hill-Jackson, Sewell, and Waters(2007) found that teachers who resist critical pedagogical techniques often display traits such as low-cognitive complexity, a uni-focal worldview, intercultural apathy, and low levels of self-efficacy. Additionally it was found that even if teachers theoretically displayed affinity towards the values and aims of critical pedagogy, without explicit ability to turn theory into practice, the K-12 urban classroom does not benefit, nothing a deficit in a teacher's ability to meet the needs of diverse urban students in a productive, transformative, and respectful way (Hill, et al., 2007). Thus it is important to understand how teachers build agenic efficacy.

Agenic Efficacy in Classroom Teachers. "Efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency. Unless people believe they can produce desired results and forestall detrimental ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties" (Bandura, 2001, p. 10). Specifically, Bandura (2001) states that "to be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one's actions. Agency embodies the endowments, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities and distributive structures and functions through which personal influence is exercised, rather than residing as a discrete entity in a particular place. The core features of agency enable people to play a part of in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times" (p. 2). The social cognitive work by Bandura (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy,

1998) posits one's self efficacy as different from character attributes of self-concept, self-worth, and self-esteem because efficacy requires contextualization of a specific task. For these reasons, this study is important in the context of the doctoral program at UNC Charlotte and analogizing its experienced dissonance to that of the urban schooling experience for teachers and students.

To this aim, Bandura (1997; 2001; 2004) identifies four sources for effecting self-efficacy, applicable to personal, proxy, or collective self-efficacy. Master experiences, which provide a personal experience of an actual task, like teaching, are found to be the most influential in forming one's perceived efficacy in that situation (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). Physiological and emotional states, of which operate on a continuum of anxiety to excitement also impact one's efficacy (Bandura, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998) and can be connected to the role of emotional intelligence (Gardner, 1993). Emotional intelligence is likely composed of neural networks, which according to Jensen (2001) are "the complex patterns of neurons that comprise our behavior" (p. 30). These neurons connect with other neurons when "genetic or environmental stimuli" are present (Jensen, 2001, p. 30). In fact, the strong the emotion during the learning experience, the more the participant remembers of the learning experience (Wolfe & Brandt, 1998). However it should also be noted that if an experience produces an intensely threatening emotion, such as fear, then learning will be decreased (Jensen, 2001; Wolfe & Brandt, 1998). Vicarious experiences, those which are modeled, are indebted to the likeness of the model to the observer (Bandura, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). Similarly, the credibility and trustworthiness of a speaker utilizing social persuasion as a source of efficacy also impacts the significance of this source in the receiver's self-efficacy

(Bandura, 2004; Tshannen-Moran, et al., 1998). Such could be considered factors of transfer of agenic efficacy from teacher educator to classroom teacher to K-12 student.

It is also important to note that in a review of teacher efficacy studies, Tschannen-Moran, et alk, 1998) found that the school context or environmental factors were significant and that teacher efficacy varied within a day of teaching different class periods and different sets of students. To this analysis Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998) add the role of cognitive processes, or how the "interaction of task analysis, context, and competence" impacts teacher efficacy, of which impacts student achievement and student affect (Teven, 2007; Tschennen-Moran, et al,, 1998). This recognizes that agency is a dynamic experience dependent upon context and suggests that participants in my study would have multiple stories of experienced dissonance that differ in the agenic actions taken.

It is now helpful to return to the notion that the facilitation of agency in urban students is in part dependent upon the classroom teacher's agenic efficacy and identity of which has been influence by a teacher education program. For this reason, teacher educators and education scholars need to embody agenic efficacy as well. This chain necessitates the preparation of teacher educators and scholars who master the experience of agency. This logic is dependent not only on the effectiveness of the related pedagogy, but also the theory of transfer as well.

Bekerman (2009) finds that educators are in a complex position, for educators are simultaneously seeking to assert their own identity while also facilitating the identity development of his or her students, of which both parties are dependent upon each other for legitimization. However acknowledgement or rhetoric about the role of these power

structures is not sufficient to mediate identity negotiations (Davidson, 1973/2008). For "putting an emphasis on the constructed and constituted nature of identity does not offer solace in the reality of conflict situations where deep suffering arises from rigid labels of identity that create marginalized status with very real consequences" (Bekerman, 2009, p. 80). Bekerman (2009) goes on to add that, "our educational efforts need more. We need to allow the social to predominate over the ideological without ignoring the power relations involved, which often make the social and the ideological difficult to distinguish" (p. 80). It is in this light where Habermas' intersubjectivity (Lemert, 2004) becomes helpful by remaining a continuous goal in relationships, whether interpersonal, intrapersonal, or project specific.

Theoretically, and practically, the agenic experiences of doctoral students in urban education can play a potentially significant role in the development of agency in teacher educators and education scholars, urban classroom teachers, and urban students.

Summary

The marginalization of urban students in the United States continues to be revealed symptomatically via test scores, school resegregation, dropout/pushout rates, teacher retention issues, among others. Transformative education calls for the liberation of students through their own agency. However, through a democratic perspective of education, teachers must also embody an efficacy towards their own agency so that its facilitation can be co-constructed in the classroom setting. It follows that this facilitation of agency must be aligned throughout the teacher preparatory structure. In other words, classroom teachers are influenced by the efficacy of agency that teacher educators and scholars maintain, and these teacher educators and scholars require agenic efficacy as

well. This leads us to the place where teacher educators and scholars receive their formal training: doctoral programs. This study employs a postmodern theoretical framework to explore the experiences of doctoral students in an urban education program for the purposes of fleshing out a conceptual model of teacher and student agency. Chapter three discusses the methodology used to understand participants' experiences of agency in an urban education doctoral program.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

To examine the lived experiences of agency by students in the UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral, I designed a critical, hermeneutic phenomenological case study. In simplistic terms, a critical lens denotes a refusal to accept the grand narrative of a dominant culture and seeks to deconstruct hegemonic power relations; hermeneutic phenomenology denotes interpretation of the essence of a lived experience. A case study provides focus and permits context to be taken into account of the phenomenon under study (Schwandt, 2001). More holistically, van Manen (1990) posits that "hermeneutic phenomenological research integrates part and whole, the contingent and the essential, value and desire" (p. 8). In other words, this type of research seeks to dwell within the interactions among identities, structures, and context in order to better understand how such interactions operate. Findings can then help to better understand the human experience. In the context of this study, the human experience under investigation is agency. Specifically, my study dwells among the identities of students and faculty members in the urban education doctoral program, the structure of higher education in general and at UNC Charlotte in particular, and the context of three commonly experienced relationships: interpersonal, intrapersonal, and project specific. The following questions guided this study:

1) What fosters and/or inhibits agency for students in this program?
2) How do doctoral students negotiate issues of power within this program as it pertains to one's agency?

Summary of Design Paradigm

Critical. Major characteristics of the critical design method include its allowance for power relationships to be illuminated, the status quo to be critiqued, and that findings can be used for social action and change (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In its arsenal, critical inquiry is without borders, as it "supports a kind of reasoning that is practical, moral, and ethically and politically informed" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 46).

Phenomenology. The method keeps the environment as well as temporality as key pre-phenomenal methods of which create the horizon to access everydayness of the phenomenon (Heidegger, 1962/2008). In terms of this study, the horizon in which to access the phenomena of agency is constructed through the environment of the urban education doctoral program and the temporality of everydayness.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology. For van Manen (1990), "the aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflective re-living and a reflective appropriation something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated by his or her own lived experience" (p. 36). This hermeneutic phenomenological method was selected for this study because it seeks to empower or help unveil latent agency of a person in relationship to the topic understudy. Since the topic of study herein was agency and how it was experienced in the chosen site, the method's valuation of intersubjectivity and dynamic processes seemed to me to align with the nature of agency as defined herein. "What is the significance of theorizing and research and scholarly thought if they absolutely fail to connect with the bodily practices of everyday life? What does it mean to stand for something if it does not make a person stand out?" (van Manen, 1990, p. 148).

Case Study. According to Stake (2000) a case study is not privileged to one type of methodology over another, but rather seeks alignment with the overall paradigm of a study. In this dissertation, the paradigm was critical and aimed to unveil a better understanding of what it is like to experience agency within a specific case. A case can be an individual, a class, a school, a nation, or in our case, students in an urban education doctoral program.

Data Collection Procedures

Participant Selection

Participant selection for this study was purposeful and convenient, which "provides a clear criterion or rationale for the selection of participants, or places to observe, or events, that relates to the research questions" (Ezzy, 2002, p. 74). Criterion for this study was: Are you a current or recently graduated student in the urban education doctoral program at UNC Charlotte?[1]

I used my own personal connections with my fellow doctoral students to recruit current students as participants for this study. I contacted them via their uncc.edu email address of which I had in my possession due to my own enrollment in the doctoral program. To each potential participant an email was sent with a short recruitment script, including inclusion criteria and an abbreviated rationale for the study. To recruit recent graduates, I obtained a list of potential participants from my dissertation committee. Three of my dissertation committee members have contact with graduates because of their faculty appointments in the College of Education and for having served on their dissertation committees, taught their doctoral courses, or served as the coordinator of

[1] Current students selected for this study were in their last year of coursework and/or in the dissertation phase of the urban education doctoral program.

their doctoral program. With the information provided by my committee, I contacted recent graduates via email in order to introduce myself and send the recruitment script, of which included the criteria for inclusion and an abbreviated rationale for the study.

Criteria were set in order to inform a deeper understanding of the process of agency in the doctoral program rather than a measurable assessment of the program. This orientation is aligned to the philosophy behind hermeneutic phenomenology which is "interested in the human world *as we find it* in all its variegated aspects" (van Manen, 1990, p. 18).

It was important to include participants who were fulltime students and those were part time students because the literature on relational mechanisms (Rivera, et al., 2010) suggests that one's actions within an organization are influenced by one's number and strength of ties to that organization. Additionally, despite the disproportionate number of white females who are currently enrolled in the program, participants representing the range of diversity that, albeit in low percentages, constituted program demographics at the time of the study. Other variables of different among participants included: strand orientation, of which might be urban, mathematics, reading, English, TESL, or elementary education; differences were also noted among the professional career path of each participant, and I paid particular attention to whether or not the participant had K-12 classroom teaching experience; lastly, it was important to know the doctoral status of each participant, with options being: currently in the final year of coursework, all but dissertation (ABD), or graduated. This information is reported in the below, TABLE 2.

TABLE 3.1

Demographics of Participants

Name	Gender	Race	Student Status	Fulltime/ Part time	Strand	Project Specific
Sunshine	Female	African American	Current/ CW	Fulltime	Urban	No
Louise	Female	White	Graduated	Fulltime	Urban	Yes
Coco	Female	White	Current	Fulltime	Urban	
Rose	Female	White	Current	Part time	Urban	No
Matilda	Female	White	Current	Fulltime & Part time	English	No
Maria	Female	White	Current	Fulltime & Part time	Urban	No
Journey	Female	African American	Current/ CW	Fulltime	Math	No
Sasha	Female	African American	Current	Fulltime	Urban	Yes
Rick Flair	Male	African American	Current	Fulltime & Part time	Urban	No
Bishop	Male	White	Current	Fulltime & Part time	Math	No
Jackson	Male	White	Graduated	Part time	Urban	No
Lisa	Female	African American	Current	Fulltime	Urban	No
Phoebe	Female	White	Current	Part time	Reading	No
Trey	Male	White	Graduated	Part time	Urban	No
Zara	Female	African American	Current	Part time	Urban	No
Roxie	Female	White	Graduated	Fulltime	Urban	No
Bethany (researcher)	Female	White	Current	Fulltime	Urban	Yes

These demographics met some of the goals I set forth in order to account for diversity among participants prior to beginning my data collection. I had hoped to meet the following minimums: 7 participants who attended part time, 7 participants who attended fulltime, 7 males, 7 females, and 7 racial minorities. Interviewed all current and

graduated students who responded to my recruitment email except for two people (one white male and one white female) due to scheduling conflicts.

Of the 17 participants, 13 were female and 4 were male. Of the 13 female participants, four were African American, 8 were white, and the four males comprised of one African American male and 3 white males. Six participants (all female) attended fulltime for the length of the program and six participants attended on a part time basis. Four participants experienced both fulltime and part time enrollment over the course of the doctoral program.

Data Collection. I collected data by interviewing the 17 participants. Each participant was interviewed one-on-one in what van Manen (1990) terms a conversational interview. I conducted all interviews except the interview of myself, of which a fellow urban education doctoral student and study participant conducted. Interviews lasted between 50 minutes and 2.5 hours in length. Three interviews were conducted over the phone and while fourteen were conducted in person either on campus or at the participant's house. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed by myself or by a professional, paid transcriber. Once transcripts were complete I followed along the transcript while listening to the corresponding audio file. Audio files and transcriptions were kept secure on my password protected laptop computer. Once transcriptions were complete and passed through a member-check, audio files were deleted.

Semi-structured questions guided each interview (See Appendix B). Conversations were oriented to the direction in which the participant wished to transverse in regard to the topic of individual and/or collective agency within the urban education doctoral program. In order to account for potential bias in the interview protocol, I

piloted potential interview questions with doctoral students in the College of Education at UNC Charlotte, but where were not in the urban education doctoral program. This process allowed for me to revise questions in order to mediate for bias, and provided me a better understanding of how others interpreted and responded to my questions. Because I was also a participant, I wanted to take steps that would diminish the possibility of my own viewpoints contaminating the questions I asked of others. The piloting of my interview protocol, I revised the questions in order to better orient responses to participants' experienced agency as a doctoral student and an urban scholar/teacher educator.

I was interviewed by Coco. This interview was conducted after all other interviews had been completed. I included myself as a participant in order to account for my own subjectivity to the topic and also to help facilitate my own sense of agency within the urban education doctoral program. I was very hesitant to be interviewed and actually postponed it three times. I was nervous about what I would say, not say, and what emotions it would evoke. However because I had waiting for a few weeks after completing the last interview of a fellow participant, I felt more confident in my ability to identify more as a doctoral student participant in the study rather than as the researcher. The fact that Coco was interviewed early on in the study, thus not likely to be basing her interviewing of me off of my interview of her, and also because she was not part of the project-specific incident, the interview was not only productive in terms of acquiring data, but also cathartic in my own processing of the experiences.

TABLE 3.2

Data Collection Procedures

DATA	SOURCE	METHOD	PROCEDURE
Rich descriptions of how participants perceived their experience of their sense of agency within the urban education doctoral program	Current students and graduated students	Individual Interviews	1) Prepare interview protocol draft 2) Pilot the interview protocol with doctoral students in the College of Education who are not in the C&I department` 3) Revise interview protocol in order to better meet the needs of my research questions 4) Compose invitational email 5) Send out an invitational email current, non-first year students and to all graduated students 6) Schedule interviews 7) Obtain consent and conduct interviews 8) Have a colleague interview me 9) Transcribe interviews 10) Provide transcript to participant for member check and to select a pseudonym. 11) Import transcripts to Atlas.ti 12) Analyze data 13) Have a colleague code check percentage of my transcripts on Atlas.ti 14) Present findings

Data Analysis Procedures

Hermeneutic phenomenological analysis requires thematic analysis (van Manen, 1990). I employed analytic interpretive practice (bracketing) in order to juxtapose the language, context, and actions of the participants and to remain cognizant of my own subjectivities while unveiling themes from the data (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; van Manen, 1990). The aim of analytic interpretive practice (AIP) as postulated by Gubrium and Holstein (2000), "is to document the interplay between the practical reasoning and conversational machinery entailed in constructing sense of everyday reality on one hand and the institutional conditions, resources, and related discourses that substantively

nourish and interpretively mediate interaction on the other" (p. 497). The fundamental question behind AIP is, "How do participants do things? (p. 497). In other words, AIP seeks to better understand how the *whats* and the *hows* operationalize each other and present themselves within an experience (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000).

TABLE 3.3

Purpose and Method of AIP

Analytic Interpretive Bracketing	**Purpose/Unveiling**
The *whats*	To better understand the "constructive nuances of social patterns [that] can be found in discursive practice" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000, p. 502).
The *hows*	To better understanding "the delimited patterns of meaning consequent to social construction process [that] can be found in discourses-in-practice" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000, p. 502).

Coding Interviews

I analyzed transcripts from each individual participant were analyzed for emerging themes using analytic interpretive practice (AIP). I imported each transcript into the qualitative data analysis program, Atlas.ti. I read transcripts 5 times and then applied open coding in order to allow themes to emerge. I wrote comments as necessary with each code as it pertained to *what* the participants experienced and *how* participants acted upon that experienced, thus keeping aligned with AIP. I renamed codes when necessary, kept memos regarding my interpretations and my emerging questions, and continually searched for new possible codes as I compared across transcripts. The 'families' comparative tool in Atlas.ti allowed me to compare like-grouped codes across documents. At this point in my analysis I printed off my coding work in order to reread

and reflect upon any biases that I may have brought to my coding. I also employed sub-codes at this point in order to differentiate nuances and the essence of my findings.

Sub-codes and memos were recorded in my researcher's notebook and provided space for me to reflect on the findings and situate them within the context of my study. This writing and rewriting helped facilitate a phenomenological understanding, for "language is a central concern in phenomenological research because responsive – reflective writing is the very activity of doing phenomenology. Writing and rewriting is the thing" (van Manen, 1990, p. 132).

Strategies for Quality

In qualitative design, quality comes from planning ahead and seeking to diminish structures and procedures that would hinder understanding (Ezzy, 2002). In order to mitigate bias and to account for my own subjectivity as research, I utilized the following techniques in data analysis concurrent with early data collection: I met with and debriefed my committee chair, 2) I met with a colleague who is trained in qualitative data analysis who provided me with her own open coding analysis of 1/3 of my transcripts in order to check for any discrepancies among my coding and to account for implications in analysis, 3) I conducted informal debriefings with participants as findings emerged, and 4) I kept memos during the entire analysis process. In order to account for the values that I brought with me into this study, I engaged in daily journaling and regular communication with other qualitative researchers. These steps helped me remain conscious of my role as researcher and as a participant. This mindfulness aligns with the theoretical framework of the study in that it accounts for the importance of relationships in feminist standpoint

methodology and adhered to the values of democratic education that participants are co-creators of the analysis (Ezzy, 2002).

Presentation of the Findings

In hermeneutic phenomenology, findings invite the reader to take part, provide access to engagement with the topic of study, "for example, cool water invites up to drink, the sandy beach invites the child to play, and easy chair invites our tired body to sink in it, etc. Similarly, a phenomenological human science text invites a dialogic response from us" (van Manen, 1990, p. 21). Thus, findings from this study are presented in a format that aligns to the nature of the data itself… In other words, the presentation of the findings is part of the analysis process, the interpretive hermeneutic process. Thus chapter four contains findings and interpretations. Chapter five then provides discussion and conclusions.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The crisis of urban education calls for action (Anyon, 2005; Kincheloe, 2004; Kozol, 2005) and with a goal of education being the actualization of a students' highest potential (Dewey, 1916/1944), partnered with the fact that the number one influence on student achievement is the classroom teacher (Haberman, 1995), it follows that urban teachers require their own sense of agency in order to positively impact the development of their students' individual and collective sense of agency (Freire, 1970/2005; Griffer & Perlis, 2007; Lavin-Rasky, 2001). This dissertation study sought to better understand how agency is experienced by those preparing to become leaders in the field of urban education, in a hope to better inform the preparation and development of urban teachers for the benefit of their own growth and that of their urban students.

To investigate this issue I conducted 17 interviews with advanced or graduated urban education doctoral students. I analyzed data for emerging themes using analytic interpretive practice (AIP). In interpreted my findings through a critical, postmodern theoretical framework.

In Chapter 2, I presented brief descriptions of the three types of dissonance-provoking incidents experienced by the doctoral students who participated in this study, namely, interpersonal relationships, intrapersonal relationships, and project specific relationships. In this chapter, I will present the four common agenic responses that participants shared in response to these three dissonance-provoking types of incidents.

Then I will present findings within the context of the themes that emerged in response to the following questions guiding this study: 1) What fosters and/or inhibits agency for students in this doctoral program? And, 2) How do students negotiate issues of power within this program as it pertains to their agency?

Four Emergent Themes of Agenic Action

Four agenic actions taken by participants emerged as dominant approaches for responding to troubling events: verbal response, silence (no action), seeking assistance from people with power, and non-verbal response (action).

Verbal Response

A verbal response was denoted when a participant reported using one's physical voice to respond to a situation where he or she felt tension. In this context, the response was verbally communicated to a person who was antagonistic in relationship to the participant.

Silence

A silence was denoted when a participant reported making a literal decision to be silence (van Manen, 1990) in that physically nothing verbal was communicated toward antagonistic parties. In some instances an epistemological silence was denoted when a participant "face[d] the unspeakable…[and has] knowledge on one level and yet this knowledge is not available to our linguistic competency" (van Manen, 1990, p. 113). A third type of silence identified was an ontological silence (van Manen, 1990) where one has had a "moment of greatest and more fulfilling insight or meaningful experience that we also experience the 'dumb'-founding sense of a silence that fulfills and yet craves fulfillment" (p. 114).

Seeking Assistance from People with Power

Often it was found that participants sought guidance or direct support from a person within the doctoral program who held a different capacity or greater level of authority or power within the doctoral program. This person was typically a professor, administrator, or member of the support staff.

Non-verbal Response

The non-verbal response was noted for a variety of behaviors including removing self from a situation, seeking guidance and/or direct support from fellow doctoral students, or seeking guidance and/or direct support from family and friends outside the doctoral program. Often this form of response was also noted when participants drew upon their own capacities and remained diligent and worked toward to the goal of earning the doctorate.

Sub-categories within non-verbal. Because there is a range of responses that have been included within the non-verbal category, it is important to flesh out a way to make the differences more distinct. This also helps delineate the differences in macro- or micro- agency experience or enacted by participants. For instance, self-talk, and guidance and support from peers and family was noted commonly in the responses of participants to intrapersonal dissonance. The use of personal resources (money, time, social networks) was more common in response to interpersonal relationships. This difference can be viewed as an argument for general disposition as a macro-level form of agency, much like the underlying grand narratives of urban education. For the psyche is formed by the self-talk and influence of peers and family and it promoted a general sense

or disposition of agency. In other words, a self-narrative. Likewise, the micro- or task-specific agenic responses appear more aligned with the use of personal resources which can account for the contexts in which interpersonal and project-specific relationships occur. This logic aligns with the task-specific agency required by teachers within their classrooms on a daily basis. Arguably, it is a combination of both general agency or one's disposition and task-specific or one's capacity that determines the range and effectiveness of a participant's agenic response.

Findings that Illustrate the Four Common Agenic Actions

Four agenic actions taken by participants emerged as dominant approaches for responding to troubling events: verbal response, silence (no physical action), seeking assistance form people with power, and non-verbal action. Findings reveal that broadly, non-verbal action (i.e. self-talk, written concerns, dismissals) and seeking assistance form people with power (from primarily faculty members and administration) were the most common agenic responses to intrapersonal dissonance and in response to project specific triggered dissonance. To relate back to the literature on agency and one's participation within an organization (Bandura, 2004; Bidwell, 1965; Weber, 1953) it is possible to distinguish at a basic level a different between the agency require and/or utilized within one of the three commonly experienced dissonance-provoking relationships.

TABLE 4.1

Agenic Actions and Dissonance-Provoking Incidents

	Interpersonal	Intrapersonal	Project-Specific
Non-Verbal	X	X	
Silence	X	X	
Seek Assistance			X
Verbal			X

Rick Flair tapped into his non-verbal capacities in order to resolve dissonance he experienced upon learning of the questionable behavior of his intended dissertation chair:

> "I look at it as defiance. I never verbally talked about it. I had told this professor my topic via email and from this professor's response to that email and from conversations we had in person, I mentioned that I would like for him/her to be my dissertation chair. This professor agreed. Afterwards though the response I received by email basically offered a different version for the dissertation that I had planned, so that alone left me with, 'Okay, I'm not going to be able to do this the way I want, which was justification number one. Then two, with the whole thing going down with the grant further

> deteriorated the trust factor. So we haven't had any correspondence at all since then about my dissertation."

Although Rick Flair did not personally confront this professor, he did disregard the verbal agreement they had about serving as dissertation chair and went to find a different professor to serve that role. Roxie also demonstrated her agency through non-verbal exchange when she had reached her breaking point from having her spirit beat down by this professor over a period of months. While there was a point later on when she sought the assistance of people with power, Roxie identified this experience of self-talk as crucial to her future agenic responses to this professor:

> "I put my hands up and said, 'Fuck off, I'm taking myself out of your game.' And that's what I did. I mean, I didn't have any other ties to UNCC. I don't have – I didn't have a graduate assistantship; I wasn't on campus. I didn't have a job at all that was affiliated – I mean I was totally independent."

Roxie acknowledged that this response was due to her unique combination of social and cultural capacity and that this capacity was not the same for all of her fellow doctoral students. Roxie reflected,

> "This is what I've thought over and over and over. If [this professor] would have done the same things, for example to Maria, would she have been able to do what I did? And the answer would probably be no. She didn't have a Matt [supportive

> husband]. She didn't have my mom and dad.
> She didn't have a dad who had fired people and
> dealt with HR issues his whole career. She didn't have it.
> And she didn't have the – 'cause I lost money. I paid
> for that course. So it was also a money issue. I walked
> away from $1,800.00 dollars. I come from money so…
> I did everything in my power to make sure this didn't
> happen again but it is still happening [to others], and I guess that's
> the frustration now."

It is at this point when the role of social and cultural capacity becomes apparent in its influence on one's agenic efficacy.

Agenic responses to dissonance experienced from interpersonal relationships and project specific relationships also took the form of seeking assistance from people with power. For example, those participants who worked on the grant approached administration regarding their dismay and anger at the behavior of the Primary Investigator (PI), who was also a faculty member in the urban education doctoral program. Sasha recalled,

> "It was enough that it happened in the first place,
> that is one person doing wrong. But what happens
> after that? The administration is not doing anything
> about it. Nobody is doing anything about it. So it just
> pushes you further and further down. We have less
> power than we did before. At each time you try to go

> to somebody else or you hope this time it's going to be different…but it just shows how little power we have as doctoral students even though the grant was our creation in the first place."

The depth of the dissonance that Sasha was experiencing is illuminated when considering the research from Hall and Burns (2009) in that in education doctoral programs, students often enter with "extensive prior professional and lived experience" (p. 56). In this vein, it is understandable that a former classroom teacher would find it troubling to be invalidated as a member of a professional space, despite status differences. It is possible that this caused a disruption in Sasha's professional identity and caused her to renegotiate in relationship to the institution of higher education and the organization of the College.

My own interview revealed a similar perception of the experience when the cohort working on the grant met with representatives of the administration regarding the behavior of the PI.

> "In that room that day I felt slighted. Well first it was betrayal by a professor and that was hard. Then by the administration. We were subjected to being guilt tripped, saying that if we quit the grant you quit on children…at this point I started to tear up and in a forceful voice responded, 'How dare you tell me that I would ever quit on students and how dare you ever assume that this is why I am here talking to you now.' I was pissed. The administrator looked back

> at me and says, 'Well I don't think you should be talking to me like that.' I responded, 'No, you accuse me of something like that, then you better get ready for me to defend myself…you have no idea how much I work for my students and how I value them at the center of my practice."

While the response of administration in this meeting did not meet our collective expectations, in other words, the PI stayed on the grant and retained majority of power over the release of funds, I decided to take care of that for which I did have capacity.

> "I composed a little email. It's beautiful. I'm gonna hang it on my refrigerator one day. It says something like, 'Professor: Thank you for your guidance and instruction the first two years that I've been here in the Ph.D. program. However, I just wanted to let you k now that 1) you are no longer my dissertation chair, 2) my independent study is going to be picked up by another professor, and 3) I will no longer work with you and [fellow student] on the book chapter.' I sent it after another professor read through it for me – for a reality check because I tend on the passionate side – I wrote, Sincerely, Beth Salyers. I sent it. I never heard back from him. Last communication really. Except for that which was required in order to

> deliver the intervention of the grant – but even that was minimal and infrequent."

Interpersonal dissonance was most often resolved with either a verbal response directed at the antagonist or silence. Journey revealed her process of negotiating a response when in her opinion a faculty member crosses the line.

> "I know when it's my breaking point but I also know when to hold my tongue and then at a certain time talk about it later because I don't want my emotions to get in the way of what my point is to that certain person. So I always take my time. I reflect on what I'm going to say and then I go back. I know it sounds kind of odd because if you silent sometimes that means acceptance but for me it's more of 'let me reflect.' I will get back you but I got you."

While this critical pause to reflect prior to acting was common for almost all participants, Maria took a different approach and immediately sought out support from administration after a troubling interpersonal incident with a faculty member. She recalls the story,

> "I walked into this faculty member's office, for whom I was a graduate assistant…this faculty member stood up and said, 'Get out. Get out of my office now.' And I was thrown off because I thought we had a working relationship, I was like, 'Professor, what's going on? What's happening?' The professor responded, 'Get out now!'

> I was literally chased out of the office where I dropped papers and things behind and never picked up again."

Maria went directly to the College's administration:

> "I told them [what had happened] and they were kind of like, 'Okay. Well, you know….' And in hindsight they were just pretending to listen and I feel like pretending to care. You know, now, when I think back on it, I want to punch them both in the face like 1,000 times…I still had one or two of this professor's classes left in the course, and I took a withdrawal. I wouldn't go again. I think in the end I received a B for the course when I clearly had an A on all my work up to that point, but I didn't fight it. I wasn't going to fight it. I was at a point where I physically did not feel comfortable or psychologically safe to be in a classroom with this faculty member."

Maria also shared that after this incident she was still encouraged by the administration to go to the faculty member's class because a teaching observation was scheduled for the next class meeting of the course and it would be awkward if there were only a few students present in the already small class. This is relevant because it demonstrates the priority of concerns by the administration, by electing to try and coerce Maria to attend a space where she felt unsafe so that administration could still attend to their own need to complete a teaching observation.

Findings to Illustrate the Three Emergent Themes

Finding 1: Prior experiences and one's disposition foster student agency.

Formal documents illustrate that this doctoral program was born in part as a response to the crises in urban schooling. Participants' interview data reveals that this concept of volition (Marginson, 2009) would suggest that students came into this program with prior experience in education and a general refusal for the K-12 education system-in-place. Trey recalled a poignant span of time that influenced his perception of the system-in-place and his motivation to want something different,

> "One morning I came to school about 7:15am
> and a girl was lying in the lobby of one of the
> entrances to the school and she had slit her wrists
> because of overwhelming challenges she faced at home.
> Then a week later, there was a full-fist fight with
> administrators that involved students and teachers.
> A week after that one of my students in my earth
> science class was shot at a bus stop because he refused
> to take off his Girbaud jeans."

When asked how this experience influenced his desire to work for a different urban schooling experience he reflected that,

> "it was difficult frequently to focus on academic
> needs when you are dealing with just a real…
> if you're worrying about being shot and killed or
> you're not being fed or had enough sleep. It's very tough.

> So that made me realize that there is a tremendous need in our society for full service."

Participants validate the application of volition (Marginson, 2009) to better understand the space where dissonance and agency occur. Interviews revealed that for most participants their motivation for entering the urban education doctoral program was at least partially based on their prior classroom teaching experience. Maria's prior classroom teaching experiences revealed her motivation to turn her frustration into hopeful action,

> "The more outreach I did, the more barriers we came across and I just saw basically how many resources and things that [my students' families] were being denied just because of a cultural or language barrier. And so, you know, access to mental health services, access to food stamps, Medicaid, all these different things."

These examples also lend support to Kotler and Keller's (2009) argument that people new to an organization, such as the College of Education in general and the urban education doctoral program specifically, should be tapped for new insights in order to better align to the programmatic mission and limit normative tendencies towards traditional teacher education programs.

Marginson's (2009) concept of condition, or the place where creativity occurs, inclusive of the university, the College, and the urban education doctoral program, especially with its interdisciplinary design offer its actors a wide-range of potential for

agency. The significance of the condition and the position or location of the urban education doctoral program does not appear to be lost on participants. Louise notes a collective consciousness of the promise of the doctoral program and an appreciation for many of its characteristics,

> "We all had been submersed in this transformative education theory and practice, that we had it more in the front of our lives…really this group of friends [and fellow doctoral students] is more likely to take a stand than any other friends I have, so I think the fact we are all together. It's more than just philosophy or we wouldn't all be in urban education."

This positions the doctoral program at UNC Charlotte as a place prime for facilitating the creativity required for transformative curriculum and instruction. The fact that the program is located in a large urban city arguably adds to this promise, this potential. Thus with this promise conscientized, it is understandable to hear that many participants were dismayed at the lack of alignment between the promise of the program and its daily practice. It seems that the ingredients for something truly transformative are present but not yet appropriately activated or validated. The counter to this is to acknowledge that a main goal of an organization as securing its own legitimacy (Kotler & Keller, 2009; Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). In that light the bureaucratic forces perpetuated by some faculty members is at some level understandable, or in the least not surprising. But this is where participants' critical orientation keeps this dissonance in play despite continual attempts by administration to persuade silence. Refusals to accept the university or doctoral space

as a pause away from practice counters the Classical, traditional concept of the university, thus evoking faculty and administration to employ bureaucratic tactics in response to this threat. In this sense, the identity of educators, whether as former classroom teachers, current teacher educators or scholars, or somewhere in between, is complex in that they are all dependent upon the legitimization of one another, but as Bekerman (2009) reminds, keeping this dissonance in the realm of rhetoric is not good enough. But it is a good place to begin (Foucault, 1972) so long as it remains oriented toward social justice (El Saadawi, 1997).

The instability of binaries is promulgated by posturing them as commodities that are exchanged rather than created (Cho & Lewis, 2005. However my findings reveal that this organizational tactic of legitimization did not keep participants from trying to create their own agency. This posits the fostering of doctoral students' agency as independent from the agency exercised by faculty members. In other words, for one group to exercise agency, the other groups' agency was not necessarily diminished. Zara's interview provided an example of this when she recalled a time when a professor had made derogatory comments about Christianity, specifically,

> "Blaming Christianity for everything and as if all
> Christians fit into the same category and as if all
> Christians thought the same way…"

Zara decided to email this professor her concern for the way s/he was essentializing Christians. The email was composed and then sent to a different, trusted professor who read it and made sure it was not out of line. Upon getting support for the email from the

trusted professor, Zara sent the email to its intended. This action prompted a one-on-one conversation between Zara and said professor, but in Zara's words,

> "it was an exercise in frustration."

This sequence of actions resulted in the professor in question becoming,

> "a little bit more careful after that about making remarks...but I also think that that was because there was a review process around that time for tenure or reappointment"

This data suggests that the professor in question was possibly motivated to moderate his/her language to act in order to maintain legitimacy within the College of Education. The normative practice of tenure and reappointment in higher education cannot be ignored when attempting to interpret the actions and motivations of a professor. The dissonance experienced by Zara was a personal attack on her religious beliefs and the contradiction between the class where the comment was said and the fact that this same course was oriented around the importance of validating diversity and acknowledging power structures that oppress through essentializing groups of people. Yet here the professor was essentializing all Christians in a negative light. Zara reflected that the dissonance she experience required her to do something,

> "I mean generally it's my conscious and like how much it is weighing on my conscious. If I can't sleep at night I need to do something about it. I need to sleep. I mean there's some things – you pick and choose your battles and some things just aren't worth pursuing but

> when its weighing on my conscious – I'm a person that has to have peace. Even if I'm in the middle of a horrible situation I have to have peace. When I don't I can't function like that. I have to do whatever I need to do quickly even if that means things are unresolved… usually that peace is probably based on whether or not there's something that I need to do…but if you've done everything you can do you can have peace knowing that."

Findings do not suggest that all acts of agency have the desired effect in terms of concrete change, but findings do show that catharsis did result for many, illustrating that sometimes regardless of a discrepancy between desired outcome and actual outcome, there is solace or resolution. Such proved the case for several participants' experience of dissonance in intrapersonal relationships. This supports research by Hall and Burns (2009) that finds that despite "privilege, certain behaviors and modes of affiliation, individual agents and groups are always capable of making their own decisions about how to act" (p. 53). However it is also important to juxtapose this with the possibility that the relative invalidation of Zara's dissonance by the professor in question could be detrimental to her identity negotiations as a doctoral student if similar instances persisted over time. And within these multiple interpretations, the data presented helps corroborate the claim that the agency exercised by students within the urban education doctoral program can work to conscientize their identities and work to remain cognizant of bureaucratic forces that push toward normative behavior within the program.

I had a similar experience that, in retrospect, was the start of a series of experiences that led to this dissertation,

> "We were sitting in class talking about power
> and privilege. We're sitting talking about status
> and context. Then we experience being smacked
> down by the people in power in our College.
> It drove me nuts. Hence my stupid dissertation.
> I cut ties with the faculty member whose behavior
> I perceived as contradictory to a critical orientation
> of education. I changed my entire dissertation after
> I'd written chapters for my original topic because
> I was like, 'This doesn't make sense."

The fact that participants experienced such contradictions within an urban education doctoral program that proclaims to address, critically, issues of marginalization, inequalities, and social stratification, proved frustrating for many participants in this study. The overall sentiment expressed what that instead of working to combat these issues, the program appears to be reproducing them.

This highlights the need to reconsider bureaucratic practices that work against liberating acts. It follows that higher education is sustained by its legitimacy (Bekerman, 2009; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Gumport, 2011; Hall & Burns, 2009). Such examples in my data illustrate how participants sought orientation to the promise of the urban education program – of which most participants sought out because of its critical urban focus – and when practice contradicted this promise, students remained loyal to the

promise of the program, whether in action and/or in reflection, a pedagogical stance akin to Freire's (1970/2005) dialogical practice. El Sadaawi (1997) and Lorde (2007) would view this as an orientation towards social justice and keeping one's own identity negotiations in balance with that.

Consider Zara's story from above. The dissonance experienced from the contradiction of hearing a professor essentialize Christians in a class that taught critical approaches to dismantling such generalizations, was clearly frustrating and painful, but also provided Zara the opportunity to negotiate her identity as a Christian, as a doctoral student, and as a human being. Consistent with the majority of participants, such spaces for renegotiation served as volition (Marginson, 2009) for strengthening their orientation towards social justice. However this was usually not without some intense struggle that for some threatened identity and status as a doctoral student.

Within the context of the organization – the College of Education, reported interactions between faculty members and doctoral students were determined to be potentially harmful to the growth of the urban education doctoral program. This dissonance sheds light on the different investments each actor has with the doctoral program and with the College and with the institution of higher education. Hansen, et al., (2009) argues that cosmopolitanism permits the existence of multiple investments stratified dynamically within a hypercomplex (Graybill, et al., 2006) like higher education, and that what is occurring is a juxtaposition between what the program might become and an understanding of its roots and traditions (Hansen, et al., 2009). The doctoral students are comparatively temporary actors within the organization, whose livelihood, personally and professionally, is not as dependent on the legitimacy of the

program as is the faculty. This suggests the forces of bureaucracy at play in that faculty and administrators are subject to the climate and culture higher education (as is the local doctoral program) and pressured to remain consistent and loyal to the forces that deem legitimization (Bekerman, 2009; Hall & Burns, 2009).

Finding 2: Relationships with people in positions of power and bureaucratic traditions inhibit students' agency, but this negative effect appears reduced when a students' identity negotiations mediate the breaking point.

Where Bieber and Worley's (2006) participants ultimately did not alter ideal images of faculty members, but instead were hopeful in their ability to resist succumbing to institutional pressures that may trigger the observed undesirable behavior once they entered the professoriate, my findings differ on how this experienced dissonance influenced career orientations. The participants in my study were often put off to the idea of belonging to the professoriate yet remained hopeful about the promise of their field of study. Sasha's interview reveals this change,

> "When I started this program the number one thing I figured I would do was become a university professor. I'd teach teachers…but I still wasn't really sure I wanted that, it was just at the top of the list, but I wasn't really sure. And so now I don't know. My ideal job now would probably be to have my own school… but definitely since I have been in this program and a graduate assistant and exposed to university life, I definitely

don't see myself spending a career in higher education."

Several fulltime students who participated in my study considered career paths outside of academia after having been exposed to the hypercomplexity (Graybill, et al., 2006) of higher education. Like Sasha, Maria also once envisioned a career in the professoriate but after four years in the doctoral program she sought other avenues for utilizing her urban education degree. When I asked Maria about her professional goals after completing her doctorate she quickly replied,

> "It's funny. Those have changed since entering the program. I think when I initially entered the program… I wanted to work with pre-service teachers."

When I asked her why she had changed her mind, Maria stated that,

> "I was going fulltime and I was working as a GA and I just – I don't know. I guess it could be just specific to our institution. I don't know. It could be UNCC specific, but just working at higher ed and seeing the way one – the kind of way that people interact with one another, I found it to be very disheartening."

She reflected on the dissonance that this scenario had produced:

> "We're a university and I guess I thought that there would be a focus on service and there was a huge focus on everyone writing and publishing. You know, people writing about experiences and

> what's happening to students and they have no teaching experience – they're not spending time in the field to know what's happening and to me I thought that that was just really off. One professor that I did have that spent a ton of time on service was, I think by some professors, considered to be wasting her time. Those professors were busy cooped up in their office writing when she was actually out doing."

Interestingly, the service-oriented professor that Maria refers to left the academy a few years later to return to work for an Non-profit Government Organization (NGO). Reflections provided by participants centered on the impression that institutional culture in higher education was largely personally harmful and contradicted the critical orientation that guided many participants' agenic actions. Coco's experience helps demonstrate this impression,

> "I thought I wanted to be a professor, but as I mentioned before I suck at politics and am not good at closing my mouth. Like if shit is wrong, and I feel in this program we have seen a lot of bullshit...like you can talk your talk but you're not doing anything. And that's not all professors, that's just my experiences now. So it has changed my mind. I now feel so far removed and I miss being in the classroom. I see myself doing advocacy work. I see myself working with actual [K-12] urban students."

There is also traction in looking at this data through the lens of hope, as discussed by Hansen, et al., (2009) and Duncan-Andrade (2009). In this light, my data supports the inclusion of hope as an essence of agency or at least in one's agenic efficacy (Bandura, 2001). For my participants such changes to their original vision of their career appeared to reinforce their critical orientation that originally led them to this orientation. And that is, arguably, a productive finding for the field of urban education and for the growth of this doctoral program.

In reading through my researcher's notebook right after I finished readings on bureaucracy and organizational behavior, I realized that it is possible that the faculty and administration of the urban education doctoral program might be struggling just as much with the disjointedness between the promise and the current practice of the program as expressed by so many participants. Thus I began thinking about how Freire's (1970/2005) conscientização can only be the result of one's own work and how his reading the word and the world can be applied to critical reading students and faculty do of the promise of the program (reading the word) and its practice (reading the world). For example, I have three professors on my dissertation committee who hold appointments with the College of Education. Given the topic of my dissertation, it would be understandable that a faculty member would not want to broach a critical study of their students' experience in their place of employment. It is also in this respect that I realize my own attempt to negotiate my identity as a doctoral student seeking to become an emerging scholar and urban teacher educator through the space and time afforded by this dissertation study would not have been possible without a group of faculty members who practice their critical orientation towards education. Accordingly then, one could

surmise that the actions of just the students or just the faculty members cannot resolve the experienced dissonance, but rather requires the work of everyone involved in the space of the urban education doctoral program. Admittedly, this is neither easy nor simple.

The coercive characteristic of fear of potential negative consequences appears to have influenced white and African American participants differently. Where Maria defied the wishes of the administration to attend the class for the purpose of helping them conduct a teaching observation, Lisa, in response to a negative comment about African American women that her professor had made during class, decided to remain silent. Lisa explained,

> "There are a lot of ramifications that you have
> to consider. Like in [this faculty member's] class,
> my grade could have been affected. What is the term?
> Blackballed? You don't what to be blackballed.
> You have to fear that. So you don't speak up –
> and you feel bad about yourself, like I felt kind of
> wimp-ish that I didn't say anything."

While all participants spoke to an incident where he or she verbalized discontent to a person in a position of power, I found that those who were fulltime students and white were more likely to be more outspoken and defy normative or coercive tactics – in both content and in speed of response – than part time students and students of color. Participants of color voiced more concern for potential consequences for a verbal response than did white participants, regardless of class differences. Jackson reported that,

> "I think my biggest motivator I would probably
> define now is, 'Do I think this is an injustice?'
> Whatever the situation is, I am just real quick to
> just let my tongue fly, to say what I wanted to
> and whoever I ticked off, student or professor,
> then I just ticked them off."

Note that this response is from a white male, whereas the majority of minority females' responses were tempered by a fear of potential consequences for acting out an orientation towards social justice. Sunshine's interview explicitly spoke to this phenomenon:

> "I realize there is a system. I realize there is a system
> and not only am I African American, but I am a woman.
> And in academia, the reality is very different for me
> than it may be for example a white male or even a
> white female. So I feel like I have to in some cases
> tread lightly. I don't want anyone in exerting my
> agency think I am a different person from what I am.
> You know sometimes in doing that, people take it very
> differently. You know I'm just kinda scared of doing that.
> In some wasy I want to get through the program and
> I don't want to rock the boat. But that's hard to do
> because at the same time I don't want to be walked over."

These findings support the literature that doctoral students' who are racial and/or cultural minorities within the institution of higher education, are found to be more conscious of

the identities and social and cultural capacity valued. And in turn motivates these students to either conform or rebel with institutional norm (Hall & Burns, 2009).

It appears that the breaking point or trigger for agency is coming to consciousness with one's own identity and knowing when it is being twisted by forces outside the self. This situation, this dissonance, demands attention. It is then that the space for agency is created. A decision is then made about how one's identity relates to the dissonance-provoking incident which helps decide which action to take. This process sounds like it could be operationlized using Graybill, et al., (2006) questions to negotiate one's identity within a hypercomplex organization: 1) where is my home? 2) What do I prioritize? And, 3) how do I integrate and represent my scholarship?

Maria's interview helps demonstrate this process. She recalled the moment she realized the source of her experienced dissonance as an interpersonal relationship with a faculty member,

> "I think it was almost like, - it was just at a point
> that I had gained enough self-confidence in the fact
> that in this area [of being a classroom teacher] I know
> what I'm talking about and I know the issues. So I asked
> the professor specifically how many years [he/she] had taught
> and there was no immediate response. Finally the professor
> said, 'Not very long.' And so I was like, you know what?
> In regarding some other topics I wouldn't necessarily act
> because that's not my area of expertise. But in being a
> classroom teacher/ This is where I know what I'm

> talking about."

My own interview revels my journey through the same process:

> "If it doesn't feel right, I don't do it. I get out.
> If something just does not feel right internally,
> I look around and say, 'What can I physically do?
> What can I do right now?' It's taken a long time to
> get to that place, especially in terms of my own
> personal health, and to be honest it is still a struggle
> sometimes. What can I do to get the coping mechanisms
> attuned and to that which actually has influence over
> the situation. 'What can I do?' I immediately ask myself
> that question and I look around for what is available."

The process also accounts for the disruption to identity required in order to experience growth (Cho and Lewis, 2005). In addition this data speaks to the overwhelming tendency for participants to resort to their classroom teacher disposition and prior experiences when experiencing dissonance within the urban education doctoral program.

Lisa, upon reflecting on her choice to remain silent in response to a racist remark about African American females made by her professor during class, stated that,

> "If other African American females had been
> in the class I think it would have given me a sense
> of support and if they had felt the same way I could
> see myself maybe going to the professor and saying
> something to them that the comment had offended me.

> But only if there had been someone else too. I just don't know if the professor would have heard me because I did not feel in that class that the professor valued me as an individual."

This suggests that doctoral students feel more comfortable engaging in collective acts of agency than individual acts. The fact that the cohort of participants who worked on the grant and subsequently also went to administration in response to questionable behavior by the PI, was a group of fulltime students, probably gave them each a sense of support and decreased fear of personal consequences.

On the other hand, consequences from the traditional demographics of higher education are visible. Due to the lack of African Americans in the class that Lisa was in, it is not surprising that she demonstrated a "pattern of behavior that tends to reproduce the status quo and militate against social, cultural, and intellectual diversity" (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 49-50). Even though Lisa was cognizant of this dissonance, the efficacy in her own ability to carry out different agenic response was diminished due to a dominate narrative that students are subordinate to teachers/professors, regardless of behavior or pedagogical techniques. The size of one's population also matter according to Heath and Heath (2010) who found that group speak often trumps the will of an individual. The power of a collective identity or membership proved powerful for individual members as well.

When asked how race and gender play into his agency, Rick Flair responded,

> "That's at the forefront. It's part of who I am…
> .if I didn't get involved in science fair, if I didn't get

> involved in the science Olympia, if I didn't get involved with quiz bowl or the charter school and so forth, then who would? Who would do it? And if I don't take on the challenges that come on associated with taking on responsibilities then what was the purpose in me getting involved in the first place? So going back to why I said I went into education in the first place, I not only have the opportunities and the resources to do it, but I have a responsibility because of my blackness, because of my gender. Even because of my class and so forth, and so it is definitely a factor."

Doctoral students' identity construction appears intimately interconnected to the experiences one has within the program but also as they remain oriented towards the motivation to be in urban education in the first place. According to Hall and Burns (2009) students who do not following normative practices risk marginalization and that this effect is pronounced in the identity constructions by minority doctoral students (Davidson, 1973/2008; Hall & Burns, 2009; Stacy, 2009).

Finding 3: The ability to find space and/or create space, and then sustain oneself in order to maintain and maneuver within that space is critical for agenic action.

Findings show that fulltime participants were able to speak about a greater number of experiences of exercising their agency within the context of the program than were part time students. This makes practical sense in that fulltime students have more relational mechanisms (Rivera, et al., 2010) and more hours of practice (Gladwell, 2008)

which lead not only a greater emotional affinity to the program but also towards a greater level of expertise in negotiating the institution of higher education. It also serves as a position more hospitable to creating and engaging in micro-transformations (Dooley, 2008; Eberly, et al., 2007) and bright spots (Heath & Heath, 2010) as a way to mediate the radical fear of loss to one's identity that accompanies the process of reconstructing an identity as, arguably, doctoral students are doing.

A doctoral student is better able to utilize his or her social and cultural capacity (Bourdieu & Passron, 1977; Smith & Kulynych, 2002) in more efficient and effective ways when he/she is cognizant of the traditional structures and forces of education. Roxie recalls using her appearance to break down barriers of racism and class,

> "People at my school were like, 'What are you wearing?' I don't wear make-up and they were like, kids would be like, 'We've never seen you with make-up on.' I'm like, 'I'm begging for money from rich white people today. Don't worry about me.' It's just code switching; it's kind of crazy. I didn't realize I had all this – but they put me out in front, like the fund development people love me because they're like, 'Oh there's someone like us at the helm. We'll give someone money who looks like us…It's a whole 'nother dynamic. But, again, because of all the training I've had, I'm able to call a spade a spade. I'm not here saying, 'Oh they

> just like me,' They don't like me! It's because I'm – they think I'm like them. Because we look alike. Because we have a shared country-club history and because we have – they know my dad. They played golf together."

Roxie admits,

> "That's the beauty…I recognize what I'm doing. I am manipulating them by wearing pearls and a button-down shirt and a pleated skirt. I am consciously making you think that I look like a Junior Leaguer, when I wouldn't join the Junior League is someone had a gun to my head. But you don't know that 'cause I have on pearls today. They're my grandmother's pearls, even."

So the question becomes how does a doctoral student create and sustain space in which to engage his /her agency in response to dissonance-provoking relationships or incidents? Reflective writings in my researcher's notebook suggest that fulltime students appear to report a greater amount of experienced dissonance within the urban education doctoral program – but at the same time they have potentially fewer identity markers and spaces in which to execute their agency and balance identity negotiations. For Davidson (1973/2008) reminds that dissonance experienced by subordinate populations is not a resolvable issues, but the intensity of the experience can be lowered by being able to navigate multiple spaces and identities.

Sunshine's interview revealed one of her coping mechanisms that grew out of her past experiences as a classroom teacher,

> "I think it benefits me in a lot of ways, working with the kids [at a local, urban school]. It really brings me back to what I was doing before I got here [to the doctoral program]. There may be some days that aren't going so well in the program, but when you go there some of the creative things the kids are doing or some of the things they just say, and running around and doing things with them helps you keep your focus on why you are doing what you are doing in the program."

Some turned to their religious identities to help negotiate intense experiences in the doctoral program that threatened one's sense of well-being. Journey said,

> "It's how I approach situations that I need advice on. I would approach stuff like that little saying, 'What would Jesus do?' or – I'm real big on that. So my spirituality and my relationship with God plays a big part on how I am and how I approach that, 'What should Journey do?' sort of moments."

Roxie depends on her coping mechanism found through years of trial-and-error:

> "If all my coping mechanisms are in place and if I've done yoga several times that week, and if I've taken Rover [her dog] on a good dog walk…if I've gone to the gym that morning, I can be cussed up one way and down the other and be fine, and not take it personally…"

It appears that the personal engagement one has with the phenomenon of agency, the greater his or her motivation to exercise that agency. My data suggests that it is the personal experience with dissonance, or as Bandura (2001) would state, mastery experiences, that predicts the potential for agency rather than a detached analysis. A group of participants who all entered the program at the same time, a group consisting of myself, Sasha, Louise, and Coco, had heard several tales from students in earlier cohorts of troubling interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships with faculty members and administration by the time we had entered our second year in the program. However, none of use acted or changed our behavior until we had each personally felt the dissonance ourselves – of which did prompt agenic action.

This is to be expected, for as Heath and Heath (2010) remind "we usually know there is a difference between knowing how to act and being motivated to act" (p. 112-113). In the case of my study, the motivation to act was prompted by personally experiencing dissonance within the context of the urban education doctoral program. In other words, hearing about someone else's experienced dissonance may help to provide feelings of solidarity or catharsis, but agenic action appears to stem from personal engagement.

Summary of Findings

Findings suggest that a doctoral students' disposition and prior experiences foster agency. This relationship was strong when the student's disposition was critical and prior experiences included operating within a variety of organizational structures within the field of education. Current relationships with people in positions of power and the forces of the iron cage (Weber, 1953) that pervade the UNC Charlotte urban education program

inhibited doctoral student agency. However, this negative effect appeared reduced when the student's identity negotiations entered the agency-negotiating process. Finally, doctoral students who were able to find space and/or create space within the structure of the doctoral program experienced greater satisfaction with their doctoral experiences.

Findings within the Context of Urban Schooling

Doctoral Student Agency and Dominate Issues in Urban Education

Arguably, a student – teacher relationship shares many characteristics with life in an urban community. Inequalities are experienced on social, political, and economic fronts of which impact ones access and capacity to educational opportunity. In keeping within a critical and democratic framework, the ability for both students and teachers to exercise their agency is paramount in countering environmental and structural forces that inhibit educational outcomes and produce negative educational experiences.

Experience of Agency and Staying in School. The findings from this study illustrate how a doctoral student's ability to handle school pressures and the behavior of teachers, of which Dei, et al. (1997) finds to be significant factors in a student dropping out of school, is indicative of his or her overall experience of agency within the doctoral program. This is important because while it was evident that doctoral students experienced difficulty in handling school pressures and encountered unwelcomed and unexpected behavior from some faculty and administrators, participants' interviews revealed that four agenic actions emerged as helping to mediate troubling situations and incidents within the program. Thus, despite inequalities in social status, political power, and economics, students were able to remain within the program, negotiate changes in their identity, and creatively tap into personal and collective social and cultural

capacities. Specifically since it was found that when participants were able to critically analyze an incident prior to executing an agenic action they were able to reach, at minimum, some sort of resolution, whether it be environmental or structural changes or personal catharsis. In reflection, the majority of agenic actions served for the most part as catharsis, due to the weight of the organizational isomorphism demonstrated through interactions with structural barriers, faculty, and administrators.

Experience of Agency and Teacher Retention. Findings also suggest that while catharsis is a viable resolution for a student confronted with a troubling incident in a formal schooling environment, it may not be enough for the classroom teacher who is critically oriented towards social justice. I mention this because in looking at past experiences and dispositions, all participants are either current K-12 classroom teachers or were prior to entering the program. The dominate reasoning for enrolling in the urban education doctoral program was to experience more than catharsis, rather, students wanted to make positive, sustainable, structural changes to benefit the schooling experience of urban students. This provides insight into the problem of teacher retention, especially in our urban schools in that measures for catharsis among teachers are not necessarily enough to retain the social justice-oriented urban teacher. In other words, we cannot expect catharsis to squelch dissonance, for injustice requires action at the crux, not in the subduing of its symptoms.

Experience of Agency and Macro Factors of Urban Schooling. A critical praxis of the social context of schooling requires that macro factors of urban schooling be conscientized as an important part of the dialogue. Specifically, resegregation, economic disparity, and unfair housing practice constitute added layers of complexity to the

practice of urban education (Chemerinsky, 2008; Holme, et al., 2008; Lipman, 2004; Meyer, 2000; Mickelson, 2006; Mickelson & Bottia, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Stromquist, 2002).

Because individuals are arguably limited in their capacity to affect structural change or macro factors, it is particularly important for teachers and students to be able to conscientize micro practices that are driven by macro trends (Lipman, 2004; Monahan, 2005). Findings illuminate how participants' agency – at both general and task specific levels - and helped in negotiating complex environments within the doctoral program, particularly when incidents were connected to legitimizing practices, money, and intellectual property as was the case with the grant and interpersonal dynamic between faculty, administrators, and students. While participants expressed disappointment at not being able to yet affect structural change within the program, it was valued that personal catharsis was attainable and that the ability to conscientize such complex issues within the functioning of the doctoral program was critical to the overall engagement a doctoral student experienced with the content and praxis of urban education.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

"As in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary of a phenomenological study. To summarize a poem in order to present the result because the poem itself is the result. The poem is the thing…poetizing is thinking on original experience and is thus speaking in a more primal sense" (van Manen, 1990, p. 13).

But when have I ever been afraid of being inappropriate?

To examine the experience of agency among those preparing to be urban teacher educators, I designed a critical, hermeneutic phenomenological case study. I selected the urban education doctoral program as my site because as a student in this program I had experienced several dissonance-provoking incidents that to me seemed contradictory to the promise of the program. Of course I had heard the informal opinions of my fellow doctoral students as we all seemed to experience dissonance occasionally, but I wondered if there were anything to it…in other words, was this the typical doctoral student experience? Also, I recognize the dissonance experienced as a doctoral student. It reminded me of the ache I experienced as a classroom teacher and as a K-12 student. What I was told or read just never seemed to align with what I saw or experienced. The experience of dissonance is a disjointed, oxygen-restrictive environment and state of being. And apparently, as my study reveals, I am not the only one who suffered through it while enrolled at the UNC Charlotte urban education doctoral program.

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach in this dissertation has helped to move the topic of dissonance far beyond the principle of cause and effect, rather situating the topic experientially and dynamically. I have no conclusions. Only that these doctoral students-participants' agency was impacted by the traditions and bureaucratic nature of the higher education. Yet the doctoral students-participants who were conscious of their identity constructions and oriented themselves toward the value of social justice, were able to subvert the structures of the urban education program.

So what?

My findings provide a view into the dissonance that constitutes so much of urban schooling. It is a view that tries to get up under the negative headlines regarding urban schools, tries to grasp the dimensions of the contradiction between the promise of school and the schooling experience, and tries to validate the desire and effort to remain committed to that promise. It is a dissertation on engaging with the journey of becoming an urban teacher educator. The findings help tell a story.

But at the same time, it is not a piece on the logistics of earning a doctorate. It is not a program evaluation. It is the story of 17 students. Perhaps you sensed reflections of yourself within the text. Perhaps it just made you mad. But it is not your story.

The topic is a common one, I suppose: the experience of one's agency within an organizational structure. The obvious connection to this work would be from other doctoral students and I suppose those who have survived the process too, i.e., Ph.Ds. For whenever I tell a fellow doctoral student about my topic, I witness in return a nod of recognition. When I received a marked up draft of my dissertation back from my chair, she admitted to being told at one point that "she wasn't Ph.D. material" or good enough

for graduate school either…apparently the culture supports notion of breaking people down to see if they can hold their own. The word 'hazing' comes to mind. And it appears that those of us who survive are characterized by not only an individual sense of agency, but a collective one as well.

FIGURE 6

The Thread of Dissonance through my Schooling Life

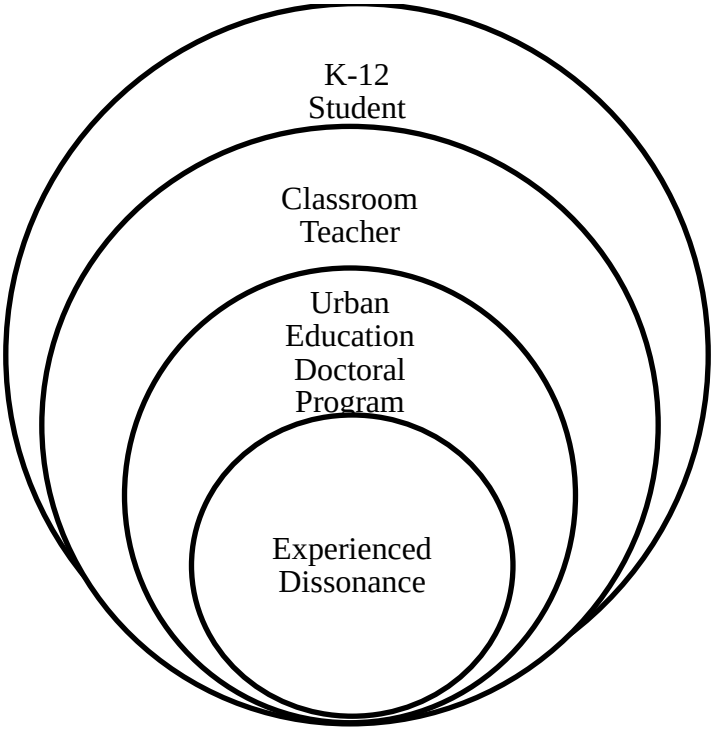

Figure 6 works two ways: first, it illustrates the motivational path I took into this study of dissonance within an educational setting/structure. It began with my experiences as a K-12 student where the courses and topics that mattered to me were deemed of lesser value by those in positions of power. Then I became a classroom teacher in order to relieve some of that disconnect for secondary-level students using my certification to teach English language arts. The experience of dissonance remained dormant it seemed, for a while, but eventually became chronic within the space that I occupied. I sought

higher-ground. But the flood levels rose. Dissonance, a feeling expressing the disconnect, the contradiction, between the promise of schooling and the realities of schooling again reared its face. It was clear that the organizational structure of K-12 schooling in the United States was not going to be 'redone' any time soon – the institution of schooling would remain strong in its legitimizing powers to shape the value of knowledge and reproduce itself as the governing voice of public schools and that teachers did in them.

My coursework within the urban education doctoral program here at UNC Charlotte helped me to conscientize and verbalize the dissonance I had experienced throughout my schooling life. I also learned, formally, about the influential role of individual and collective agency within an institutionalized structure. Robert Moses engaged with the structure through his Algebra Project. Jane Addams' built the Hull House. Audre Lorde wrote poetry and challenged feminism to remain critically conscious of itself. Kozol continues to pull the curtain back on the discrepancies among urban and suburban schooling experiences. Elijah Anderson introduced the *Code of the Street* to those outside the ghetto. And, according to NCES (2010) 3.2 million teachers entered into public K-12 classrooms to teach this fall in the United States. If the trend continues, approximately 8% of these teachers will not return to the profession next fall (NCES, 2011). This equates to 256,000 teachers leaving the profession. Teacher retention issues, turnover costs, and the impact of the teacher on student achievement was summarized in chapter two.

This figure also illustrates how I envision the interconnectivity between the K-12 urban student and the urban teacher educator/scholar. While all roles can be considered

part of a schooling life, it is also suggestive of the experience of dissonance that resonates among all actors. The physical organizational structures change depending on one's place within the discourse of schooling, but the traditions and legitimizing power of the institution of public schooling – at all levels – appears chronic in its presence. Such conditions require teacher and student agency, with particular emphasis on one's identity negotiations, to maintain a status of presence as well as to sustain an-ongoing effort to remain oriented to liberation of social justice within the institution. Bureaucratic forces are part of the discourse and part of which are contributing factors of dissonant-providing incidents in urban school structures/programs.

The significance of my study lies in its illumination of the possibility of engagement that doctoral students in urban education have within the discourse of urban schooling in general, and within the formal structure of doctoral studies specifically. This helps us to better understand how the crux of structure and agency is negotiated and, hopefully, reconciled by participants in the process, especially those with relatively little bureaucratic power.

And the irony of that fact that I sought out a traditional legitimizing organization, an urban education doctoral program at a public institution of higher education, in order to reconcile the dissonance I had experienced as a K-12 student and then classroom teacher is not lost on me. Moreover, I have conducted a critical, postmodern study that investigates the experience of dissonance within the very program through which I hope to be legitimized. And this is all packaged up in a traditional five chapter dissertation format.

In keeping with the theme of operating one's agency within the institution of schooling, it appears that my final act of agency within the space of the urban education doctoral program, as a student, is this dissertation. In my final work within this organization I chose to turn toward the feelings of dissonance and engage with that which would have been perfectly happy to remain dormant. But this does not mean my work is over. I am participating in the process in order to remain within the institution of urban education so that I can exercise my agency, hopefully, always towards an orientation of social justice.

In the end I hope this dissertation helps others turn toward dissonance and better understand how their own agency can be fostered and utilized as a vehicle first for survival and then for change. And if it were that easy it would also help reform the space in which teacher educators and scholars are prepared in order to create the space for pre-service and in-service teachers to develop their own agency. In turn, with this dissertation, my highest aspiration is to help classroom teachers foster their students' agency. I have a few recommendations that may help advance this aim:

Recommendations

My first recommendations is that doctoral programs build researcher identity negotiation skills into the curriculum. Ideally this will benefit both doctoral students and faculty members. Just as the teacher is the most influential factor in student achievement at the K-12 level, the mentor-mentee relationship that doctoral students and faculty members have is highly influential in both parties' identity negotiations. The findings from this study suggest these skills can help diminish normative bureaucratic forces.

My second recommendation is that teacher education programs design experiences for their pre-service and in-service teachers that challenge the candidates' extant ways of knowing self and the world. The study's findings suggest that the more experience one has in exerting agency, the greater capacity to do so in the future one will have. This is particularly important for classroom teachers because they are charged with the facilitation of agency in their students. The adage, "you can't teach what you don't know" comes to mind.

Below are recommendations for how teacher education programs can conscientized their students to becoming global multicultural educators:

1. Require all pre-service teachers to minor in a foreign language.

Language can dislocate grand narratives on what proficiency means, what ways of knowing are validated, what schooling looks like, and the purpose of education (Lemert, 2004; Lorde, 2007). Also, the working knowledge of a second language can help a teacher understand the difficulties that his or her English language learners (ELLs) as well as provide the teacher an additional mode of communication to be used with speakers of the language learned (Nieto, 2004).

This addition to a teacher education program will help ELLs who are training to be teachers have their native language validated, by endorsing and requiring and teaching all future teachers a second language. Additionally, the learning of a second language will provide conscientizing opportunities for pre-service teachers of the importance of being validated during the learning process. Languages can also represent other ways of knowing oneself and the world. In terms of cultural capital, the process of learning a foreign language will expose students to an 'other' culture, way of viewing the world,

and communicating. This could have positive impacts on building the efficacy of pre-service teachers in terms of providing instruction on dominant cultural fluency because it will provide a point of comparison.

2. Require all pre-service teachers to spend at least one summer, or semester studying abroad.

Immersion in a culture different from ones' own provides the potential for numerous conscientizing experiences from negotiating new spaces, speaking a foreign language, delving into different ways of living life, and experiencing the 'other.' This process can dislocate the dominant, white, upper-middle class discourse that is fed by media and traditional schooling, and teach the student to redefine him or herself without orientalizing, but instead through the context of his or her own being. This process can enlighten a person to define only him or herself and let others do the same.

While abroad, one is exposed to other ways of knowing the world and oneself, through a context different than the norm. In experiencing the unknown or unfamiliar, one often becomes better acquainted with his or her own identity. The exposure to other capital is constant, providing the student enough time to reflect upon the new learning and to integrate it into his or her actions. Such processes can then be integrated into one's teaching.

3. Require teacher educators to model dialogical collaboration in their teaching, and incorporate, consistently, opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe and practice collaboration themselves.

Teacher educators should not be allowed to lecture on differentiation, student-centered learning, democratic education, or problem-posing pedagogy. Culturally

responsive teaching should be modeled and collaboration with colleagues should be within the department and across-fields of study, as well as with colleagues who may or may not be of the same professional level.

Part of a pre-service teacher's clinical hours needs to include the observation of several different ways of collaborating in a school setting. Reflections of these hours should be critical and provide background for pre-service teachers in planning and presenting a lesson in collaboration with another pre-service or in-service teacher.

This process can help demystify the notion that there is a right way and a wrong way to teach and to learn. For success in collaboration, context and reflection are essential, and these experiences will allow for students to practice and validate the many different ways of existing, learning, and teaching. Additionally, the cultural capital of the pre-service teacher may increase based upon who is observed, what collaborations are experienced, and how lessons resulted from various dispositions.

4. Require emphasis on critical scholarship in every course.

Critical scholarship seeks social change which necessitates a conscientizing process of questioning, analyzing, and synthesizing. If pre-service teachers will be one day required to teach his or her students to be critical thinkers, then no opportunity to practice critical thinking should be left untouched. The works of bell hooks, Cornel West, Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Gloria Anzaldua, Audre Lorde, Eliot Eisner, Derrick Bell, Martin Haberman, Maxine Greene, Martin Carnoy, Nawal El Saadawi, Geneva Gay, Sonia Nieto, Jim Cummings, Jonathan Kozol, John Ogbu, W.E.B. DuBois, Nelly Stromquist, Michael Apple, among others should be familiar to undergraduate pre-service teachers. And when possible, primary texts should

be accessed over corporate textbooks. This will help students engage with the various schools of thought concerning the topic of educating for transformation, for peace, for liberation.

Third, I recommend that dissonance be repositioned within the theory and practice of education as a space in which to be engaged in order to foster the knowing of the self and the world in a more complex way.

My fourth recommendation is that the question be raised as to whether there actually is a shared aim to foster agency among urban teachers and students. The study's findings, my interpretations and subsequent discussion, assume that agency is a positive characteristic in urban teachers and students. This type of conversation will require intersubjectivity among all participants, a free space where participants do not feel disempowered, and will utilize Freire's dialogical process, conscientização.

These four recommendations can help facilitate the inclusion of teacher and student agency as a meaningful component to urban schooling reform. Subsequently, these recommendations can also help restructuring efforts of urban teacher education programs and of related doctoral education programs in order to operationalize the experience and efficacy of agency.

Limitations

Limitations to this study include having only acquiring data from participants through one method, the semi-structured interview. Although a semi-structured interview of a participant's lived experience is often a source of rich data, it does not allow for other forms of communication to express the experience of agency within the context of

the doctoral program. Due to time constraints for this study, additional data points will have to be gathered and analyzed after the completion of this dissertation.

This limitation was noticeable in the scope of what I was able to discern from the collected data, especially with regard to a person's (non-academic) experiences participants may have had that influenced one's agency within the doctoral program. Some participants expressed appreciation for capacities fosters from outside of academia – such as travel, sports, and family life – but these elements only made a peripheral appearance across collected data and were not prominent in the literature related to the experience of agency within an academic setting. However this observation does illuminate the need for future research regarding the role of travel, sports, and familial life in developing student and teacher agency.

A second limitation is that while I discuss and theorize the relationship among the urban schooling – academia pipeline illustrated in chapter one and elaborated on in chapter two, the interviews in this study only investigate agency at one point in the pipeline, of which is the agenic experiences of doctoral students. Thus the interview data only provides argument for the possibility of such a pipeline and raises questions for future research.

The fact that this dissertation is a qualitative case study eliminates the generalizabilty of my findings, like all case studies and qualitative research. But it raises questions that can be explored in future research such as:

1) What non-academic experiences help teachers and students foster agency?
2) How do urban education doctoral students at other universities experience their agency?

3) How do classroom teachers experience agency?
4) How do university faculty members experience agency?
5) What is the role of agency of teachers and students in transforming urban education?

Conclusion

Being able to recognize the feeling of dissonance and identify its source proved helpful for this study's participants. At a minimum, they reached a level of catharsis which served to mediate intrapersonal struggles in a productive manner that did not threaten one's identity constructions. Such actions taken by participants suggest that free spaces (Heath & Heath, 2010) where one can dialogue with others without fear of alienation or sanctions, provide a space for such agency to transpire. Within the urban education doctoral program, participants revealed that several such spaces were available, namely: the graduate student organization for the urban education doctoral program, study groups with friends/fellow students, and shared office hours for graduate assistantships, in addition to informal gatherings as well. And such with the recent graduation of several of the participants in this study, it is apparent that their agenic actions paid off. In other words, doctoral students can benefit from more of these free spaces where experienced dissonance can be engaged with in a non-threatening, intersubjective space.

The bureaucratic structure of the College of Education and the urban education doctoral program is not unique: what is unique is the particular mix of personalities and issues faced by the cohort of students at this moment in the program's development. The unfolding of the stories indicate how the bureaucratic response to the delimmas brought

up were detrimental and contradictory to the organization's goals as described in the literature. This ties back then to the issues of agency.

Rick Flair's interview closed with this reflection on this reality:

> "In order to maintain your sanity with the world
> and so forth like that, you will have to have somebody
> to vent to and it's always best to be able to vent to
> somebody who is going through a similar experience.
> So the fact that we all had that in common and all had a
> similar perspective and humanity about it and what not,
> it lets you know that one, you're not alone and two, that
> more than anything, you are not alone…it's really it.
> It's a lonely process because believe it or not it's all on you."

Final thought:

What if teacher and student agency was a viable force in urban school reform? Is the field of education ready for this? And I do not have a cogent response yet. But rather I have additional questions in order to locate the dissonance of this issue. Is it emblematic of the expression and practice of democracy, as a political structure? What does a democracy look like in practice? What does a classroom of an agenic urban teacher look like? What does a classroom full of agenic urban students look like? And perhaps most importantly who would be against the images you have constructed?

Coda

My subjectivity became a lesson in the interconnectedness of human action and organizational science and how adherence to binaries can prove too simplistic. In retrospect, my theoretical framework, which positions power in a postmodern critique and resists the oversimplification of binaries, suggesting instead interconnectedness (Foucault, 1972; Lemert, 2004) was well aligned to the study's purpose and design, but as far as being helpful in codifying findings and deciding on their presentation, the functionalist gets the last laugh. The weight of the interconnectedness among agenic actions, that which motivated and/or inhibited them, and the role of bureaucracy resonated with me repeatedly and often frustratingly, as I read over and over my transcripts, coded, and tried to make sense of their relationships to each other. My personal memos and researcher's notebook that I kept during this study look chaotic from a far and read just as complicated and abstract when up close. I am not surprised, nor disappointed, for my theoretical framework makes no apologies for such characteristics. I chose this topic in part because it forces me to engage with the interaction among different elements, knowing that every moment of engagement could be contradictory to the last. I assure my reader I cursed my postmodern bent several times over the course of working on this dissertation, but knew that no other theoretical framework would push me to continually question my data against the literature.

Therefore it cannot be a surprise that my presentation and subsequent discussion of my findings will also be interconnected. I can assure you that at the time of penning this final draft, these are the connections and revelations that I had made regarding the experience of agency by a group of 17 advanced or graduated urban education doctoral

students. And, in keeping with my critical postmodernist perspective and design I invite my contributions from this study to be held up to critical scrutiny as well, for El Sadaawi (1997) , Foucault's (1972), and Said (2002) reiterate that one must keep all things within reach for dispute, claiming no privilege for itself.

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APPENDIX A: PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Phrygian Sonnets: A Narrative on the Space of my Doctoral Education

This narrative is focuses on the creative - intellectual paths I have been traveling since I began in the doctoral program in August of 2008. In other words, how in the heck did I arrive to this research topic for my dissertation: the experience of agency within educational structures.

To remain methodologically aligned to my agenda, I cannot tell one story without the other: my journey is both in my tangible work as well as in my mind's eye. At points I was passive in each realm, thankfully not too often simultaneously, and when I was lucky I had more than just a foot in each space. Therefore one story is told through the different sections and the selected artifacts and the selected stories I share. Another story is told here in the narrative you are reading now. The stories are linked by the soundtrack. There are multiple ways of engaging with this portfolio: to that I quote Pablo Picasso, "I begin with an idea and then it becomes something else."

American Pie

It could be considered a famous, well known song in the evolution of American music. No doubt a song that has spawned many interpretations, folks wanting direct connections between lyric and life; however I always thought each lyric could represent a myriad of points in history, and comically, present times too. Perhaps that is the transcendent quality, the 'we all think we know what he's talking about' that makes it so powerful. Or perhaps people just like it because the words are clearly audible and the tones, movement, closure familiar.

To me, more often than not, the song denotes tragedy. McLean asks, 'do you believe in rock and roll? Can music save your mortal soul?' I have always answered, 'yes.' But then the song talks about the day the music died. Not good news for my soul.

For me the music dies when space is collapsed and access to opportunity is denied. Music opens up space for dwelling in a multitude of ways of knowing the self, the neighbor, and the world. To be denied music, denied space, is to experience a death.

The work of Audre Lorde, Paulo Freire, Maxine Greene, Eliot Eisner, Pablo Picasso, Mary Stone Hanley, and Charles Wright speak to the power of this space. Stone referred to the process as 'going toward the tension' in a recent presentation at the AERA Annual Meeting in Denver. Art (poetry for Lorde and Wright, problem-posing dialogue for Freire, and the fine arts for Greene, Eisner, Picasso, and Hanley, provides the tools in which tension can be approached, investigated, either destroyed, revised, or affirmed, thus igniting the imagination and allowing knowledge to be created. However these scholars press that the mere presence of tools is not sufficient, but that the artist must be free in their utilization and equipped to use them for oneself. Without such premise the artist is shackled to the dominant structure, the hegemonic values which seek self-preservation, not space for the sustainable empowerment of others.

It is oft said that first impressions are the most important. This seemingly applies to education too where my first two semesters were spent swimming in the work of these scholars; some were already old friends, other kind acquaintance, but a few strangers. Thus my first impressions of doctoral study were from a critical school of thought that dwelled in the potential of the arts.

Remember the Name

A line in this song reads, “It’s about reality and making some noise.” It is to this aim that I chose the subject of student and teacher agency to be the focus of my research agenda. I came into the program with an interest in validating and capitalizing on multiple ways of knowing. For me, I know the world first through music. However, such methods were not always validated, or even humored, in my non-arts-based courses. This spawned my desire to create and implement arts-infused curriculum in my classroom. In fact this agenda drove my Master’s thesis work where I did a mixed-methods study in using music to teach a 7th grade poetry unit in my own classroom.

But as I have mentioned before, I became frustrated at the lack of scope such curriculum had on the macro factors and micro trends that, in the end, dictated much of the schooling experience, thus opportunities for learning for my students. In sum, I believe that curriculum development and implementation, along with teacher pedagogy is an essential component, but harmonically engaged with policy and procedure that often contradicts such curricular aims. Reform thus needs to be aligned throughout the levels of schooling.

During my first semester in the program I began researching the history of multicultural education with a critical lens. This choice was made because as far as I knew, multicultural education had been the movement which most closely aligned with my interest in inclusivity of multiple ways of knowing self and the world. It was in a Critical Issues class when Dr. XX told me to go to the work James Banks. To say the least, Banks and I have been close for the last two years. What I found captivating was that while the aims of multicultural education have historically sought social justice, its implementation has stagnated. The evolution of theoretical frameworks of multicultural

education and its curriculum and pedagogy has been reactive to social movements, for the most part, and is arguably not inclusive of the needs of 21st century diversity.

It is my goal to utilize multiple data sources to illuminate the reality of multicultural education and crank up the volume regarding the crime of being rhetorically supportive, yet actionably oppositional.

Can't Hold Us Down

Enter the feminist writers in my education. I found the language of Audre Lorde, Nawal el Saadawi, Merlin Stone, Arlie Russell Hochschild, Jane Addams, among others, lightening to a silenced part of my perspective. At the end of my first year I was clamoring for a fourth wave and part of an insanely strong group of women who were also in the doctoral program. In fact, I think the friendship was sealed for good as we all expressed similar reactions to Hochschild's *Second Shift.* Can't hold us down.

Graffiti the World

To have agency in this world, students' education needs to change. Radically. Most reform focuses on inoculating symptoms such as test scores, dropout rates, violence in schools, and other common topics on mainstream media outlets. Such is attention getting, reducible to numbers, and fits nicely into a 2 minute segment.

But I find myself more aligned with Michael Apple, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Kris Gutierrez, and Jonathan Kozol who target causes for student disengagement in the classroom, student disenfranchisement from school, and the vertical and horizontal contexts involved in a student's access to and experience with learning. Monahan, in his text, *Globalization, Technological Change, and Public Education* speaks to the role of physical, political, and technological barriers to education for not only students, but for

their parents and communities. Denial of access breaks down levels of agency which spawn symptoms of low achievement, dropping out, and resorting to violence. Too often the existence of technology, the existence of a schoolhouse, the existence of a meeting is mistaken for providing sustainable access to all. I propose that this is in fact a significant cause for the lack of viable reform within education and multicultural education, in particular.

Blowin' in the Wind

An optimist could hypothesize that after reading the sequence: *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* by Anderson, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door* by Meyer, and *Shame of the Nation* by Kozol, education policy (as well as housing and health care policy too) would have changed for the benefit of all citizens and residents in our public schools. But it has not. Perhaps there are reasons for this: the scholarship is not read, the scholarship is read but not agreeable with a person's core values, the scholarship is read and sounds good but is un-actionable, or perhaps some readers fear the content and work to censor its power. If this trifecta, this trinity of the history and present story of minority education in this country does not rattle one's soul, we have a bigger problem on our hands than education policy.

How many prisons must we build before society cares about the education that all students receive in third grade?

Comfortably Numb

Durkheim's metaphor of the body. And if pain is experienced, give it time, it will self-equilibrate, just like the neoliberal-driven economy. The fact that the nation stands by while education budgets are cut rather than scrutinized for better means of allocation,

that arts, second language, and history classes are the sacrificial lambs, achievement equals test scores, means that, as Zhao states in his "Education in the Flat World: Implications of Globalization on Education," are symptoms of a nation starving itself by neglecting its central values and strengths: individuality, freedom, and access.

Gunship Politico

Issues of poverty, language, and ethnic and racial profiling, are discernable in dominant curriculum, reinforced through oppressive pedagogy, and validated with state rights such as California's Proposition 227 and Arizona's Senate Bill 1070.

The work of Rosemary Traore combats such oppressive space at the classroom level using Afrocentricity to bridge mass media and socially concocted theories of self and other and establish platforms for community where a student is complete within him or herself, but also simultaneously part of larger contexts as well, which is dependent on the similarities that lie beneath differences.

Taking the gavel away from a western-centric perspective and opening up to the harmony defined and lived in the South and East of this globe requires that the corner cop be an agent of change, not an agent of surveillance and authority. Guided by the work of Asante, DuBois, Tagore, among others, it is possible defeat the gunship politico.

Black Rock

In October of 2009 I emailed Dr. XX, professor of Philosophy and Education at Teachers College at Columbia University. I had read his scholarship and was instantly and forever moved by his work on the *poetics of teaching.* I searched our faculty, both in education and in the philosophy department and found an assistant professor in both fields who had insight into such methods, but did not have command of the subject like

Dr. XX. One proved unavailable for an independent study (probably trying to publish in order to gain tenure) and the other proved only knowledgeable in the social theory-side of things. But it was all I had.

Luckily for me, a month after the email sent, and I had pushed it to the back of my mind in lieu of impending course deadlines, I received an email from Dr. XX stating that he was intrigued by my research agenda and would be happy to work informally on an independent study in philosophical methodology. He sent me a list of texts to study, much with the intent to balance out the post-modern-heavy list Dr. XY had given me, and throughout the spring semester I emailed him my reflections and he emailed me back his thoughts. Who knew I'd receive a more enriching experience in an unofficial independent study than in my official independent study (Illich anyone?).

In late April I traveled to New York City to meet with Dr. XX. I was sooooo nervous. I mean, it is Columbia. Dr. XX is a full professor with incredible depth and breadth of knowledge and when I read his work I feel like my ideas are shown words.

What is most inspiring is that while a philosopher, he is action-based. He trends upon the worlds of cosmopolitanism, art, pedagogy, peace, and works for "reflective opennens to the world and reflective loyalty to the local." After three minutes of meeting, we sat and talked like long-time colleagues for over an hour and a half. He gave me insight into my dissertation content and methodology, encouraged me to seek the particular for the universal, to keep true to my own voice and creativity throughout the entire dissertation process, and to keep feeding my soul with the art that speaks to me. At the time my soul was being crunched and he gave me space to breath and take back my

voice. Currently I am reading the work of Rabindranath Tagore, at his recommendation, and two texts he edited. He has thankfully agreed to continue our dialogue!

This is what mentors do: they remind you to seek out your black rock, to write your song all day long, and when scared and lost, help you light your way.

Little Boxes

Prudence Carter's *Keepin' It Real* faces the tension among dispositions, tracking, and pre-packaged identities that strangle the potential of students. The space created in the flux of culture and status, the attitude-achievement paradox (as explored by Dr. Mickelson), the learning space of mainstreamers, the non-compliant, the straddlers, and the navigators, Carter redefines learning space. No longer can education be seen as an entity independent; a student is not a tabula rasa, but an organic being who is at all times his or her past, present, and future.

Now how does one denote that on a bubble sheet?

Bhangra Fever

Robert Moses' book, *Radical Equations* and Martin Carnoy's *Cuba's Academic Advantage* rip the seam open on closed minds who categorize student-centered, problem-posing learning of mathematics, and the nation of Cuba as too 'other' to be relevant (and dare I say important) to the way secondary schooling in American operates. That which is unfamiliar is not dirty, wrong, evil, or weak in mind. On the contrary, othering, as Edward Said writes about, most often signifies self-preservation by the person, peoples, or entity issuing the normal – abnormal labels. Moses takes Freire's work and marries it to the lessons learn during the Civil Rights movement regarding access, buy-in, and sustainability to empower students to engage and create mathematics. Carnoy makes it

possible to see Cuba as not the belle-époque escape nor the closest enemy in the Cold War nor the embargoed communist state, but as a space where all students engage with a viable education of high quality. And for those who like statistics, Carnoy's got those too.

Crumbs From Your Table

The students' in Lipman's *High Stakes Education*, in Kozol's *Shame of the Nation*, students predominately in urban areas do not receive the same education as their suburban peers. Furthermore, within the same school building, classes are racially and economically segregated, so that school choice vouchers, magnate programs, and lotteries do not alleviate the disparities. Likewise, nations in the southern hemisphere, particularly on the continent of Africa, are not affording all students a high quality, sustainable secondary education at a more distressing level than counterparts in the north. Right now, where you were born has significant consequences for whether you have sustainable access to an education that empowers students for the 21st century.

Handlebars

Power and how you use it. I think of Derrick Bell, well meaning, but perhaps not as reflective as Freire would have wanted him to be, to complement all his action. However the manner in which he tells his story, especially using the analogy of Timur and Tamir, that power bestowed is not always true power, but instead a manipulation or a self-righteous act.

Hero

If I could teach the world to sing, this is the song it would be.

Stuck in a Moment You Can't Get Out Of

Globalization is marked by a compression of time and space. Finding one's way would be understandably difficult. The goal of a my research is to figure out how to empower students and teachers to each find his/her own melody to be sung, without subtracting parts of the self in order to gain acceptance.

I come back to music and its contrapuntal aspect which states that each line (of a four part harmony, for example: soprano, alto, tenor, bass lines) are complete within themselves, but also, i constructivist fashion, are part of the whole. So in this respect there are two spaces for validation: the validation of the individual line and the validation for the context in which the individual line exists.

This notion goes beyond the heroes and holidays that Banks classifies as lower levels of multicultural education and moves toward transformative and social justice. Likewise, this theory is informed by the improvisational component in jazz. As Ladson-Billings alludes to, the jazz performer must be highly knowledgeable and skilled at the basics of jazz not only to be able to play what is written, but also to improvise in and out of what is written, to create something new within a pre-existing structure, which simultaneously alters the structure.

The Last Trumpet

A call to duty. I realize within my research and in my methodology, that it is an issue of sustainable access. Taking off the findings of Carnoy in his work on Cuba, Chile, and Brazil, the strength and integrity of the teacher education system is a monumental force in the health of the K-12 education system. To sustain access, across the nation, across generation, across traditional lines of discrimination, teachers need to

be prepared and empowered to be the most influential factor in a student's education achievement. Linda Darling-Hammond is adamant on this issue, as is President Obama, but unfortunately in a political structure that is ' pimped and gansta'd out' the alignment of resources, expertise, passion, and innovation is sacrificed.

Wide spread breaks in the system require wide spread reform. Modern education don't prepare our teachers either. Hence my decision to focus first on the implementation of a global multicultural education within the space of teacher education and professional development.

Galvanize

I took a marketing class because I am fascinated with the concept and act of buy-in. (Tired of hearing me talk about it without getting anywhere, I signed up for Marketing Management, a MBA course in the Belk College of Business from the advisement of my brother who raved about Dr. XZ' course…that it was the most relevant and helpful than any other business course he ever took..and this is from a guy who has an undergrad in business, a Master's in Sports Marketing, and an MBA in Marketing).

Business does not have all the answers, but you have to give the field credit. They make things happen, they sustain buy-in, and frankly have a lot of money. Three things that the field of education desperately lacks.

To the surprise of my new classmates in the marketing class (a PhD student in urban education, their stares said) to the crooked head of education professors wearily giving me a permit to include it as an official elective, I did not hold back. In fact I received an A on every assignment, and every assignment I was able to focus on

multicultural education and how it fits within a marketing plan in an age of imaginative transformation. Don't hold back.

All You Need is Love

Along a continuum of tolerance – appropriation – authenticity, P.B Mehta, notably in his 2000 article, *Cosmopolitanism and the Circle of Reason*, challenges the willingness of the cosmopolitan to shatter core beliefs. He suggests that a Eurocentric mindset dominates the selection of options an identity can theoretically 'choose' from. Mehta insists that reflection become more critical in that it validates social structures and contexts, and moves toward identifying the perceived threats and benefits one's identity makes upon an act of appropriation, cosmopolitanism. In sum, reflection is a political act, and thus since contemporary cosmopolitanism seeks reflection, cosmopolitanism is a political act. Traditionally this rests on binary constructions which sustain an Other. However according to Mehta, for cosmopolitans to legitimate their argument, space is needed where reflection reveals its own limitations (i.e.: the ever present chasm from theory to practices) and also, recognize the tension between one's identity and that which threatens it both positively and negatively. Cosmopolitanism, requires defenselessness, according to Mehta. This plays with the basis of judgment of a philosophy, which is addressed by Nussbaum in *The Philosophy of Desire*. For the Hellenistic tradition, the end goal of philosophy is eudaimonia, or human flourishing. This, by Nussbaum's admittance has great consequence for ethical issues, and I would add for issues of identity construction and subsequent academic achievement as well. I adopt the Hellenistic premise that "a precise, logically rigorous argument that is not well suited to the needs of its hearers, an argument that is simply and entirely academic and unable to engage its

audience in a practical way, is to that extend a defective philosophical argument" . Tied to cosmopolitanism and the continuum created from Mehta's work, would state that argument for human flourishing requires defenses, and therefore allegiances, to be laid down. An argument, or discourse for that matter, that is not self-critical regarding its continual ability to promote consciousness of all actors, thus objectifying, disengaging the actors to simply a role of a silent audience, is defective and purely serving for its own survival.

Tolerance does not trust the voice of the attendee, but doesn't kill him off, physically. Appropriation, seems to trust only arguments or points of view that are hospitable to the discursive constellation, which Michel Foucault distills in his *Archeology of Knowledge,* that is already in place, thus not risking a revolution. This seems to be, for me where Epicurus and Lucretius stand, appropriating philosophical methodology in order to achieve pleasure of mind – thus body, but negating the foundational requirement of tension for the philosophical methodology to remain relevant. In essence, in terms of appropriation, philosophy or discourse is simply instrumental, not essential in its own right. Taking this to cosmopolitanism, strict cosmopolitanism would then seem to object to the Epicurus theraputic tradition because it believes in, and thus seeks, a peace of mind free from poisonous desires, where as the strict cosmopolitan invites potentially poisonous desires because to him/her the designation of 'poisonous' is politically loaded, and an example of indoctrinization, or allegiance building. However, such adherence strips away potential benefits of allegiance. Perhaps this is where the moderate moral cosmopolitan comes into play. Can a comparison to Carter's multicultural navigator be made? Certainly the position of

authenticity could be discussed at this point. Trust in self, as navigator, as moderate moral cosmopolitan, to continually engage, remain subject within each discourse one enters and of course trust on the part of each discourse that such subjectivity is allowed, no encouraged.

The opposite of tolerance – appropriation ….. is love. Damn, did McCartney and Lennon so simply capture the complexity?

Everyone Deserves Music

Everyone deserves music and it is the force that drives my research agenda.

Not Ready to Make Nice

I could bow down and do a more traditional dissertation. I could run data in SPSS. I could interview a few teachers, perhaps (gasp!) a few students, and maybe some policy makers to see how to improve American secondary schools. But I don't want to. I am afraid that I'd be sucked into the same spiral of depression in which I was trapped when I left the classroom for the doctoral program.

For seven years I taught secondary English language arts classes in North Carolina public schools. Each year I lost a bit of my soul. Not because of students, but for them. What started out as disbelief and frustration toward the structure and process of schooling, and most importantly its impact on my students, grew into anger. I was serving on committees at the district level that aimed to solve the problems, I served in leadership roles in my school in order to try to make positive change. I taught controversial text, I lit the canon on fire and stopped it out with the help of some very feisty middle schoolers. I stayed out of the teacher's lounge, headed up Friday social gatherings with like-minded colleagues, co-taught an elective course for no extra pay

because it was needed. I was a teacher-researcher, earned my Master's, met with legislators in D.C., and attended professional development as if my life depended on it.

No dice. The lit flame afforded two choices: one succumb to numbness or act. When I finally tried to be numb I was diagnosed with depression, thus beginning my citizenship in the Prozac nation. So I must act. I could change my classroom. I couldn't change the structure of education from the classroom. Maybe some teachers can, but I couldn't give my all on two fronts. So I entered this program to change the way we do education in this country, with a particular, research focus on secondary public schooling.

I find myself though in another bureaucracy (not really surprised) where the structural change is also needed in terms of teacher education programs. It appears to be the whole darn thing. But I'm closer now. Closer to the spaces where impacts can be more direct on policy and structure. Closer to the degree that will permit me access to the opportunity to make the changes needed for the benefit of all students.

I could play nice and pretend that the interaction of macro factors and micro trends do not matter in the education of a secondary or a post-secondary student. I could try to bend myself into an odd and perverse shape so that I fit into the structure built on agriculture, industry, and commodities. But I already tried that. I refuse to play nice because nice will not challenge the status quo; nice will not face issues of power and privilege. Nice refutes the importance of social context, is hell bent on shaking hands post-sanitizer, and keeps popping pills for an artificial high or in the least, norm.

Up Up & Away

In Dr. XZ' class he talked about the age of imaginative transformation and how the hierarchy of human potential flows: 1)imagination, 2) passion, 3) creativity, 4)

persistence. Then below an arguable line of mediocrity lay, 5) intelligence, 6) diligence, 7) cooperation, and 8) obedience. Such delineation is comparable to the values and life work of those whose scholarship welcomed me into the field of urban education, those unafraid to face the tension and embrace all methods and space for the benefit of student learning.

What About Your Friends

Couldn't have done this without them. Or if I did, I sure as hell wouldn't have enjoyed it. Phrygian was/is considered a wild, exotic mode in which to play music. Plato and Aristotle used it to train those in society who needed to be brave and inspired, like warriors. However exposure and fluency with such a mode was tightly controlled because in the wrong hands, it was fear, it could lead to rebellion. On the other end of the prim and proper spectrum, in terms of form that is, or aesthetics, is the sonnet. It is a tightly controlled structure, often one of the most difficult to compose with any sort of command or meaning, though truly powerful when content meets form. Hence the title alludes to the mysterious and powerful space when elements both controlled and familiar are juxtaposed against that which is wild, foreign, and passionate. Much like life, in this space, when tension is faced, not ignored, amazing things can happen.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Opening Questions

1) Can you briefly describe your professional background? (degrees, certification, years of experience)
2) Why are you pursuing a doctorate in urban education?
3) What are your professional goals?

Content Questions

4) What does *agency* mean to you?
5) Have you been part of situations in which you have exercised your agency? Either individually or collectively?
    a. Have you been part of situations in which you have perceived tension that have been related to the urban education doctoral program or to your related-professional life?
6) If yes, can you describe the incident?
        i. *Describe the experience from the inside, almost like a state of mind: the feelings, mood, emotions, etc..*
            1. *Attend to how your body felt, how things sounded, etc…*
        ii. *How did the issue arise?*
            1. *How did you become aware of it?*
            2. *What was it like to discover this issue or realize that you were in this situation?*

iii. *Did you talk to others in the program/your profession?*

1. *What happened?*

2. *Describe these conversations.*

iv. *How did you come upon your personal stance in response to this issue/situation?*

v. *How did you decide what you would do/not do?*

1. *Was this a planned out response?*

vi. *Did you assume you would have support from others or form elsewhere in the program?*

vii. *Is the issue/situation resolved?*

viii. *What has been the response by faculty and administrators (i.e. people in positions of power) to your individual and/or collective acts of agency?*

b. As you reflect back on your agenic actions in this situation, do you recognize similarities to other agenic actions you have experienced in the past?

7) If not, can you elaborate on why you do not perceive your actions as agenic?